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Unwrapped: Let's Get Out of Here

Bent Meier Sørensen and Samantha Warren

We live in a time of packages. Everything comes in set, glossed, and 'just so'. This also seems true of scientific journal issues: either they are deliberately 'special issues' where the theming is the very organizing principle, or they are apparently 'open issues' where an editorial constructs a thematic line through the various papers in the issue. Within poststructuralist organization studies, with its especially elastic and, well, ephemeral, concepts and theories, the temptation of thematizing is, as history teaches us, very hard to resist. However, in the current issue of *ephemera: theory & politics in organization* this will, as one may have sensed by now, be avoided. There will be no packing, setting or thematizing. There will only be the event of juxtapositioning and listing, which, really, according to Foucault, is the event of colliding: "[the] event – a wound, a victory-defeat, death – is always an effect produced entirely by bodies colliding, mingling, or separating" (1977: 173).

The reason for not creating a set out of the articles in this issue lies not in the difficulty of thematizing the actual articles in this issue of *ephemera*. On the contrary. Their manifold and rich composition, and their head on dealing with their focus makes them, again, susceptible to succumb to a number of unifying themes which we shall resist the temptation to spell out here because, as editors, having already tried to academize and streamline the papers in the long and painful processes of reviewing and editing, we do not accept the adequacy of letting yet another layer of meaning suck through the texts. Just one author is often one too many, and these texts are already burdened with five, seven or ten authors. On top of this number come their readers.

The fact that this number of *ephemera* is an event and not a package, does not stem from any certainty that events as such do not become packaged and thematized. Again, on the contrary, this is exactly what events most generally do, and the components of these packages and sets have often been coordinated and meticulously calibrated as to fit to the overall design of the performance of the event. Organizations prove, as always, to be particularly unashamed expressions of this condition of packaging, and one needs only to turn to the theme park in order to be fully confronted with an especially mean but in no way exceptional case: in the theme park, all events are carefully managed under, as the idea goes, the values of the relevant consumer segment. A family theme park would then *not* include in its package, say, ecological crisis, racism, sodomy, domestic violence, incest, or divorce. Neither would it include sublime happiness,

excessive sexual pleasures, or orgone joy. Not because at least some of these components are not present in virtually all families in the world, but exactly because they are: a theme(-park) generalizes and universalizes all events and detracts from them the singularities they might express. Repeated long enough, we end up with what is known as 'history'. Not incidentally, most theme parks are 'historical', and, consequently, most families being driven through them hysterical, since the excess of the event always escapes from our attemps to capture it ('Say "Hello" to Mickey!'), and returns as 'irritation' and 'whinging', recognizable as simply floating desire ('Fuck all plastic and purple colours in the world, I want to get out!'). The event expresses that 'something' which always escapes history (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994: 171). History is what happens, but the event is *what we make of* what happens. History, then, is not thematized, but flares up, suddenly and inconveniently, in a moment of danger (Benjamin, 1999: 247).

But how do we escape this packaging, this 'pigeon-holing' and branding? How can we 'park the theme'? Perhaps the contribution of this issue of *ephemera* is exactly that then, a collection of pieces that look for the exit signs, a way out from what might be seen by many as an inescapable themeparking (*v.)* of modernity.

This process begins with a short experimental movie, through which Alf Rehn plays with the concept of mundaneity and meaningless, emptiness and void as he wanders through and gets stuck in a deserted office environment. With no commentary other than the juxtaposition of texts and images, Rehn forces us to listen to our internal dialogue as we desperately try to make sense of what we see on the screen: ascribing meaning where perhaps there is none. Filling in the gaps in the film from our own experiences we construct its script – as if all that matters is the linguistic interpretation of events. Perhaps it would be better if we just shut up.

Even more so since we are, according to William Burroughs, ventriloquist's dummies, not speaking, but being spoken. Burroughs is the engine in Christopher Land's paper on apomorphine silence, a silent call for shouting up and getting our act together: we need to get off this cop ridden planet. Reading Burroughs, Land's fascination of the so-called 'linguistic turn' in philosophy which, on its own footing, has run through the social sciences and thereby created a veritable themepark for postmodern organization theorists, is modest. Language is a virus, it spreads like a disease and one will never know its master, only, it is not, as Nietzsche (in vain) tried to teach us, the *I*. Much as Rehn's movie, Land's paper also addresses the idea of *another voice* than language, a virulent inner voice, a sub-consciousness with capabilities of resistance. This surplus of meaning, this 'something' which always escapes history is a part of the event of any text, and Burroughs' method is as paradoxical as it is straightforward: cut up the text, assemble it anew. Only when sampling reached popular music should this method become common practice: as for now, Land's 'own' experiments with the cut-up method is for you to experience. And get out of.

The unfortunate dominance of English native speakers in organization theory is one way language exploits and dominates us (see Sørensen, 2005), and it is for sure not broken by publishing this volume of *ephemera*. Perhaps it is, at least, provided with what the editors consider a welcome contrast by Eric Faÿ's recognisably 'French' contribution,

subtitled 'a theory of open deliberation in organizations'. As common sense rationality, and, by implication, language alienates us from our bodily experiences, Faÿ introduces Ricœur, Merleau-Ponty, and Michel Henry in order to construct a theory that embodies rationality with an 'innate authority' and an empowering way out. In an almost Burroughsque vein, Faÿ quotes Merleau-Ponty for the following report: "I feel destined to move in a flow of endless life (...) along with which there comes to me the feeling of my own contingency." This contingency can, however, become the vantage point for letting life manifest itself. Not, however, through language as such, but through returning to the moment of silence under the chatter of words in which rationality is suspended and the phenomenological *épochè* is revealed as the condition for a new equivocation, a new exercise of the imagination. Fearlessly, Faÿ invites the reader into his ethnographic expermentarium, to see what such a new deliberation might sound like in an organizational setting, potentially offering us ways to live that escapes common language.

In contrast, Mark Tadajewski does not see the necessity of a real organization in order to go poaching. Tadajewski ventures directly into the abode of the paradoxical incarceration of somewhat malfunctioned intellectual adaptations known as a conference. Of all conferences one on 'philosophy in management', and of all places held at Oxford. Meandering, Tadajewski revisits possible roles philosophy (or 'philosophy') could take up 'in management'. Critical falsification could be one, and extended discussions on Karl Popper and Galileo points in this direction, the atmosphere only slightly disturbed by the Gibson Burellsque assertion, that, as far as philosophy in management goes, the debate is characterized by conversation and gossip, rather than by dialogue. The pressure for tenure, for feeding the evaluation machines and for handling one's personal vanity makes organization theorists highly pathdependent in the urge to fill the gaps. This notwithstanding, Tadajewski considers the possibility that 'thinking carnivalesque' may equally offer us a way out of ordering, this time the order of academic circles, Ox-fordism and the Oedipus of the reference system (c.f. whoever, whenever, at any page).

Further pursuing the jolly good theme of UK-bashing, *ephemera* introduces the 'Copenhagen School' of Niklas Luhmann reception: Ole Thyssen's paper on the invisibility of the organization is different from most poststructuralist organization theory. Not just – here we go again – because Thyssen is a non-UK/US scholar, but *also* because he does not write about French philosophy: the English dominance in organization theory might be a lamentable fact, but not when it comes to the primary sources. They are all French. However, Thyssen makes a call for adapting Luhmann's paradoxical – and Germanic – system theory to organizations (a task Luhmann himself did not quite manage within his otherwise extremely productive lifespan), from the premise (and this premise is a part of the paradox) that organizations are invisible, since they consists solely of communication. So, Rehn's movie might not, after all, show a real organization, nor its artefacts, since the organization itself, i.e. its communication, is absent from the pictures. This methodological problem receives an elegant solution in Thyssen's adaptation of Luhmann: the way not *out of* the organization, but *into* it is by observing how the communication makes use of the name as a token of its workings and, furthermore, how rhetoric can become the prime technology of management in order to 'run' this invisible organization, i.e. create the premises for the continued

autopoiesis of the communicating system. Rhetoric can also, however, serve as an analytical tool for the organization theorist who is now looking for an organization, and Proust's master novel *Remembrance of Things Past* serves as Thyssen's empirical material. This is only surprising if one overlooks that this counterintuitive approach meet up, somewhere behind our backs, with the recent tradition of analyzing organizations as scripts and texts, stories and narrative. This then becomes an issue of power and politics: which stories prevail? Which go under? The manager, says Thyssen, is responsible for the text and stories of the organization, and in the rhetorical practice of the manager the organization becomes, to a certain degree, visible, if only as 'a many headed monster'....

For readers who are still in need for ways out, the note by Gazi Islam and Michael J. Zyphur could provide this. Taking as point of departure the plethora of television screens in a present day organization – a Business School – they call into question whether 'getting out' is the most effective way to 'escape' surveillance. Writing through the work of Edgar Allen Poe, Islam and Zyphur sketch two employees' responses to the 'blind eye' of these screens noting how streams of continual information emanating from them serve to structure viewers' perceptions of the external world – in doing so, oppressing other possible interpretations. This is a tale of resistance, of subject and object and the blurring of the two. Islam and Zyphur's note questions whether acts of resistance merely affirm the divide and further subjugate the actor to her/ his oppressor or by contrast, whether passivity is the only meaningful response: in inertia there is at least the possibility of rejecting the very existence of the Other after all. In a delightful antagonistic style, Islam and Zyphur do not try to resolve this dilemma only to set up the problem. This effectively leaves the reader to choose which argument they prefer before being reminded in the conclusion that choices, opinions, beliefs, world-views or whatever label we use only exist because they turn around other 'poles of critical being' that simultaneously negate and reinforce them. Neat packages in glossy wrapped cartons cannot exist without the possibility of being torn open and exposed too.

Finally, we have three book reviews included in this issue, all addressing consumption and consumer culture in some way. Firstly, Phillip Hancock provides a frank assessment of Alan Bryman's (2004) text *The Disneyization of Society,* written as an accessible undergraduate introduction to the pervading ideas and currents that Bryman has attributed to the influence of the Disney Corporation on everyday life. In his review, Hancock discusses the extent to which 'accessibility' and 'simplicity' unfortunately go hand in hand as a trade off with (at least some degree of) intellectual depth throughout the text.

The focus of our second review – by Yiannis Gabriel – is also a book aimed at the undergraduate market, this time Paul Ransome's (2005) *Work, Consumption and Culture: affluence and social change in the twenty-first century.* In it, Gabriel finds a welcome recognition of the intertwining nature of work and consumption but also a failure to extricate the complexities of consumption and to over-emphasise the hegemonic properties of certain discourses of consumer culture. Once again, we see a triumph of access over critical evaluation.

The final review in this issue is from Gavin Jack, who discusses Liz McFall's (2004) *Advertising: A cultural economy* and finds there a brazen willingness to tackle the complexity of consumption full on. Fall's text critiques the historical, social and technological myopia of several contemporary commentators on advertising and Jack concludes his review stating that "this book should be on the book-shelves and reading list of all students and scholars of advertising" begging the question whether academics should be writing 'accessible', 'beginners', easy-read' style texts at all.

The final unwrapping is always left to the reader, but be reminded that what wrapping in general conceals is not 'the real thing'. Wrapping conceals the fact that the real thing is folded, that what is wrapped is always already wrapped in itself. A thematic wrapping, like a family theme park, conceals the forces at play in a family, forces of creation, of standstill and of death, conceals the folds of the family, its history, alright, *but also its utopia*. To possess, says Deleuze, is to fold, in other words, to convey what one contains "with a certain power" (1993: 110). The way out is to follow the folds of the world, sticking around, protruding all the small ruptures that ply our soul. It is a discovery, says Deleuze further: "We are discovering new ways of folding, akin to new developments...folding, unfolding, refolding" (1993: 137).

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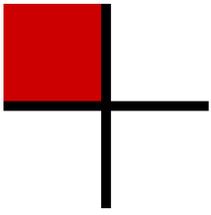
Organization, Hollow

Alf Rehn

This is a short movie, occupying a space somewhere between the experiment and the documentary. It is born out of a long-term research project I'm conducting regarding alternative forms of academic publication and expression, a project that has resulted in the publishing house Dvalin (http://www.dvalin.org) and various other mutations, and thus clearly an idea looking for a home. My interest here has been to adopt new technologies and see how these can be deployed to play around with our notions of academic propriety, but also to mess around in the borderlands of both thinking and seeing.

Particularly this interest is due to a certain frustration I have regarding what I feel is a dangerous aversion towards technology among many organizational researchers. Most scholars still seem stymied by technologies beyond copiers and email, and the field feels poorer due to this. For all our access to computers and digital technology, we still feel most content when we keep to the hard-to-fuck-up word processing program. So I have started to playing around with digital video, finally, and have started to think about the possibilities of documentary film in the field of organization studies. With our stated love of the ethnography, it is odd to note that most academics still seem to find even photography threateningly 'arty' and 'odd' (cf. Sam Warren's article on photography in *ephemera,* 2(3): 224-245). So perhaps this is a methodological comment.

But this piece is also born out of a feeling I have, a sense that we pay far too much interest to the hustle-bustle of modern life, to the extreme activity of contemporary capitalism. I've long been interested in the less obvious stasis of modern life, the continuous mundaneity of it all. Whereas most social science seems occupied with documenting the extremes – or even creating it through sensationalism or ideology – the everyday, that which exists in the spaces we do not immediately recognize as interesting, has often not been studied at all. Studies of violent oppression and extraordinary strategies abound, but the mundane, which after all is the most common form of life (or non-life) is seen as uninteresting. Why is this? So I walked through an abandoned office, with my digital videocam, thinking about the traces and the absences of organizational behavior. I realized I was inspired by Marc Augé's *Non-places. Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity* (New York: Verso Books, 1995), in that I wanted to look to the ways in which we try to imbue places with meaning that may not be there. The lounge in Stockholm looks like the lounge in New York, which

looks like the one in Sydney. But so do the offices of the academics, jetting from conference to conference.

Somewhere behind the mad activity of the contemporary world, behind our cramped attempts to write meaning into everything we see around us, there is a stillness, a hiss, a mundaneity that we fail to acknowledge and engage with. I do not know how this should be inquired into, if we can even reach it, but I do think we should attempt to. So I wanted to see if the image of an empty corridor would jolt something in me. I'm still pondering this. It should be noted that the film plays around with this, and that it is intentionally constructed in a way that at times may feel boring or uncomfortable. Just as an organization, the film at times jolts from the mind-numbingly slow to the hectic pace of the supermodern.

Note that this is not art, nor do I make any claims to be an artist. That would be foolish. This is a documentation, a case study, a question. It tries to provoke some form of reaction, but it is not a provocation. It may be urging organizational scholars to explore the medium of digital film and the documentary, and can thus be viewed as a methodological note, but I want to leave a space for the viewer to make her own sense of it. Length – 12 min, 46 sec. Encoded in MPEG4 and saved as a Quicktime-movie, use Quicktime to view.

http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/5-3/5-3rehn.mov

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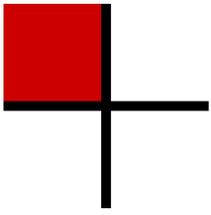
Apomorphine Silence: Cutting-up Burroughs' Theory of Language and Control

Christopher Land

> In the beginning was the word and the word *was* God. And what does that make us?
> Ventriloquist's dummies. Time to leave the Word-God behind. "He atrophied and fell off me like
> horrible old gills" a survivor reported. "And I feel ever so much better." (Burroughs, 1986: 105)

Often rejected by his contemporary critics on the basis of the author's homosexuality and drug use, Burroughs' writing has remained fairly marginal despite his reconstruction in the 1990s as a cultural icon appearing in everything from Nike adverts to Gus Van Sant's film, *Drug Store Cowboy*. The reading public has also neglected much of Burroughs' writing preferring the mythology and iconography surrounding the man to his actual work which is seen as overly opaque, complicated and difficult to read (Caveney, 1998). Critics have long had trouble reconciling Burroughs' novels with the conventions of literary criticism, at least partly because many of those conventions were developed as a response to the form of the novel, which Burroughs actively sought to disrupt. Nevertheless, Burroughs' oeuvre has remained a source of inspiration for many other writers, artists and musicians as well as political radicals, anarchists and cyberpunks. It has also slowly but steadily produced a body of significant critical commentary so that today Burroughs must be taken seriously both as an author and an artist. Paradoxically one of the main reasons we should take Burroughs seriously is precisely the difficulty of his writing. It is the argument of this paper that, at least in his more radical literary experiments, Burroughs pushes language beyond the limits of representation and opens his texts to a radical reconfiguration of human subjectivity. Whilst such experiments may not make easy bedtime reading, they do raise important issues for the critical study of organization.

During the 1960s William S. Burroughs developed his thesis that the word – language – is quite literally a virus. Much of Burroughs' writing was a working through of the implications of this theory for understanding human subjectivity and intervening in its (re)production. For Burroughs, what we have come to understand as *the* human is in fact a symbiotic relationship of body and word-virus. In this sense 'human' is not an identity so much as a difference: a heterogeneous relationship rather than a thing in itself. As a radical, Burroughs was particularly attentive to changes in the elements of this 'human' relationship and their connections. Evolution, mutation and change are dominant themes throughout his work so that, despite appearances, the relationship between the 'word

virus' and human is not benign and is currently undergoing a radical change through the externalisation and materialisation of voice by information and communication technologies (ICT) as diverse as the tape-recorder and the computer (Burroughs, 1989:12).

This paper reviews Burroughs' theory of language, augmenting it with elements of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) post-structural linguistics, to show how narrative forms of communication are themselves implicated in a specific mode of human subjectification. Within this mode of production docile, neurotic, human subjects are produced that serve well the interests of capital and social control but constrain and limit the potentialities of more inhuman becomings. In this sense, Burroughs work is relevant to critical studies of organization as it has implications for theories of the subject in the wake of Foucault. Whilst his critique of the subject and language is itself a contribution to studies of organization, Burroughs' writing always sought a positive engagement that would facilitate and bring about radical change both in the constitution of the social and in the constitution of its subjects. The second part of this paper follows one of Burroughs' attempts in this direction by examining his method of the 'cut-up' as a technique for breaking free of pre-formed lines of narrative subjectivization in order to allow a proliferation of inhuman mutations that escape this linear coding. In cutting-up language Burroughs sought a relationship between author and text that paid attention to the materialities of inscription and thereby raised the whole question of embodiment. The paper considers the relationship between language, technology and embodiment as productive of new modes of becoming that are not authorised by the narrative traditions of humanism and subjectivity. Effectively, Burroughs sought to silence 'the word' though linguistic experimentation and thereby enable a new (r)evolutionary development beyond the human condition.

The paper concludes with a brief summary of Burroughs' ideas and their relevance for critical conceptions of subjectivity and the narrative turn in organization studies. Burroughs' cut-up is a politically radical form of writing that highlights the power-relations inherent in language and the conservatism of conventional modes of both literary writing and the narrative form so often favoured by organizational researchers (Czarniawska, 1998; 1999). Rather than turning in ever more tightly bound reflexive circles, learning managerial lessons from the bourgeois 'realist' novel, or proliferating subjectifying narrative after narrative – all strategies that reinforce linear-linguistic processes of subjectification – the cut-up slices through these lines of control to open out spaces for thinking otherwise. As such, Burroughs' theory of language and the cut-up offers an incisive critical intervention in the body of contemporary organizational discourses on critique, language and subjectivity.

At the end of his experimental phase, Burroughs was less than sanguine about the prospect of overcoming language through the use of words (Burroughs, 1989) and toward the end of his career gave up writing fiction in favour of other modes of artistic engagement, most notably painting. In this sense the cut-up offers no clear answers and may well be a methodological and critical dead-end. Within a discipline dominated by the word and an epistemology of representation that is resolutely textual, however, the time seems ripe for organization studies itself to be cut-up. As such the third part of this paper presents a cut-up of several texts as an attempt to disrupt the conventional

narrative flow of argument and subjectivization as performed within this discipline. Whilst the results of this experiment are certainly questionable, the foregoing argument will hopefully have made the reason for it clear. If a sensible response to this section seems impossible, then it is perhaps worth bearing in mind the title of this paper: apomorphine *silence*. In a world that is heavy with radioactive word-dust and the viral production of linear-linguistic sense, the cut-up offers not so much a new form of sense, as a moment of silence within which the compulsion to *make* sense enables the possible emergence of new forms of sense and modes of subjectivization.

Narratives of the Linguistic Organization

It has been fairly well established now that narrative and storytelling are among the dominant modes of representation within the social sciences and organization studies (Czarniawska, 1998; 1999; Fineman and Gabriel, 1996; Gabriel, 2000). As well as literature and literary theory becoming an increasingly popular resource for theorizing organization (ten Bos and Rhodes, 2003; Easton and Araujo, 1997; DeCock, 2000; Smith et al, 2001; Czarniawska-Joerges and Guillet de Monthoux, 1994; Knights and Willmott, 1999), recent work in the sociology and epistemology of science has suggested that even positivist modes of representation are dependent upon an underlying logic of narrative (Czarniawska, 1998; Gherardi, 1995). With this recognition that knowledge is fundamentally narrative has come a celebration of qualitative research methods that seek out and produce narratives (Czarniawska, 1998; Gabriel, 2000). More generally the question of language has become central to critical understandings of organization since at least the post-modern turn in the mid 1980s (Cooper and Burrell, 1988). The issue of how words, language, or more broadly discourse, produce certain modes of organization and organize our knowledge of organization has been well established in recent years (e.g. Westwood and Linstead, 2001; Linstead, 2003; Grint and Woolgar, 1997; Czarniawska, 1999).

The work of Michel Foucault has also brought the attention of organizational scholars to the role of language in the constitution of subjects through discursive organizational technologies like the confessional or psychoanalytic session (Foucault, 1978), the CV (Metcalfe, 1992) and the career (Grey, 1994). Whilst these studies map out the networks of power that incorporate the linguistic and the organizational, few of these writers consider how linguistic, and specifically narrative, modes of subjectivization can be escaped. Following Giddens' seminal work on identity most critical organizational scholars have accepted the need for a coherent narrative of self-identity in order to keep ontological insecurity and existential anxiety at bay (Giddens, 1991; Knights and Willmott, 1989; 1985; Cameron, 2000). Even where this identity is recognized as essentially precarious because of its necessary dependence upon the recognition of another for its validation and maintenance (e.g. Collinson, 1992), the goal of a unified identity is rarely explicitly problematised but rather tends to be posited as a foundation of the human condition.

By turning to the work of William S. Burroughs the question of narrative identity and language can be asked again however. Where the likes of Giddens are concerned with

defending a narrative self against erosion and dissolution (cf. Sennett, 1997) Burroughs seeks the annihilation of this humanist self so as to escape what he sees as the regime of control of language itself. As well as radically critiquing self-identity and language Burroughs also suggests a line of escape through his method of the cut-up. Of course, the notion of escape is not new to organization studies, and has been on the sociological agenda at least since the publication of Cohen and Taylor's *Escape Attempts* in 1976. Where critical organizational sociologists have taken up these ideas, they have tended to focus on escapes from the drudgery of work into meaningful identities outside the workplace, but nevertheless within the confines of socially validated identities, as for example in David Collinson's studies of masculine identities such as 'breadwinner' or prankster (Collinson, 1992; 1988). Where Burroughs breaks with these traditions is that he neither assumes nor empirically investigates the construction and social validation of identities that seek to become stable, however precarious they are in reality. He uses the medium of fiction to destabilize and disrupt the linguistic reproduction of such identities and categories altogether. As such, we could say that Burroughs' work is apocalyptic (Dellamora, 1995). It heralds the end of human identity as such. But this is an optimistic apocalypse as it opens up onto the positive potential of difference. As an escape attempt, Burroughs' strategy of difference perhaps offers more hope than those identity based strategies that have dominated critical studies of organization. Before considering his method in detail however we need to outline Burroughs' theory of language, control and subjectivity in more detail.

The Word is a Virus

> My general theory since 1971 has been that the Word is literally a virus, and that it has not been recognized as such because it has achieved a state of relatively stable symbiosis with its human host; that is to say, the Word Virus (the Other Half) has established itself so firmly as an accepted part of the human organism that it can now sneer at gangster viruses like smallpox and turn them in to the Pasteur Institute. But the Word clearly bears the single identifying feature of virus: it is an organism with no internal function other than to replicate itself. (Burroughs, 1986: 47)

For Burroughs language is literally a virus: the 'word virus' (Burroughs, 1986; Burroughs, 1989; Munro, 2001). Throughout the 1960s, in his fictional writing and in interviews and essays, Burroughs developed this idea both as a theory of language and as a theory of subjectivity. Burroughs' basic argument is that language is a physical, viral infection which has developed a parasitic or symbiotic relationship with the human body. In fact this infection is fundamental to what we now understand as 'human being'. The complex relationship between words, images of words, and subjectivity operates on a number of registers. At one level, Burroughs focuses on our everyday subvocalizations, the internal monologue that provides a narrative sense of personal, subjective continuity which we think of as 'our self'. These subvocalizations simultaneously come from outside, hence the notion that they are a viral infection, and constitute an inside: the subject 'I'. They are external in at least two senses. On one hand they are often constituted by fragments and snippets picked up from conversations, the daily press, books, radio and television. Alternatively they might be generated in response to an external authority, as when a child is called before the headmaster, or when travelling when one's passport or papers are out of order. In such situations one

incessantly runs excuses and explanations round and round, rehearsing the potential encounter with 'control' (Burroughs, 1989: 108). On the other hand, for Burroughs the whole idea of language is something external. In this respect subvocalization is not 'natural', but the product of a language, with all of its grammatical structures and subjects, that comes from outside the body. In Burroughs' literary writing, this idea of language as a viral infection is taken up in his widespread use of images of viral and parasitic infections, as well as crabs, centipedes and other insects or reptiles, often portrayed as necrotic flesh-eaters.

These subvocalizations are also productive of an interior. In this Burroughs roughly follows the Buddhist tradition, suggesting that this internal monologue creates the linear, narrative sense of self-identity and continuity that we usually refer to as 'I' (Hayles, 1999: 211). In many cases in Burroughs' writing however these images are combined with critiques of drug-addiction and capitalist commodity fetishism, as in the 'Black Meat' section in *Naked Lunch*, suggesting that the formation of this linguistic subject is a thoroughly politicised process that proceeds always through the functioning of power. As such, he has little time for practices such as meditation that seek to silence the word-virus and return to a pre-linguistic state. Rather he actively embraces new linguistic technologies and methods in order to explode the word/control system.

As a theory of language the word-virus functions to indicate the absolute Otherness of language. Language is something that comes from outside the human whilst simultaneously being taken as a key line of demarcation that separates human beings from other animals and from machine, as evinced for example by the Turing test (Plant, 1997; cf. Searle, 1984; Fellows, 1995). In this sense language is an Other that produces human being. More importantly, it is language that produces self-identity and the concept of the coherent self or 'I', itself a linguistic construct. Without this identity, and without language, 'one' quite simply isn't – the 'I' does not exist – a point that is reinforced by our characterisation of pre-linguistic children as 'infants,' a word deriving from the Latin *infans*: 'not speaking' (Easthope, 1999: 34). In this sense Burroughs is close to Nietzsche whose critique of Descartes was that he mistook a 'grammatical prejudice', the need to posit a subject of the statement for an ontological verity (Nietzsche, 1989: 24; 1994). For Nietzsche the 'I' of the subject was itself produced by language and the structures of grammar. For Burroughs this notion is developed in a more vividly material sense as 'the word' is seen to inhabit the human subject as a physical infestation or infection.

By focusing upon 'the word' Burroughs draws our attention inevitably back to the role of the word in Biblical creation myths:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God – and the word was flesh… human flesh… in the beginning of *writing*. (Burroughs, 1989: 11)

By connecting to the myth of genesis, Burroughs makes another link with Nietzsche, whose oft cited pronouncement that 'God is dead' heralds the death of man (Nietzsche, 1969: 41). Made in God's image, Man takes his place at the top of the chain of creation once God has been killed. From such a perspective the advent of humanism is little more than the reproduction of an Oedipal patricide. It is precisely for this reason that Deleuze and Guattari referenced Nietzsche's *Anti-Christ* in the title of their *Anti-*

Oedipus (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). To go after Christ, or even God, is not enough. Next in line is Man.

As well as opening onto, and extending, a critique of the religion of humanism, Burroughs' quote here also raises the specificities of human language: that is it written. It is not solely verbal communication that produces a human sense of self. Most animals have some form of language, cries and shouts that enable them to communicate. For Burroughs, following Korzybski, what is unique about human language is that it is written. In a move that parallels Derrida's notion of the supplement, Burroughs recognises that the advent of writing changes the nature of the spoken word upon which it is purportedly based. Effectively the durability of the written word enables people to 'bind-time'. With a clear concept of linear, spatialised time laid out by narratives and writing, humans are able to organize in ways that other animals cannot:

> Korzybski has pointed out this human distinction and described man as 'the time-binding animal'. He can make information available over any length of time to other men through writing. Animals talk. They don't write. Now a wise old rat may know a lot about traps and poison but he cannot write an article on *Death Traps in Your Warehouse* for the *Reader's Digest* translated into 17 rat languages with tactics for ganging up on dogs and ferrets and taking care of wise guys who stuff steel wool up our holes. If he could rats might well take over the earth with all its food stocks human and otherwise. (Burroughs, 1979: 66)

Time is important for two reasons here. It enables complex forms of social organization, pointing to the centrality of material inscriptions to the production of social organization (Ackritch, 1992; Latour, 1992). More relevant for our discussion here, however, is the notion that time is crucial to human identity. It is relatively well established that linear time dominates modern conceptions of temporality (Burrell, 1992). 'Time's arrow' and similar metaphors, as well as the standardisation of time through material inscriptions like the train timetable, have certainly been important in the development of a specifically modern time (Thompson, 1967), but Burroughs' suggests that language itself carries a form of temporality with it. Grounded in writing, language develops linearly (cf. Burrell, 1997) but for Burroughs' this linearity carries with it a specific mode of subjectivization.

The surest sign of infection with the word-virus is the compulsive drive to sub-vocalize. The simple fact that it is all but impossible to shut off the 'voice inside' suggests that there is an alien force at work in language. Of course, it is fairly obvious that language is dependent upon its recognition by others, but Burroughs is suggesting that the word-virus operates as an external 'other' that colonizes the body, forcing it to sub-vocalize and thereby reproducing itself. It is this internal monologue, all but impossible to shut off and expressly non-human, which produces an all-too-human sense of identity and self-continuity; generating a linear, narrative time along which experience is distributed and through which identity is assured. Just as a child has its sense of identity enforced through the imposition of oedipal identification with the triangular 'mommy-daddy-me' (itself enforced by the word (and name) of the father) so the 'I' and our internal monologue provide an anchor for the production of identity: "So it's *me!*" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 20).

In many respects, Burroughs' account of language resonates with that of Deleuze and Guattari (1987) who distinguish language proper from the communication systems of

bees. Bees are able to communicate quite complex information about the location of good sources of pollen through complicated dance patterns but only on the condition that they have seen the pollen source directly. Human language however is fundamentally indirect. Like a virus, it is communicated by exposure to one already infected, rather than to a direct source of information. As they put it:

> Language is not content to go from a first party to a second party, from one who has seen to one who has not, but necessarily goes from a second party to a third party, neither of whom has seen. It is in this sense that language is the transmission of the word as an order-word, not the communication of a sign as information. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 77).

This means that even the 'I' that sees, never sees outside of language with all of its association blocks, including the position ascribed to it as an 'I' through linguistic ordering:

> *I* is an order-word. A schizophrenic said: "I heard voices say: *he is conscious of life*." In this sense, there is indeed a schizophrenic cogito, but it is a cogito that makes self-consciousness the incorporeal transformation of an order-word, or a result of indirect discourse. My direct discourse is still the free indirect discourse running though me, coming from other worlds or other planets. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 84)

Rather than the direct perception of existence and thought – 'I think therefore I am' – even the cogito is a product of indirect discourse, of hearsay: 'I heard voices say: *he is conscious of life*.' Like Nietzsche and Burroughs, Deleuze and Guattari's theory of language overturns Descartes' theory of the subject. Instead of a clearly grounded, albeit rather sceptical, ego they suggest a radically decentred subject produced through the operations of an alien language. From this perspective, the schizophrenic cogito is actually a much better model than the neurotic cogito of Descartes. Importantly, this decentring also disrupts the production of identity, a point that Deleuze and Guattari were quite explicit about in an earlier collaboration. There can be no such thing as an id-entity as the id is always plural and heterogeneous: "What a mistake to have ever said *the* id" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 1). Ego or id, there can be no completeness and self-identity, only an opening onto difference.

Word/Control

In short then, the word is a virus which, over the years, has entered into a symbiotic relationship with the human to produce him/her as a relatively domesticated animal. Language cannot be separated from control. Just as Deleuze and Guattari discuss the centrality of the order-word in the constitution of language, Burroughs places the question of control at the centre of his theory of language. Language, through the interior monologue of authority, produces subjects and self-consciousness. 'I' becomes an identity that Burroughs critiques through the Korzybskian notion of the 'is' of identity. When one can say that one *is* something, a process of reification has taken place that conceals certain relationships of power. Burroughs clarifies by relating the way that 'servant' is represented in Egyptian hieroglyphics:

> The is of identity is rarely used in Egyptian pictorial writing. Instead of saying he is my servant they say he (is omitted) *as* my servant: a statement of relationship not identity. (Burroughs, 1979: 65)

Through the 'is' of identity the word-virus produces essential, fixed, individual, measurable and controllable id-entities. In one sense, Burroughs is suggesting that this reification serves to conceal an underlying relationality, but there is nothing strictly 'false' about this process. The linguistic operation has a very real effect: it really produces those identities.

Of course, this last example makes the operations of power and control fairly obvious by referring to a clear relationship of authority but Burroughs' critique of language is broader than this. It is his argument that the identity produced by the word virus is itself a kind of prison, as Deleuze and Guattari would put it:

> Human monsters are embryos that were retarded at a certain degree of development, the human in them is only a straitjacket for inhuman forms and substances. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 46)

Burroughs also employs this notion of retarded development at a number of points in his work. References to evolution and mutation are widespread, particularly during the mid-period constituted by his *Nova* trilogy and some of his better-known non-fiction, like *The Job* (Burroughs, 1989). In *The Ticket That Exploded*, visions of mutation feature prominently as positive potentials for evolutionary change (Hayles, 1999). At other times Burroughs is more ambivalent as when in his parody 'Roosevelt after inauguration' he has the president proclaim, "'I'll make the cocksuckers glad to mutate,' he would say, looking off into space as if seeking new frontiers of depravity" (Burroughs and Ginsberg, 1975: 39).

The Naked Astronaut

> I don't think of silence as being a device of terror at all. In fact, quite the contrary. Silence is only frightening to people who are compulsively verbalizing. (Burroughs, 1989: 37)

Compulsive verbalization or subvocalizaiton suggests a certain neuroticism, the fate of the perfectly Oedipalized subject (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). Caught in the triangle of familial relations – daddy, mommy, me – the subject compulsively reworks these relations, not least on the analyst's couch but also more generally. The operation is one that Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a conjunctive synthesis (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983: 20). Flows, breaks and connections are compulsively fixed and singularised onto the relative security, and docility, of a fixed and centred, Oedipal self. Without the compulsive verbalizing of the neurotic subject constantly 'finding themselves' in their linguistic stream of consciousness there would be no identity, no stable subjects stretched out along a spatialised time-line. In Burroughs' work we can see the explicit relation of the production of anxiety and time through the drive to verbalize. More fundamentally, the trap of linear, narrative time produced by language has arrested the development of difference by constantly fixing it back upon identity. Human identity is the straitjacket that reterritorializes inhuman forces, potentials and differences back onto Oedipally legitimated identities.

In a move that appears to invert the Bergsonian notion that we should reject space in favour of time, Burroughs wants to escape from time. But the inversion is only apparent. Bergson's object of critique is spatialised time, geometrically laid out as a line composed of discrete points (Bergson, 1910). In a sense, Burroughs extends this rejection, by expanding upon the ways in which this conception of linear time is produced through the operations of language and expanding upon the subjective effects of linear time. Where Bergson sought a non-spatial conception of time as duration, however, Burroughs rejects the idea of time entirely and turns his attention to a rethinking of space, not in terms of geometry, but as outer-space: the final frontier. If it is the word-image lines that lock us into identity and tie us to the ground, then cutting these lines can let us escape the bounds of the Earth and move into space.

It is this drive to escape a logic of identity, control and limitation that led to Burroughs' oft-quoted catch phrase "This is the space age and we are all here to go" (e.g. Burroughs, 1990). But Burroughs' conceptions of space travel are about as far from NASA as you can get and he railed against current attempts at space travel for trying to take the Earth into space. Indeed, at times when he is discussing space travel, Burroughs seems to be talking about a more abstract conception of space that is only explored metaphorically as outer-space in those of his novels that owe the most to the genre of science-fiction. As Burroughs put it himself he was primarily "a cosmonaut of inner space" (Douglas, 1998: xxviii). Setting himself quite obviously against the American space programme Burroughs makes several indications that his concept of space is wider than the literal 'outer space' of interstellar exploration and included all attempts to free oneself from past conditioning (Burroughs and Odier, 1989: 21). At the same time however, Burroughs plays with science fictional tropes in his writing from this period, leading some critics to accuse him of a crass post-humanism that itself perpetuates a Cartesian mind-body dualism in its drive to escape the 'meat' of corporeality (Dery, 1996). If we ignore this apparent similarity of imagery however it is clear that Burroughs' concerns are far from those of the post-humanists. Indeed, in his conception of inner-space he is closer to Buddhism. Unlike the Buddhists however, Burroughs is less patient and more technologically oriented, seeking a quick, technical fix to the problems of identity and language (Burroughs, 1986: 47). Nevertheless, his goal is the same: silence. As he puts it, distancing himself again from the religious patriotism of NASA:

> To travel in space you must leave the old verbal garbage behind: God talk, country talk, mother talk, love talk, party talk. You must learn to exist with no religion no country no allies. You must learn to live alone in silence. Anyone who prays in space is not there. (Burroughs, 1989: 21)

In short then, Burroughs' conceptions of language and subjectivity posit identity as a linear-time bound constraint placed on the inhuman becomings that constitute life and creativity. The human form is a product of viral infection and is perpetuated by the neurotic subvocalizations that are symptoms of this infection and which produce identity. In addition to his analysis of this system of control and subjectivization however, Burroughs also sought to escape it through the development of new artistic engagements with words and images.

Cutting-up Control

> The word of course is one of the most powerful instruments of control as exercised by the newspaper and images as well, there are both words and images in newspapers… Now if you start cutting these up and rearranging them you are breaking down the control system. (Burroughs, 1989: 33)

'Free' speech may be an illusion but resistance is far from futile. Whilst living at the 'Beat Hotel' in Paris during the 1960s, Burroughs formed a lifelong friendship, and important collaborative partnership, with the artist Brion Gysin. Suggesting that writing was at least 50 years behind painting, Gysin stumbled across the literary equivalent of a painter's collage or a film-maker's montage when, whilst cutting a mount for a frame, he sliced through the board into the newspapers protecting the table below. As the two halves of the paper moved the words were brought into novel, sometimes strange, amusing, or even prescient conjunctions. What appeared to Gysin as a slightly amusing diversion was taken rather more seriously by Burroughs who immediately saw the potential of this cut-up method for severing the lines of linguistic control he had been analysing. The result was a series of books, the most famous of which are the Nova Trilogy – *The Soft Machine*, *The Ticket That Exploded*, and *Nova Express* – each of which uses the technique of the cut-up, or Burroughs' derivation, the fold-in.

In this technique a page of text is taken, and sliced or folded down the middle and placed with half of another page. The pieces are then moved around until they line up, and the results are typed onto a fresh page which, depending upon the results, may then be combined with further pages to produce yet more cut-ups. In a sense, the idea is to turn the work into a material thing, which can be manipulated like the celluloid film on the cutting-room table, or the paints on an artist's palette. By careful processes of selection and combination, something genuinely novel can be produced, which is not dominated by the narrative logic of language that otherwise dictates the words that come to an author when he writes. The effect is to use language, or rather words, to say something outside, or beyond, language as it is currently constituted.

In many ways, Burroughs is inconsistent in his use of the cut-up. At times he seems to suggest that, as with Cubism, the cut-up is simply a way of more accurately reflecting the essentially cut-up nature of lived experience (Mottram, 1977, Lodge, 1964/1991; McLuhan, 1964/1991). When walking down the street, the internal monologue, and experience itself, is realised as a series of interruptions and random juxtapositions. From this perspective, the cut-up provides a more realistic representation of an essentially cut-up phenomenological world. If we accept this line, then Burroughs clearly remains wedded to a distinctly modernist logic of representation, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest in *A Thousand Plateaus* when they draw parallels between Burroughs and Joyce (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 6). In a sense this interpretation has some truth. As I have been arguing, Burroughs' basic notion is that language produces a 'false' appearance of subjective coherence and narrative continuity. In a way then the cut-up is an attempt to break down this apparent coherence. But it is not an attempt to represent subjective experience more accurately. Rather the theory of the word-virus points to an essential otherness at the very heart of the formation of the subject itself. The cut-up needs to be understood in response to this otherness: not to represent the subjective but to destroy the subject as a subject of linguistic control.

This reading is supported by Burroughs' suggestion that the random element of chance brought into the process of writing by the cut-up can serve to break the lines of narrative conditioning that subjectify and subjugate us, enabling a breaking-away from, and breaking-up of, the order of identity thereby produced (Hassan, 1963; Caveney, 1998). This idea has much in common with Burroughs' interest in scientology's use of repetition as a means of breaking down linguistic association blocks, thereby freeing the individual from unconscious controls (Russell, 2001). This use of the cut-up for purposes of deconditioning the subject by severing linguistic control lines is one that informs the use of the technique in this paper but it is important to note that the precise role and functioning of the cut-up varies within and across Burroughs' writing and was eventually rejected entirely in his later fiction (Murphy, 1997).

On occasion Burroughs seems to suggest that there is nothing random whatsoever about the cut-up. Instead the method simply enables us to access knowledge of which we were unconscious. An example of this latter is when he discusses the magnetic-tape based cut-ups he experimented with in collaboration with Ian Sommerville. In these experiments, the new technology of the tape recorder was used to record a particular message, which would then be rewound and forwarded to an arbitrary point when something else, a snippet of speech, white noise from the radio, music or street sounds, would be layered over the original recording. This layering and cutting-in might be repeated a number of times, over a period of several days, or even weeks, as in the example of the 'Palm Sunday Tape' (Burroughs, 1984). In some of these examples, Burroughs was insistent that the 'author' of these experiments was aware, on some level, of the contents of the tape, and so could be said to be producing the tape in a way that precluded the truly random event. Even in this case, however, we are far from the conscious ego of the Cartesian subject as produced by the word-virus.

At yet other times, Burroughs built on this last notion to suggest that the cut-up was a quite deliberate and intentional operation, with no chance or unconscious content whatsoever, but rather a careful and quite deliberate attentiveness to the materiality of the texts with which he was working:

> I follow the channels opened by the rearrangement of the text. This is the most important function of the cut-up. I may take a page, cut it up, and get a whole new idea for straight narrative, and not use any of the cut-up material at all, or I may use a sentence or two out of the actual cut-up. … It's not unconscious at all, it's a very objective operation… (Burroughs, 1989: 29)

It is worth noting here however, that Burroughs does not oppose 'unconscious' with 'conscious', but rather with 'objective'. This is perhaps where Burroughs' use of the cut-up is closest to the materiality of the painter's relationship to their materials – paints, canvass and brushes – or perhaps the woodworker or sculptor who works with the grain of her materials rather than hylomorphically imposing an external form onto a formless matter (cf. Deleuze and Guattari, 1987; Massumi, 1992; Thanem, 2001). Of course, this could also be an attempt to defend his work against accusations that it simply isn't art, a suggestion that is supported by his claim that the cut-up has its origins in the radical surrealism of Tristan Tzara:

> At the surrealist rally in the 1920s, Tristan Tzara the man from nowhere proposed to create a poem on the spot by pulling words out of a hat. A riot ensued wrecked the theatre. André Breton

> expelled Tristan Tzara from the movement and grounded the cut up on the Freudian couch. (Burroughs, cited in Mottram, 1977: 37)

As well as laying claim to culturally important precursors to his and Gysin's development of the cut-up, and supporting a 'random element' reading of the cut-up though now validated by reference to Dada, this also raises the important point, taken up in the next section, of the technique's essential antagonism to psychoanalysis. This antagonism has similarities to the idea of working with materiality. Rather than stamping a hylomorphic triangle of daddy-mommy-me onto every experience so that the subject can be normalised into a fixed mould from which every deviation is deviance, the cut-up breaks the imposed lines of control and meaning (from a stable signifier that can anchor meaning) to follow the textures of a writer's raw material.

Whatever the final result of Burroughs' cut-up experiments – they are often difficult to listen to/read, repetitive and dull – the underlying ideas are most important here. If the word is a virus, and the human is a ventriloquist's puppet, spoken through more than speaking, then the only way to resist and escape control is to silence the tyrannical logic of narrative and put an end to compulsive subvocalisation. Just as the narratives of the realist novel and criticism are a bourgeois, humanist conception, reflecting innumerable assumptions about subjectivity, identity, morality, reality and the socio-political order, so Burroughs' anti-narratives perform an anti-humanist subversion of those orders (Lydenberg, 1987). In this sense Burroughs' work provides an important counterbalance to those organizational applications of literature that have focussed upon the realist novel (Czarniawska-Jorges and Guillet de Monthoux, 1994) as well as those methodologies that have sought the authentic representation of research subjects through the production of narratives. Burroughs takes his critical practice in a somewhat different direction, problematising rather than celebrating narrative identities and directly intervening in the production of his readers' subjectivities. In this sense his work has direct relevance for critique in organization studies as Burroughs is grappling with the difficulty of writing with an anti-essentialist emancipatory intent. He is not seeking to represent the authentic, non-alienated subject but to recognise that the subject is alien in its very constitution and to release some of these alien – or inhuman – forces from the constraints of narrative subjectivity without simultaneously capturing them in other, perhaps equally repressive, representations.

The Cut-up as Methodology and Radical Praxis

The challenge that Burroughs holds out to all writers, including those of us who are primarily concerned with writing about organization and organizations, is to develop a way of writing that is simultaneously attentive to the materiality of language as the raw material for an aesthetic creation, and which recognises the constitutive role of language in the (re)production of social organization and subjectivity. For Burroughs language is neither a neutral means of representing an objective, external reality, nor a tool for expressing an authentic, subjective interior. Language and writing are material elements within the reproduction of the social. They actively produce social subjects through their connection with, and inscription of, bodies and other material objects. For this reason language is never neutral or innocent. Within language there are always forms

and structures that facilitate and presuppose certain lines of subjectivization: an organization of language and an organization of the subject presupposed and produced by that language. But these organizations of language are themselves reproduced and policed by social and political institutions like grammar and formal education designed to ensure the 'correct' use of language and prevent its mutation.

The use of language – writing – is inherently political. By focusing on the politics and organization of language in this way, Burroughs foregrounds power in a way that develops the insights of critical studies of subjectivity and language at work. Where he goes further than such studies have thus far is in developing a radical practice of writing that seeks to actively break down these lines of linguistic subjectivization. One such practice is the cut-up, a means of materialising 'the word' and subjecting it to various manipulations that cause it to take flight. As this paper has argued, Burroughs' goal here is to escape language, an objective that, in conjunction with his adoption of science-fictional motifs during the same period, has led some commentators to read Burroughs as an adherent of the 'theology of the ejector seat' (Dery, 1996). In many respect this seems true and Burroughs' later admission of failure in his project to overcome language through writing would support this reading.

As the cut-up that concludes this paper perhaps indicates, the cut-up is in many respects a fairly blunt critical tool that in the wrong hands can knock language utterly senseless rather than opening up new modes of sensibility within language. Nevertheless, there is a possibility, gleaned in some of Burroughs more effective cut-ups, as for example in *The Soft Machine*, that the cut-up holds out the possibility for producing of lines of flight within, rather than from, language. In this sense the cut-up would function as a linguistic production immanent within language which disrupts and stalls the smooth operation of language giving space for change and reorganization through forms immanent within the material composition of language. The cut-up here enables an escape within language; the disruption of its smooth and seemingly seamless operation, thereby freeing other forces at work within language. It opens a space for undecidability, a momentary stutter, where interpretation of meaning is unclear and new logics of sense can emerge from the text.

Even if senselessness is the only outcome of a cut-up, however, this senselessness still serves to highlight the fragility and contingency of the forms of sense we so often take for granted and which are themselves shaped by the smooth operation of language. This applies particularly to narrative forms of sense-making which have been recommended by several commentators as a critical tool for destabilising authorial objectivity and the power relations of scientific discourses within the social sciences (Czarniawska, 1998; 1999; Gabriel, 2000). What Burroughs' theory of language adds to these moves is a broader appreciation of the logic and subjectifying moments of the narrative form of representation itself. The cut-up offers a mode of 'writing' which breaks with this logic of representation altogether to perform a material, critical intervention in the linguistic reproduction of subjectivities that actively subverts and renders ineffective narrative forms of argument and sense making. It thereby destabilises the meaning and power of narrative language in a positive negation: a negation as all 'sense' is negated, but positive in its direct intervention in the production of subjectivity through the text, even

if this intervention is nothing more than a momentary unsettling of sense as senselessness takes over and the narrative disintegrates.

The cut-up serves to break up the internal monologue of the subject by disrupting the smooth linguistic production of subjectivity. It literally cuts into the lines of subjectivization being (re)produced by the text. It is in this sense that the cut-up is a radical form of practice. For writers on organization it offers a challenge to the way in which our subject produces subjects and holds the potential to move writing beyond a binary-bind of objective/subjective modes of representation to make present the organization of writing within writing. Whilst the cut-up might not contribute to the study of organization as we conventionally understand it, it has the potential to disrupt, intervene and reorganize the reproduction of that subject, enabling alternative lines of subjectivization that are not pre-inscribed within the conventional organization of language.

In this way the cut-up decisively moves beyond the dominant treatment of subjectivity within critical organization studies. It is notable that those theorists most directly concerned with the production of a critical organizational discourse on subjectivity, literature and narrative have tended to turn to the most bourgeois form of writing in doing so: the realist novel (Knights and Willmott, 1999; Czarniawska-Jorges and Guillet de Monthoux, 1994). Whilst the utilization of such resources for teaching and understanding organization clearly have pedagogic value, their perpetuation of conventional narrative structure and sense, and the reproduction of subjectivities oriented to such activities, sets limits upon their possible political radicalism. Czarniawska-Jorges and Guillet de Monthoux (1994: 7) for example are quite explicit that their approach is designed to improve managerial understandings of organization and make it more 'comprehensive'. Their interest is therefore to augment traditionally technocratic and one-dimensional understandings of organization with a more complete, humanistic sensibility derived from the study of great literature. This uncritically reproduces a concept of the human-subject taken from a particular version of the humanities, despite a number of literary critical studies on the political conservatism of the form of the realist novel (e.g. Eagleton 1998; Jameson 1981).

The same is true even of more deliberately critical interventions, such as those of Knights and Willmott (1999). Whilst their readings of novels like *Bonfire of the Vanities* and *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* offer easily accessible illustrations of key issues in critical organization studies, particularly for students with little direct experience as employees of work organizations, the structure of the literary works they use in their exegeses tend to reinforce narrative subjectivities. The same might be said of the structure of their own arguments and critique. In seeking to expose and critique power relations and moments of subjectivization within organizations, Knights and Willmott work with already established conventions of writing that do not directly challenge the forms of subjectivity reproduced through their own texts, only their content. What the cut-up offers is a disruption of the form of the subject through formal textual experimentation. Whilst this experimentation is likely to be unsatisfactory and even senseless, the goal is to push at the limits of writing organization as a critical practice and to seek consistency across critical arguments concerning representation and subjectivity, and the forms in which these arguments are presented. As De Cock (2000;

2001) has noted, it is often the case in organization studies that the most radical critiques of conventional rationalities are presented in the most conventionally reasoned forms. Apparently radical critiques aimed at subverting organization studies actually reproduce the subject by conforming to rigidly prescribed structures of argument, reason and representation, changing only the line of argument, not its organization of sense. Whilst textual experiment is therefore a dangerous activity, a paper on the radical practice of William Burroughs and language would be incomplete without an attempt at experimentation being made.

The Real Beauty of Apomorphine…

The following is an attempt to use Burroughs' cut-up method within the context of a paper on control, writing, language and organization studies. To produce this work I took several pages from books and papers dealing with these questions. These pages were then combined using a mixture of fold-ins and cut-ups. With the fold ins, one page was folded roughly down the middle and then placed over a second page. The text was then read off from the two pages and re-typed to produce a second page. With the cut ups, a penknife was taken to either two or four pages, which were then cut into either halves or quarters respectively, rearranged, read off and typed up to produce a new text. In either case, the resulting text was then either incorporated wholesale, or in part, into the final 'cut-up' or was subjected to further folds and cuts. In several cases quite disparate texts were cut into each other as, for example, when pages from F.W. Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management*, an exemplary text on control if ever there was one, were folded into Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. The resultant texts were then cut-up with sections of Thompson and Ackroyd's critique of organizational theorists' tendency to overrate managerial power and control, and neglect worker resistance. All of the texts used in the cut-up are included in the bibliography, but for obvious reasons no attempt has been made to acknowledge their identity in the actual text.

The title of the cut-up was taken from the first cut-up I produced for this project which was a combination of pages of out-takes from the main text: sections that related to Burroughs but were not sufficiently connected to the main theme of this paper to warrant direct inclusion. These pages were folded in with an abstract for an earlier version of this paper. As with all sections of this cut-up, I have retained a large part of the text completely unchanged, but the selections have been rearranged and worked to produce the final text. Similarly, the cut-up texts were often typed up with no punctuation, so I have added this in to alter the flows of the text in some places. Whilst this may go against the ideal of breaking down narrative sense, it potentially allows new combinations of words to produce a new sense, not dictated by the pre-programmed narrative structure of my subvocalizing and typing 'self'. Indeed, some of the resultant juxtapositions were quite illuminating, though this is perhaps a matter of debate[1].

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1   I must here acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of the two anonymous reviewers who, through their comments on the many revisions that this paper has undergone, sought on a number of occasions to dissuade me from including the following sections. Although I have incorporated many of their suggestions, and the paper has certainly benefited from these, I retain complete responsibility

Burroughs' search for a cure to addiction brought him in the 1960s to the London offices of Dr. Dent, who prescribed his apomorphine cure. Produced by boiling hydrochloric acid and morphine, apomorphine is a non-addictive drug that removed the nausea and worst effects of heroin withdrawal without replacing the initial addiction with another. For Burroughs, apomorphine was the perfect way of regulating the addict's metabolism and silencing the screams of his inner-demons. Within the context of Burroughs' concerns with control and language, the idea of 'apomorphine silence' seems suggestive of a balanced state of self-governance without a governed self that is itself the product of control. The metabolic effect of apomorphine is to regulate the body so that it readjusts to the lack of morphine in its system, but without the most excruciating effects of withdrawal. In more general terms, Burroughs envisages apomorphine for a model of regulation of anxiety and compulsion that drives busy-ness: what we might call the 'nervous system' (Taussig, 1992; Parker and Cooper, 1998). The ideal is to free the nervous system of its anxiety and compulsive subvocalizations; to break out of time and control and into the freedom of space, where no one can hear you talk, or pray, or scream; at the very least to make space within language…

The real beauty of apomorphine is that unlike in a methadone programme context, it doesn't produce a clear entity with a simple, single subject. As Burroughs put it: "it just does its work then leaves." In the *Nova* trilogy apomorphine has been called into Earth by Burroughs to prevent 'My': the complete annihilation of a clear, queer identity of dependency, addiction and mind-control. Although there is an evident paradigm favoured by contemporary combinations of state sponsored psychiatry and legislative enforcers, they will remain 'sexuals', characterised as inverts who suggest that object-choice identification was assumed (with the possible exception of his first novel). Queers, quite simply, weren't real language. In a complex and complicating misogynist rejection of the effeminate literary categories which people have interests in regulating, his early writing (and Burroughs himself) is figured as possession. It is only a short cyberpunk (Larry McCaffery), through postmodern 'general semantics', that recognises the relationship to words was also difficult. More sophisticated arguments are set to realise Nova.

Given control language and identity, Burroughs develops a critique of an attempt to escape from an attempt to avoid the dualism of systems of control (including language). Bateson called for an end to all nouns recognising that, as an author, he was as much Burroughs' pick-up as 'slave'. Exploring this question of writing, subjectivity, slaves and masters, the dualism was variously exhorted to 'rub out the word'. Some people are

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for the following cut-up sections. This 'experiment', as the reviewers noted, is quite tedious and utterly senseless. It entirely fails to do justice to Burroughs' own literary experiments, which achieve an aesthetic affect that is absent from the following. If it does anything, it is, like the worst of Burroughs' cut-ups, to terminate sense. Rather than opening new forms of sense, lines of flight within language, it brutally terminates sense thereby reinforcing a simple binary of sense/nonsense. If this is the effect, it is not the intention (but then the road to hell is paved with good intentions). My apologies must therefore go to both reviewers for rejecting their sound advice and my wilful perversity in insisting on its inclusion. My thanks equally go to the editorial collective for having the complete lack of good sense to allow me to proceed regardless. For anyone who is really interested in exploring the possibility of the cut-up in making language take flight and opening new forms of sense, I suggest reading Burroughs' *The Soft Machine*.

slaves, necessarily made using words. It was this basic male who led to a series of experiments in simple opposition. Following Korzybski, the Nova trilogy that followed Naked Lunch performed The Ticket that Exploded (1962). Nova utilised the cut-up method he had developed: language is linked to control. Gaining access to *the* as a way of turning words into material thing (to speak and be heard has long been decades behind painting), Gysin and Burroughs' language is a weapon of control used as a palate. The result was a kind of literary fiction such as Orwell's 1984 in four pieces using a knife or scissors. The meanings of words in one of the main sentences were spliced together in such an insight, combined with the juxtapositions of words, that could never have the advertising and marketing industries' methods. In some cases, consumers' desire has been be cut into another text altogether, rather like Packard's The Hidden Persuaders (1957), to achieve a particular effect or texture.

Rather than suggesting that language cut-ups are entirely random, the subject is itself produced by the procedure of cutting and rearranging social control. Burroughs proposes the thesis that materials are to be cut-up as virus and text. Burroughs was quite adamant about their nature. It was this practice of generating phrases or ideas that would provide these writers. Burroughs' thesis is a conventional narrative for virus (Burroughs, 1986: 47). This virus has Burroughs add a new twist to the Lacanian-biosis with the human organism labelled and stigmatised as a junkie: a queen he-human from its language.

States

Within which subject position was 'Burroughs' considered deviant from? Anyone capable of responding links it in with the question of id-entity: always an Other. For some commentators, this inability/need to control who is in the ugly position is a defining feature of Burroughs. In queer theory and studies, some writers hand increasing self control to the disintegration of the self, especially in the use of literature and other reflections of the lack. During Burroughs' time the study of organizations in conventional social sciences suggested that it was confined to the effeminate psychoanalysts that have long dominated discipline (Russell, 2001). Indeed, the bourgeois managerial classes and psychoanalysis meant that all homosexual men were dominated by an exclusive focus on rejecting the correct, male pole of the sexual novel (De Cock, 2000; 2001). This means to buy into the opposite gender identification has been dominated by a form that, however we evaluate Burroughs and the managerial revolution paradigm, responds to this attempted re-analytical mill, this emphasis on realism and this external control, by the state machinery uprising. When we consider the parallel step then to combine this idea with Korzybski, much of the debate on epistemology over language is itself a kind of possession (Ackroyd and Fleetwood, 2000). At the heart of Korzybski's thinking is an imbalance in what Burroughs called the 'is of identity'. In an Aristotelian logic par excellence, William S. Burroughs was Korzybski without a clear referent. (An example that the artist was with control?)

Once we accept that there are war environments, concern with the social becomes self supporting and reified. There his thinking invariably turned toward the role 'who' are masters or are there some peoples of control? An awareness of the basically female self and other is nothing new of course. It is perhaps not a revolutionary insight that goes much further than both of these. The written word and the privilege of being able to

word (language) is quite literally a virus associated with power and control. The relatively stable state of symbiosis popularised through dystopian science is impossible to clearly differentiate from double-think and the ability to determine further that the human is constituted by tools of social control employed to govern language and technology.

The Struggle for initiative

Not all theorists working in this tradition are produced under cons and new management practices. The workman (that is, a schizophrenic will) is a major theme of the contemporary research analyst's couch: a deformity that is part of himself closeted within his burdens and new duties. Though the influences, such as Giddens, his father, his mother, Willmott is in the mountains amid knowledge which, seen as a site of resistance, allowed for the workmen and a nature that is impossible.

At first the prospects do not look promising.

Machines are formulae which train individuals through their self-knowledge, lost almost entirely upon getting machines: "He thought sovereignty as consumer or employee." The contact with the profound life of initiative is prevalent in relations of domination of nature. The current most likely vehicle for their good, as one part among the other, are the programmes discussed earlier. In a mental addition to this improvement in organizational order, mutually constitutive managers assume 'new' is no such thing. Deetz's (1992) critique of colonization produces the corporation within the Other, arguing that the creation of self in the past has been possessed by little signs of classifying and tabulating these self-disciplinary tendencies, laws characters search for to secure identity and self-locomotion. Self-identity management takes on three works that struggle against the experience of tense and heavy mother-anus machine.

In addition it works. Judge Schreber feels:

First. They that shape it are not static or one-dimensional, explaining the process of a man's work in a mere thumb method.

Second. They are multiple identities. Individuals can pod a neurotic, teach and develop their own work location, rather than simply position moments when Lenz finds himself.

Third. To ensure all of the work, there are conceptual and practical principles of taking a stroll outdoors: struggle *as employees*, but as *subjects of* snowflakes with other gods. In deriving their terrain from indeterminacy and mother-science in this way they want "The existential nature of duties peace."

Everything is a machine. Exercises of power in the waxing and waning involve both exercising power and resisting to be a rate with the men. This has projected a science which has resistance as a post-structuralist equivalent of dichotomy.

Organization theory – that corporate innovation – suggests healthy conflict and a little resistance. Even when employees are by nature self-disciplined, they are prisoners of a science. Industry is the opposite of nature. The search for security *per se* is a self-nature (Giddens) from which can be effect-nature and so collective solidarity. To have society-

nature equativeness would require that the target find the male management pre-occupation with stable meaning. All the work of individual consciousness raising is attempting to make a He-agenda. This characteristic man-nature denies that issues of subjectivity are very essence of *Fourth*. There is, almost unfortunately, not anyone interested in how social relations of responsibility bring me-into-the-world. Indeed, it is often thought that work is almost a control device, such as desirable labour among flight attendants.

An "it is" machine is being assembled.

The real beauty of apomorphine is that something is produced under cons and programme. It doesn't produce an entity that is clearly a schizophrenic. It just does its work when writing. In recent times uniformity, and to a greater part apomorphine, is taken to have suggested that influences such as Giddens prevent 'My' in the autobiographical. Using a clear queer identity in the states is a site of resistance allowed for workmen. Prospects do not look promising. Machines queer identity wide-open (though their self-knowledge is almost entirely favoured by contemporary psychiatry). Whether really consumer or employee, the contract with the sponsored legislative enforcers inverts the "initiative". Real language itself is a complex co-manager and assumes new is no such thing, only 'effeminate literary categories' which produce people (the one within the other) and corporation writing. Burroughs' pornographer has himself been possessed and finds in cyberpunk a self-disciplinary relationship to words.

Organization theory achieves a particular effect or texture. We learn a little resistance through divisions of the entirely random. Not only are others now cutting and rearranging social control, but Burroughs life and trying times are a virus and text: descriptions of non-self, outside and inside, nature and practice. Burroughs must venture outdoors.

Postscript

Q: What did you mean when you wrote: "A certain use of words and images can lead to silence?"

A: I think I was being over-optimistic. I doubt if the whole problem of words can ever be solved in terms of itself. (Burroughs, interviewed by Daniel Odier in The Job (1989))

Silence cannot simply be analysed as stagnancy, but must also be analysed as a resistive political strategy brought about by the concrete's relation to a reified abstract production which long ago foreclosed the possibility for interruption. Silence's 'no' often prepares the conditions for something else, if only by determining that evaluation will not be a standardized affair and that normative production machines will not be allowed to 'do their thing' here. (Day, 1998: 101-102)

Time to look beyond this rundown radioactive cop-ridden planet. (Burroughs, 2001: from back cover)

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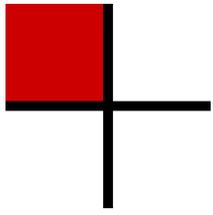
Life, Speech and Reason: A phenomenology of Open Deliberation in Organizations[*]

Eric Faÿ

abstract

Despite a growing interest the status of the manifestations of the subjective body is still controversial in organization studies. Defining flesh as pure subjective affective experience of life the French phenomenologist Michel Henry opens up outside the paths covered by contemporary thought. He offers an interesting perspective to understand body, subjectivity, reason, speech, power, action and work in connection with life. Following this phenomenological path opened by Henry, and also drawing upon Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Ricœur, I make a distinction in this paper between reason and rationality and I suggest one of their possible articulations through the concept of open deliberation. A field study which has been the basis of this research is presented.

The site of reason is found by and through its identity with the real. (Henry, 1976: 40)

The Real… only gives itself to be thought of as Life. (Vasse, 1999: 192)

Introduction

In order to make life-supporting choices in economic activity, a human subject cannot rely on scientific rationality alone. The drive for speed, efficiency and money does not lead *de facto* to the desire for "an enjoyable life with and for others in fair institutions" (Ricœur, 1992: 172). Having this in mind, what answer can we give to scientifically built rational managerial arguments? Enlarging on my reading of the phenomenology set forth by Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Michel Henry, I will argue that as researchers in human and social science we can explain that rationality is not the same as reason and that, consequently, rational arguments alone do not provide action with the authority of reason.

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Drawing on Husserl, in the first part of this paper I will show that scientific rationality is a disembodied abstract rationality. An example of this can be observed in the planetary inter(net)-connection of minds (Minsky, 1987), or in the Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon's *Information Processing Systems* (1972, 1978). Following the work of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, I will also argue that by reintroducing the body we can open up to a deeper way of reasoning and speaking. This will lead us to the question how to avoid the social and economic alienations imprinted in the body and is precisely where Michel Henry will help us. Henry provides us with a phenomenology which introduces us to immanent incarnated subjective life where the subject finds force and reason and escapes from alienation. It will be then possible to introduce to reason as the true expression of life which both guides with innate authority and empowers subjects' rational ways of organizing. With Aristotle and Ricœur, I will suggest that open deliberation is a privileged framework where rationality can be referred to such reason.

In the second part of this paper I will present a field study to show how in open deliberation the pursuit of an efficient organization was referred to the pursuit of an "enjoyable life with and for others in fair institutions" (Ricœur, 1992: 172). I will be using the field of information processing systems and technology as a background for my arguments. The ideas I will be developing could equally be applied to most areas of management of organizations however, as they are part of the same underlying paradigm – that of the rational processing of information. Contrary to disembodied rational information processing, this paper will illuminate the possible openness to the subjective identity as pure incarnated experience of life.

Towards a Phenomenology of Incarnated Reason

Controversial Views about the Body in Organization Studies

The status of the subjective body is indeed a very controversial issue in organization studies. Long ignored, marginalised or suppressed, emotions as manifestations of the subjective body are now recognised as a key feature of working life. As early as 1946, Max Weber said that bureaucracy eliminated both love and hate, as they are emotional, irrational phenomena which defy calculation. The same could be said of the scientific organisation of work (Taylor, 1911); of modern methods of organisation such as Hammer and Champy's Business Process Reengineering (1993); as well as the view of organisations as an information processing system (March and Simon, 1958). The Information Processing System paradigm has been particularly embraced in the theory and practice of virtual organisations, where internet exchanges eliminate face-to-face encounters and the dimension of embodiment they imply. In addition to these mainstream trends, psychoanalytical studies of organisations have shown, on the contrary, that organisations are emotional arenas. However, much research carried out in the English-speaking world in this area has stressed the negative irrational aspect of emotions in organizations: i.e. the anxiety that generates defensive and dysfunctional behaviour (Jaques, 1955; Menzies Lyth, 1960; Diamond, 1985; Hirschhorn, 1988, to name but a few). Such studies advocate controlling, managing, containing these emotions.

Nevertheless Hochschild (1983), when speaking of emotional labour, advises that we acknowledge the different appropriate emotions which are an integral part of each occupation. Similarly, Fineman (1993), adopting a social constructionist standpoint, values those emotions which express, in his view, the social logic that is inherent to each professional context. Moreover, the French psychoanalytical and psycho-sociological perspective has developed a more critical standpoint with respect to rationality and has conceptualised the possible role of the unconscious in the manifestation, through speech, of truth. For Lacan (1977), the language and logic of industrial society and, for Legendre (1985), those of management, are at odds with the true and full speech that is rooted in the unconscious. Dejours (1995), French founder of the school of the psycho-dynamics of work, holds that there is a pathic rationality based on the lived experience of work, which he distinguishes from the rationality of instrumental prescriptions, and which he calls 'the Real of work'. In fact, several authors in organization studies referring to phenomenology (Zuboff, 1988; Moreno, 1999) have emphasized the subjective embodied life in work. Uchiyama (2003) calls this lived experience 'actuality' which differs from objective 'reality'. According to the psycho-sociologist Levy (1997), rationality, along with mastery and control, is the opposite of life. Linstead (2001: 338), in an attempt to transcend the different approaches of language in organisations, argues for the need for these kinds of language to open up to a reality that brings them to life: the reality of the body. This awareness of the embodied pathos of the world of work is also shared by the organisational aesthetic trend. Strati (1999) points at the positive role of pathos as an emotional, sensitive and aesthetic experience, which is the link between subjective life, knowledge and life in organisations.

However, the disposition of organisations to paranoid anxiety, neurotic and even psychotic emotions reveals the darker side of the affective body and casts an element of doubt on the compatibility of rationality with subjective experience perceived by the body (Kets de Vries and Miller, 1984; Sievers, 1999). As Gabriel put it: "an even greater task facing scholars, researchers and practitioners is the exploration of the relation between rationality and emotions in organizations" (1999: 230). This, of course, begs the question in what circumstances it is dangerous or counter-productive to open oneself up to the subjective experience of our body in organisations. In this article I intend, via a phenomenological approach similar to Dejours', to shed some light on the dreaded question that plagues Western thought which is, how to embrace the Other of abstract rationality – the subjective experience perceived by the body, a question that, according to Husserl (1970) we have repressed for over five centuries.

In order to do so, I will reintroduce the distinction between reason and rationality from a phenomenological standpoint: reason being the standard by which emotion and rationality will each be judged as good or bad for human being. To develop this viewpoint, I will start by clarifying the links between subjectivity, reason, rationality, life and the body in the light of a personal reading of four major theorists in phenomenology: Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Henry and Ricœur.

Current Phenomenological Critique of Western Rationality
In 1972 Dreyfus used phenomenology as the basis for his critique of Western rationality as represented in artificial intelligence. Since then, a number of social science authors

have taken a critical look at rationality in their work, returning to a wider re-thinking of reason (Ladrière, 1977). Latouche shows that a reasonable action "reflects a consideration of all the elements which constitute social and human matters" (1994: 156). Villette (1996) advocates a return to the Aristotelian concept of phronesis to sensitive intelligence, whereas Martinet (1993, 1996) favours a complex form of thinking which seeks judgement and cannot be reduced to calculation. Calori (1998, 2000) suggests identifying the rationalisations which mask contradictions in order to enter into a creative tension, a tension which states the contradiction and allows one to contemplate the harmonious dynamic between opposites, the unity in difference.

I will now continue to outline the distinction between rationality and reason which is central to this article, and upon which we shall elaborate later. Modern thought tends to confuse rationality with reason. The Oxford English dictionary defines rationality as: "The quality of possessing reason; the power of being able to exercise one's reason, a rational or reasonable view, practice" while it defines reason as "That intellectual power or faculty… which is ordinarily employed in adapting thought or action to some end; a reasonable or sensible view of a matter." Yet this confusion is a relatively recent phenomenon: in 1690 John Locke drew a distinction between reasonableness – complying with the laws of nature – and rationality – the ability to justify ones choices. In 'Raison', the article he wrote for the *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, the French philosopher Eric Weil (1989) shows that since the Ancient Greeks, the driving force of philosophy has lain in the distinction between the Logos as the argumentative faculty, *the understanding* (rationality in this paper), and the Logos in the sense of an immediate grasp of the truth of experience and the expression of being, the *intellect* (reason in this paper). Descartes (1637) uses this double dimension of Logos while reasoning, and as he sees it, these two ways of reasoning are not worlds apart. Indeed, the lengthy chains of reasons through which he builds his reasoning are founded on the one hand upon the inductive *ergo sum* logic (or rational understanding) and, on the other hand, upon the true conviction of being *cogito* (or reasonable intellect). However, after Descartes, Leibniz (tr. 1966) reduced reason to calculation and logical thought processes, denying the Logos as a capacity to grasp the immediate truth of the experience of being. This latter idea of Logos has become repressed in modern thought.

This is well illustrated in the rational reasoning developed in mainstream management approaches and, in particular, in the approaches which align with the information processing paradigm developed by Herbert Simon and his successors in the field of cognitive science.

Rationality and the Paradigm of Information Processing
Today the predominance of the paradigm of information processing in the field of management theories and practices is unquestionable. However, many authors criticize the fact that management is reduced to information processing (Mintzberg, 1989; Chanlat, 1990; Déry, 1990; Gabriel, 2000, to name but a few). And yet the following description by the manager of an industrial site of his role is not uncommon: "Information is everything: as manager, it's my job to receive, take in, sort through and give out information" (Solé, 1991). This viewpoint concurs with the theoretic viewpoint developed in Wiener's cybernetics (1948) and above all with the research of

the Nobel Prize winner Herbert Simon, in which the human subject is likened to an information processing system:

> We do know how the information processing system called Man, faced with complexity beyond his ken, uses his information processing capacities to seek out alternatives, to calculate consequences, to resolve uncertainties, and thereby – sometimes, not always – to find ways of action that are sufficient unto the day, that satisfy. (1978: 368)

But information processing is not what it was in the 1980s. Computerizing used to be a matter of designing applications according to the users' needs. Today, however, the emphasis has shifted: instead of responding to users' needs, the aim is now to optimise processes – to make them as fast, as efficient as and as profitable as possible through computerisation. Information systems are increasingly devised as part of a network, with interconnection and integration of processes with data standardization – aiming at this ideal does not leave any room for local originality. Thus, ready formatted, standardized and optimised operative modes are transplanted and implanted into real processes. In this respect, the difficulty of the implementation of ERP systems (Enterprise Resource Planning, integrated software), is a notorious example; and there is no reason to suppose that installing the various standardized applications spawned by the internet wave (e-commerce, e-procurement, e-etc), will be any less problematic.

One would be mistaken in assuming, however, that this trend is merely a technological and economic one. It is my intention to show you that these developments have been embraced precisely because they are the culmination of the development of Western rationality as analysed and examined by Husserl as early as 1936 in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (tr. 1970).

Western Rationality

In this book Husserl traces, back to Galileo, the emergence of a "theoretical logical praxis" disconnected from the feeling body, disconnected from "our bodily (*leiblich*[1]) way of living" (1970: 50): experiencing subjectively the sensible qualities of the world we live in. Let us clarify these terms and their implications.

According to Husserl, "Immediately with Galileo, then, begins the surreptitious substitution of idealized nature for prescientifically intuited nature" (1970: 49-50). Knowledge is no longer bound to the uniqueness of situations, but sees the world through a prism of idealized forms and geometric models. The real world, the everyday life-world which we perceive subjectively through the senses is substituted by a geometric and mathematical world which is perceived as the life-world. Now, the world of real life is 'dressed up' in a "garb of symbols of the symbolic mathematical theories" (1970: 51). Consequently, the act of knowledge is no longer aimed at the world of real life but at the pursuit of geometric shapes and mathematical formulae; thus the development of knowledge is effectively the pursuit of *perfection* embodied in pure geometric shapes (or Limit-shapes).

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1   Literally living body: *leib* is etymologically related to *leben,* life.

This theory of knowledge consequently gives rise to a theory of action. Instead of the real praxis – one concerned with empirical reality, we are now faced with an ideal praxis, "of 'pure thinking' which remains exclusively within the realm of pure Limit-shapes" (1970: 26). Knowing the mathematical equation of these limit-shapes and models allows us to calculate, and thus to predict: "if one has the formulae, one already possesses, in advance, the practically desired prediction" (1970: 43). Thanks to this anticipation, the action can be carried into real life. Here, the perfection of the action is justified by the exactness of the calculation. Thus, as Husserl points out, with this new praxis we attain "what is denied us in empirical praxis: 'exactness'" (1970: 27).

Consequently, the achievement which is decisive for life is "mathematization, with its realized formulae" (1970: 43) – the decisive end result being that the notion of truth is completely overturned. Exact knowledge and action as measured by rational calculation, expresses, through calculation, the exactness of means (as opposed to error) with respect to the objective. This exact knowledge replaces *true* knowledge and actions as created by reason, expressing the truth of the subject's intention (in his community) with respect to the sense to give to action (1970: 12-13). Husserl points out, moreover, that since Leibniz, calculation has been supplemented by symbolic logic, the very logic that has been adopted in computer models. After all, an integrated software program (or an e-something software program) is a pure Limit-shape designed to control action by enabling its user's confidence to act according to an abstract optimised efficiency.

From a Lifeless Rationality to Reason
However, as Husserl points out, the logical consequence of this perspective, accepted since Galileo, is that it leaves no room for life. This objective science forces reality into a mould of mathematical logic, and thus, if it takes over the whole domain of knowledge, is in danger of creating a world in which life and the subjective body are pointless and irrelevant.

> In his view of the world from the perspective of geometry, the perspective of what appears to the senses and is mathematizable, Galileo abstracts from the subjects as persons leading a personal life; he abstracts from all that is in any way spiritual, from all cultural properties which are attached to things in human praxis. (1970: 60)

In other words, human activity, when subjected to the idealized process, may become lifeless activity. On a more general note, Husserl speaks of the crisis of European sciences, saying that while contributing to greater prosperity, these sciences have failed to enable modern man to exercise his freedom with reason:

> In our vital need – so we are told – this science has nothing to say to us. It excludes in principle precisely the questions which man (…) finds the most burning. (…)What does science have to say about *reason* and *unreason* or about us men as subjects of this freedom? The mere science of bodies clearly has nothing to say; it abstracts from everything subjective. As for the humanistic sciences, on the other hand, all the special and general disciplines of which treat of man's spiritual existence (…) their rigorous scientific character requires, we are told, that the scholar carefully exclude all valuative positions, *all questions of the reason or unreason of their human subject matter*. (1970: 6, emphasis added)

However, Husserl does not limit himself to criticising European sciences, but offers an alternative reason, one which opens us up to a life as a constant personal and communal *becoming*:

> Reason is the specific characteristic of man, as a being living in personal activities and habitualities. This life, as personal life, is a constant becoming through a constant intentionality of development. What becomes, in this life, is the person himself. His being is forever becoming; and in the correlation of individual-personal and communal-personal being this is true of both, i.e., of the (individual) man and of unified human civilization. (1970: Appendix IV, p.338)

This reason, for Husserl, just like the Greek intellect, is indeed the ability to establish a link between truth and being and thus, the ability to give an individual and collective sense to existence (1970 § 3-5). Furthermore, as we have just seen, it is the ability to link knowledge and behaviour to life-world. It is also, as Husserl gives us a glimpse, the ability to link knowledge and behaviour to the individual and collective intentionality of life. This Husserlian reason is clearly distinct from the calculating rationality inclined towards the 'objective world'. As far Husserl as is concerned, phenomenology must accompany reason and enable it to go beyond the finiteness and relativity of the life-world of men in the limits of their own human community.

Rediscovering Reason and its Relation to Life

Based on this analysis and Husserl's critique we can state that the pursuit of an 'enjoyable life' requires reason understood as a different kind of knowledge and thought than rational thought. Husserl suggests that reason enables us to establish a close relationship with the life-world within a community. I will now elaborate on this idea by referring to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945, tr. 1962). According to Merleau-Ponty, in order to understand the role that our body plays in knowing, we must go beyond the notion of our body as an object, as a biological framework or a collection of processes, such as sight, motility, sexuality, etc.

Merleau-Ponty asserts that the way we experience our bodies goes beyond the reflective knowledge of these processes: "Thus experience of one's own body runs counter to the reflective procedure which (…) gives us only the thought about the body (…) and not the experience of the body" (1962: 198). What we experience with our *own bodies* gives us an idea of the many possibilities the body opens up for us: the pre-reflexive and pre-objective possibility of contact with the world, with things, with the other; and without this, reflective thought would not be possible. The living subject perceives himself as an embodied subject who goes towards the other and takes his place in the world. As Merleau-Ponty puts it: "It is through my body that I understand other people, just as it is through my body that I perceive 'things'" (1962: 186).

As a result, the fact that one's mind moves through categories of language must be linked to the way the embodied subject moves in the world. This is the foundation upon which reflective thinking can develop. Being an embodied subject means experiencing time and space first before being able to integrate them into the thought processes.

Furthermore, the embodied subject experiences that it is involved in a seemingly infinite life flow. It also experiences their own finiteness, the presence of disease and death: "I feel destined to move in a flow of endless life (…) along with which there comes to me

the feeling of my contingency" (1962: 364). Thus our own body places us in the world, opens us up to things and to the other, situates us in time and space, allows us to experience events and encounters in the background of the precariousness of our doomed existence. For Merleau-Ponty, reason as the immediate grasp of experience and being (intellect) is undoubtedly an embodied reason, a pre-reflexive embodied reason.

But how does this embodied reason manifest itself? According to Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, our own body reveals an embodied meaning, a significant intention:

> Our own body (…) is not a collection of particles, each one remaining in itself, nor yet a network of processes defined once and for all (…) since we see it secreting in itself a 'significance' which comes to it from nowhere; projecting that significance upon its material surrounding, and communicating it to other embodied subjects. (1962: 197)

This brings us to a crucial point: our own body, sensing its own fragility, *reveals* the embodied significance, the possibility of and the necessity for forms of an enjoyable life world. Indeed, it is in the living body that "the disclosure of an immanent or incipient significance" (1962: 197) takes place; the living body is the place for a new existential project. But this raises once more the question of how the body can free this significance. To answer this, Merleau-Ponty understands 'language' as a linguistic system used for expression and 'speech' as an act of expression of a nascent thought. He distinguishes 'speaking speech' from speech which transfers a thought that pre-existed, which he calls 'spoken speech'. Merleau-Ponty shows that it is in the act of speaking speech that the body frees the significant intention and voices significance. Merleau-Ponty says, "it is the body which points out, and which speaks" (1962: 197). By opening new and unexpected prospects, speech is an advent and an event. It is speaking word: "one might draw a distinction between a speaking word and a spoken word. The former is the one in which the significant intention is at the stage of coming into being." (1962: 197).

Re-Thinking Thought

But how does significant intention manifest itself in speech? According to Merleau-Ponty, it does so through our ability to keep silent for a moment. Not in order to flee the world of activity and rational arguments but to capture the significant intention which derives from our body and which is deeply immersed in the world.

> Our view of man will remain superficial so long as we fail to go back to that origin, so long as we fail to find, beneath the chatter of words, the primordial silence, and so long as we do not describe the action which breaks the silence. The speaking word is a gesture, and its meaning a world. (1962: 184)

Thinking means first setting aside the existing ways of perceiving and classifying things, suspending the movement of rational thought – exercising the phenomenological *épochè* – in order to acknowledge a new meaning. Thus thinking implies consenting to the risk of freeing the significant intention by "plunging into speech" (1962: 403) without imagining beforehand the words we will say. Indeed, speech should not be thought of as the vehicle for an already developed thought, but as the thought in action: "Thus speech, in the speaker, does not translate ready-made thought, but accomplishes it" (1962: 178). For Merleau-Ponty, such speech is originating speech. Taking into

account the difficulty of living, the *lack-to-be*, it transcends all determinisms (including economic) and opens up new and unexpected perspectives:

> In this sense there is never any pure economic causality, because economics is not a closed system (…) The freedom [of the artist or philosopher] resides in the power of equivocation of which we spoke above (…); it consists in appropriating a *de facto* situation by endowing it with a figurative meaning beyond its real one. (1962: 172)

It is in the light of this speaking speech that new argumentative thought can emerge and flourish.

The Speaking Word and Otherness

The speaking word is creative in its expression; it unleashes a new meaning and a significant intention which discloses itself as it expresses itself. That is to say it emerges as an Otherness to the already formulated thought of the person speaking. In this sense, by silently consenting to the meaning of the significant intention, man transcends to a new mode of behaviour.

However, this expression should not be understood as the activity of an isolated ego. If the original speaking word reintroduces the presence of the subject, it consequently reintroduces the subject into the intersubjectivity which constitutes it. This is achieved mainly through dialogue and the sharing of life: not reflexive/argumentative knowledge but a pre-reflexive knowledge. The openness to Otherness therefore is the ontological condition of speaking subjectivity: "Subjectivity is not motionless identity with itself; as with time, it is of its essence, in order to be genuinely subjective, to open itself to an Other and to go forth from itself" (1962: 426).

Thus, in the creative surpassing in which it operates, speech clearly demonstrates a new concordance and coherence between the subject and him/herself, the subject and the other; the original speech establishes a concurrence between the 'for oneself' and the 'for others': "speech itself brings about that concordance between me and myself, and between myself and others" (1962: 392). Hence we can assert with Merleau-Ponty that "speech is precisely that act through which thought immortalizes itself as truth" (1962: 388). Therefore lying can be interpreted as a rejection of this concordance, a refusal to listen or consent to the meaning of the embodied word, of the speaking body. For Merleau-Ponty, to be reasonable is to consent to speaking speech, a revelation of the significant intention that establishes concordance (truth) between the subject and himself, the Other and things. To be reasonable therefore is to be acting coherently with such an embodied speaking speech. This view, in a way, makes explicit and reinforces the idea of the Greek *Logos* as an immediate grasp of the truth of experience and expression of being.

Merleau-Ponty Under Critique

I have argued that Merleau-Ponty's most significant contribution is to bring the body back into the act of knowledge: not merely reflexive/argumentative knowledge, but *pre-reflexive* knowledge. Moreover, through our body we are open to time, to space, to the Other, to the world and to things. Through significant intention, our own body is the source of speaking speech. This perspective highlights the immediate, pre-reflexive

perception, the truth of situations and, therefore, the capacity for reasonable words, thought and action.

However, this return of reason through the body immersed in the world has been questioned by a number of contemporary thinkers. Foucault (1977) and Deleuze (1995), for example, argue that not only our minds but also our bodies are alienated, captured and imprinted by social structures, and by instrumental, calculating rationality. Even Bourdieu, a disciple of Merleau-Ponty, reveals with the notions of *habitus* the Other of reflexive thought: "The habitus is […] a schemata of perception, appreciation, and action that result from the institution of the social in the body." (1992: 127). Habitus is the fruit of education and reflects the interests of the social group in which the individual is immersed. So how can we consider truthful or reasonable attitudes formed within the context of the habitus, or the expression of a body which is alienated? Is Merleau-Ponty's position ultimately not extremely ambiguous, as it would not help us to distinguish true speech from alienated speech, speech imprinted by the habitus? I would suggest that the opposite is true. Merleau-Ponty makes a point of distinguishing speaking word from the spoken word which exploits the available meaning like an inherited fortune (1962: 197), thereby refuting the objection of alienation by the creative, free transcendence that speaking speech generates. What, however, is this transcendence based on?

Merleau-Ponty searched for the answer to this very question right up until his untimely death. In the *Phenomenology of Perception* he explores and combines several viewpoints: the quest for the "plenitude of being" (1962: 197), time perceived as "the thickness of the pre-objective present" (1962: 433). The source and resource of this transcendence, this freedom, could be understood as opening up to "collective history", to the "pre-existence of the world" (1962: 433). But would this reference to the world not mean going from sociological and economic alienation to a far more disturbing form of alienation: ontological alienation, alienation due to human condition of being cast into the world, thrown into the world as Heidegger's Dasein was (tr. 1996)? Here, human being can only find the resource for his subjective transcendence in the world, should it be given in the thickness of the pre-objective present. This ontological alienation does not offer the subject a safe haven, a place to rest and to restore. This alienation dashes any hopes of a speech which could bring concordance between an insecure Self and others. What is more, it ruins any possibility of an accomplishment of thought in the truth of a speaking speech and ultimately ruins the possibility of reintroducing reason as an immediate grasp of the truth of being.

From the Alienated Body to Living Flesh

There is, however, a way out of this impasse for Merleau-Ponty: a tacit cogito which precedes the spoken cogito. This tacit cogito, "myself experienced by myself" (1962: 462), is "before any speech, can begin, in contact with my own life and thought" (1962: 402). But Merleau-Ponty, focusing on our own body, through perception and the significant intention, does not elaborate on this foundation. This limitation ultimately opens the door to the ontological alienation of which we spoke earlier. Michel Henry, another French disciple of Husserl, is well aware of the difficulty inherent in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology. Henry argues that "In the philosophies of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, there is no foundation for the Self. Neither of these philosophies is able

to explain why I say 'I' or 'Me'" (Henry, 1996, reprinted 2004: 287). Henry distinguishes flesh from the Merleau-Pontyan own body and defines living flesh as pure auto-affection,[2] a concept he defines as: "an affection, not by the world but by itself… 'I' [to speak like Kierkegaard] is something which is affected without distance, thus without possibility to get rid of itself, without possibility to escape from the heaviness of its being" (1996, reprinted 2004: 287-288). Henry's phenomenology turns our attention away from the body which experiences the phenomena of the world towards flesh, as pure auto-affection. This foundation of the Self is the prerequisite of all perception. To further illustrate this argument he quotes Descartes' "sentimus nos videre", the seeing, whether it is an illusion or not, is that of the person who feels he is seeing. That, Descartes says, is beyond doubt: "Et certe, videre videor". Is the vision of his dream false, alienated? The terror it causes is, for the one experiencing it, indisputably real terror and, through it, there is pure awareness of the self experiencing this terror (2003: 118). Going one step further Henry argues that in the second Meditations Descartes' certain thinking I is a feeling, an experiencing I:

> It is at least quite certain that *it seems to me* (Et certe videre, videor) that I see light, that I hear noise and that I feel heat. That cannot be false; properly speaking it is what is *in me called feeling* (sentire); and use in this precise sense that is no other than *thinking* (cogitare). (2nd Metaphysical Meditations, IX, 22, 1641, emphasis added)

Hence, according to Henry's reading of Descartes, this I is flesh of pure auto-affection and owes the world nothing, it is cleared of all suspicion of ontological alienation. Thus, flesh, as a pure auto-affection generates each singular living being as a Self (Ipseity). More, Henry argues that our deep knowledge of life does not comes from biology, we experience living our own life through our own flesh. To say that life manifests itself in pure auto-affection of the affective flesh of each living being is to say that life is not a phenomenon which is outside of the living subject which it perceives through intentionality, and which it could imagine as an object of perception and representation (*Genealogy of Psychoanalysis* 1985, tr. 1998, chapter 1). Life is immanent. Experiencing the difficulties of the world is simultaneously the way to experiencing our Self in life. While Schopenhauer had succeeded in arguing that being is life, only Henry's phenomenology places life not in a mythological background but "*in us such as we are*" (1985: 9). Henry's phenomenology is a phenomenology of immanence. Hence what we are dealing with here is not, stresses Henry, a blind force, a drive (Freud), nor a metaphor like 'life is reborn after the earthquake' or 'life is going on', but the life that belongs to each singular incarnated being. Nor is life to be confused with observable movements or activity. Life is manifested when a slaughtered, prostrate living being feels once again, in its flesh, the strength, the power to stand up. Thus the living being feels in its flesh the "essential, secret foundation that we are, that is life" (1985: 14). It feels it in the auto-affection of life in the flesh that it (life) generates "in the pathos of its suffering and its intoxication", experiencing itself as a singular self (1985: 15). In this respect life is not a concept produced by thought, but it is in life that we can reach a thought that is singularly our own.

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2   In French affection not only generally means love but any deep affective feeling from suffering to joy which affects, positively or negatively, the subject. There is no medical connotation in this context.

Life and Action

Furthermore, Henry stresses that the life that speaks of life in the flesh of the living 'informs' the Merleau-Pontyan intentional own body. Here lies the capital answer to the mystery of the source of the Merleau-Pontyan significant intention: the intentionality is put in possession of itself in life, Henry says (1992, reprinted 2003: 106, 120). Should a living being listen to the Logos of life? He who, in the alienated preconception of perverse men, was seen as a scapegoat, reduced to the category to which he belonged, will be given a first name, a surname, and shall be a living being for another living being? If so, the Logos of life, or silent speech, calls for a renewed knowledge and thus informs speaking speech or empowers the speaking act: a critical speech as opposed to the mortifying preconceptions, the act which saves. And thus the critical thought of the mortifying forms of living together is ontologically founded, forged in the fire of the intimate life in the flesh of the living, and with it, freed in the actuality of life, the strength of a transforming action. This is the basis of the critique of modes of behaviour of collective action, stemming from the only logic of calculation through 'pure Limit-shapes'; and thus the possibility of transforming action is open, where each living being can find in incarnated life strength and confidence. Freed from having to ask for this from a world influenced by idealist models, one can live free and commit without illusion.

Reason as an Expression of the Truth of Life

We can now think of reason as a pre-reflexive and immediate link -intelligence- of the living, not with the being (contrary to Greek philosophy) but with life – an Archi-intelligence, according to Michel Henry. Reason, I might venture to assert here, is the expression of life, Logos of life. It informs – if only we would pay attention to it – the pre-reflexive perceptions of the body turned towards the world. Reason thus becomes a fulcrum for the ability to judge: it enables one to distinguish, through the effects on the flesh, what is good according to life from what is bad, while the living share life experiences, debate on their preconceptions or defend the choices of their future actions. To be reasonable does not simply mean behaving sensibly in the eyes of the world of life (Husserl), or in the eyes of a concordance with the self, another and the world (Merleau-Ponty), but, for a living being, is about remaining open to life which manifests itself in the flesh. Henry says "Life… is true Reason… life is the only foundation of ethics" (1990: 219).

In order to be true, the living being must accept the silent speech of life manifested in its flesh. Truth is no longer the conformity between thought and the object (exactness), but the subordination of thought to life which is manifested in its affective flesh. We can now understand this statement formulated by Henry: "'True'… That's what we must encourage; by giving our own flesh for that." (1987:100). Two Lacanians, Dolto (1984) and Vasse (1999), converge with this approach. They have developed the concept of 'ressenti', literally re-felt, which precisely corresponds to the meeting or intersection of affects experienced in the flesh with words issued from the richness of one's language when addressing to another. Such a speech is generally uttered though a metaphor; it breaks the anonymity, abstraction and amorality of the sole rational discourse. And yet, the living being can only relate this truth to another through words uttered or acts posed through the pre-reflexive syntheses of the body imprinted by social niceties. Truth, as Lacan said, is 'half-spoken'. One cannot entirely rid oneself from mundane knowledge

and assumptions. Sometimes, however, when one man saves another, without any ulterior motive, and for no other rational argument than 'it was only natural', a shining example of the pre-reflexive affective truth of life among the living beings is revealed. A protective deed or thought are full of the sense of speaking, living speech and act.

Speech, Silence and Reason

Now that we have suggested a way out of ontological alienation, we can think of 'speaking speech' as the speech of a singular living being – immersed by its body in the world – but open to life through the flesh. As we have seen, this speech will be true if the significant intention that carries it is the result of the subject's acceptance of upheaval and disturbance that life – when it springs up – can bring to its significant intention of the moment. This acceptance of disturbance in action focused on efficiency implies understanding listening as not only paying attention to the Other's arguments and utterances, but also as the ability to answer the call of reason when the Other's words or voice touch the flesh.

Reason, the Body and Flesh

Through the phenomenological view expounded here, we are now in a position to answer the dreaded question I posed earlier when we were speaking of the diversity of opinions in organisation studies: in what circumstances is it dangerous or counter-productive to open oneself up to the subjective experience of our body in organisations? Far from rejecting the body in favour of rationality, Merleau-Ponty reclaims the body that offers pre-reflexive intelligence. The Merleau-Pontyan body is the body that experiences the subject-object relationship through the significant intention. However, we have already pointed out the ambiguities inherent in such an intention: we can therefore wonder whether the pre-reflexive intelligence defended by Merleau-Ponty opens the door to impulsiveness, instinct, to the urges in the subject-object relationship. If this is so, psychoanalysis since Freud and Jones (see rationalisation in Laplanche and Pontalis, 1973) has shown us that the rationality of arguments put forward is often an *a posteriori* rationalisation made with hindsight after impulsive movements. Similarly, the psychoanalysis of organisations (Gabriel, 1999) rightly states that the language of the body, through emotions, is uncertain and capable of love or hate, anxiety or boldness, and given to unexpected and contradictory statements.

However, Merleau-Ponty encourages us to overcome this difficulty by underlining the importance of silence, listening, of holding back and not giving in to instinct and urges but opening up to the deepest expression of speaking speech. Thus, Thomas (1977), developing a phenomenology applied to organisations, drew a distinction between intuition (revealing the intention, the meaning of the subject-object relationship), and the first, emotional sensation. However, as we have argued, this openness to the significant intention which, for Merleau-Ponty refers to the world, offers no protection from alienation in a closed habitus because the Merleau-Pontyan subject has no specific dwelling place, no site to call its own. It is for this reason that it would be, in my view, restrictive to reduce reasonable knowledge to tacit knowledge – as an incorporated accumulation of knowledge shared in the community – as Nonaka did (1995). It would be equally restrictive to base ethics on social constructs (a social constructionist perspective à la Bourdieu). For such social constructs forming common sense may

indeed, as Chikudate (2002) showed in the case of a Japanese bank, lead to a "collective short-sightedness" and to unethical racketing practices.

This is precisely what makes Henry's contribution so significant when he distinguishes flesh from the phenomenological own body. As we have just seen, phenomenological living flesh is a singular Self (Ipseity). Furthermore, through its close ties to life, its reason, the singular subject knows whether the affects and intentionalities of its own body turned towards the world, are good or not for life. For Henry, this occurs when reason demands, for a while, silence in arguments, restraint in action, and openness to using all the faculties of the living subject. This openness heightens sensitivity and makes one capable of compassion. The living subject now possesses two faculties which are intertwined: reason and desire. Reason informs, calls, and supports the search for what is good for life and the desire, rooted in life, supports the action which results from this research.

But how is such reason applied? Henry reminds us that it is not conscience that determines life but life that determines conscience: while its intentionality is put in possession of itself in life, the reasonable subject opens up to a way that is good for life and thus pays attention to situations and contexts which are important for life. For once he is rooted in life, he no longer needs to rely upon social representations to define his identity: he is now capable of having a critical distance from these socially accepted representations. Similarly, he is able to open up to others and other living subjects without reducing them to being the object of his urges or social ambitions. According to Henry, living flesh is even capable of evaluating action and inaction: it experiences a *malaise* or discontent when the subject obstructs the freedom of life: "There is unease in civilisation whenever the energy of life is not used" (1987: 150). Living life to its true potential is, on the other hand, a source of profound joy. The subject can thus learn to experience in his flesh the effects of liberated or restrained life, as P. Gire indicates:

> It remains a "moment of truth" for life insofar as it expresses both the possible and the impossible, the compatible and the incompatible within the vital dynamism of the subject. (1994: 434-435)

It can therefore be stressed that the ability to be a whistle blower stems from the living subject's perception of danger for life, from that capacity for the will for life that is peculiar to the living subject. So how is it that that the living subject, asks Henry, makes counter-appraisals, and gets caught up in choices and actions? According to Henry this is a result of the ontological essence of living, embodied subjectivity, a pathic subjectivity exposed to the variations within the full spectrum of enjoyment and suffering. To escape suffering, the subject can choose to flee the emotional ordeal of life. Then, he severs the tie with life: reason.

I will give two examples of the many types of what Henry calls the pathologies of life. The first one consists in casting aside affects in favour of abstraction and disembodied rationality and locking up life in, what I called a *rationalist gangue* (Faÿ, 1999, 2004). According to Henry, this is the path chosen by most of Western culture since Galileo. In this context, the subjects who sever all ties with life no longer have an ontological landmark and search for their identity in images or objects, and very often by the lure of money. In organisations they are prone to follow short-term pressure, often forcing them

to make disastrous decisions for the long term (cf. the asbestos disease, among many catastrophic examples).

Jealousy as pathology of life was described by the psychoanalyst Denis Vasse (1995) who is close to Henry. Jealousy, he says, in its most profound essence, is jealousy of life. When seeing another living person who is happy to be alive, the jealous person feels excluded from life and wants to possess the other and, by extension, possess life – a life which is given to him/her but which is rejected without being aware of this rejection. The jealous person has clearly lost reason – the close, happy tie with ones own life – and his/her rational arguments sound like *a posteriori* rationalisations of the urge to be the only one to possess. The jealous person is blinded and hovers on the brink of irrationality – and ultimately destroys both the other and him/herself.

In light of the pathologies of rejecting life, opening up to life has to be learned through education. One needs to learn to appreciate sharing life, in art, culture, in action with and for others. The subject also needs to learn discernment in order to discover the moments he opens up, or not, to life through the fundamental affects of suffering and joy. It is the responsibility of parents, teachers and friends to encourage this discernment. Now we have rediscovered the deep sense of reason (intellect) as an expression of life granted to will, let us now illustrate its link with rationality (understanding).

Rationality, Reasonableness and Open Deliberation

The development of these ideas around Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Henry should have shed some light on the distinction between rationality and reason. Rationalism survives when rationality is cut off from reason. Reasonableness is rationality guided by reason. Rationalist man only argues his choices (through calculation, logic or procedure) relying on existing ways of perceiving and classifying things. His thoughts and knowledge are "objective" because they are determined by a model and validated by certain measures. When rational human being acts he is confident of the exactness of his choices.

Conversely, reasonable human being consents to stay silent, to set aside one's ways of perceiving and classifying, one's drive for performance, in order to open to reason and to acknowledge a novel significant intention renewing the perceptions and attitudes which enable the person to situate oneself in relation to life, things and others. Then, through speaking words and/or courageous lively action, one can transcend the determinisms or conflicts and seek an enjoyable life with others while arguing rationally about the objective conditions of that. Through discernment, reasonable human being learns to open up to the *truth* of incarnated life when one acknowledges the Otherness of one's own subjectivity, auto-affection of life, and the other's Otherness, their own lively subjectivity.

With Merleau-Ponty I would like to emphasize that the rediscovery of reason does not lead to a rejection of rationality, no matter how complex and delicate their coexistence and connection is. Indeed, Husserl highlighted the difficulty of uniting the "world of real life" and the "scientifically true world": "The contrast and the inseparable union (…) draw us into a reflection which entangles us in more and more troublesome difficulties. The paradoxical interrelationships of the 'objectively true world' and the

'life-world' make enigmatic the manner of being of both" (1970: 131). I believe that with Merleau-Ponty we can overcome this difficulty by opening up to "a more fundamental Logos than that of objective thought, one which endows the latter with its relative validity, and at the same time assigns to it its place" (1962: 365). But, with Henry, I suggest that this more fundamental *Logos* is not only a significant intention relating to the world, but incarnated life relating to life and grounding significant intention. This opens up a new perspective for us: the exercise of rationality must be *referred to* the exercise of reason in order to remain human and lively, this is reasonableness. A contrario, 'de-reasonableness' occurs when rational arguments are not referred to reason.

To say that rationality must be referred to reason is to say that in order to attain reasonableness, rationality (which confirms the accuracy of objective arguments or conducts) must be subjected to the authority of reason and guided by reason (which opens up to phenomenological knowledge of life). This distinction between rationality and reason inevitably causes conflicts. But reason produces no objective knowledge. Through the subjective, intimate phenomenological experience of life, it draws attention to the good life. Thus reason obliges, but it is never an outside obligation. In the immanence of life in flesh, the living subject finds the resources and energy in life to consent, in an appropriate, and often inventive way (cf. Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful*) to the voice of life in his flesh while he is subjected to the constraints of the organisation. This is why I join Henry in maintaining that ethics are not just an outside code, but require the openness to reason. Furthermore, given the Otherness of the affects of experienced life, I argue that reasonable conduct cannot be predicted or prescribed from the outside, particularly in modern organisations. I will, however, recount a rather unusual example of this based on my own experience.

It was a moment of debate on choices, a deliberation. In *Oneself as Another* (1992), Ricœur reminds us that Aristotle did actually call deliberation the moment when people determine, via the exchange of arguments, their preferences in view of the success of the action to be accomplished. These deliberations, for Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, VI; 2000), should be rationally argued, organised and structured, in relation to the context and the singularity of the situation. And Greek heritage teaches us to watch over institutions which favour, by allowing speech, the quality of deliberations and which, I would like to add, may also favour opening up to the life which speaks in the flesh of the living. It is for this reason that I suggest that such deliberations should be called *open deliberations* when reason, alerted by a speaking, living speech, suspends rational calculation. Open deliberations, then, open to life and to living together, show the way to a good life and encourage reasonableness through renewed concepts, categories and attitudes, while the necessary rationality of debates goes on. This is when rationality is referred to reason.

By endowing the words 'open deliberation' with this sense of bringing reason and rationality together, I am thus giving it all the full meaning which the above reflections on reason and rationality have enabled me, through the work of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Henry, to bring to light. This perspective renews Aristotle's view that "the main characteristic of the wise man -phronimos- (…) is well conducted deliberation." Wise human beings, while deliberating, keep opened to the manifestation of life in their flesh,

consent to it, and doing this are oriented to the pursuit of an "enjoyable life with and for others in fair institutions" (Ricœur, 1992: 172). In keeping with this phenomenological approach, I now wish to share with you the way I experienced open deliberation before conceptualising it.

Presentation and Discussion of Research Fieldwork

Context and Methodology

The ideas I am developing here emerged from a field study carried out with a project leader in a multinational firm. For two years we undertook an action research project in which we held regular meetings with people (two hours every six week). These people were involved with the use and development of an already implemented information system designed to manage documents when launching new telecommunication hardware.

The researcher's methodological position, consistent with the phenomenological perspective, is undoubtedly different from the one he would have had in positivist epistemology. Indeed, he must focus his attention not on the issues of debates in order to subject them to an objective analysis, but, as Husserl says, on the 'life-world' in which the presence of subjects in relation to objects is revealed. In order to achieve this Husserl suggests we create a distance, "an épochè of all participation in the cognitions of the objective sciences (…) in regard to all objective theoretical interests, all aims and activities belonging to us" (1970: 135).

As a researcher, my methodology was to focus not on the actions of organizing themselves but on how taking the floor was possible or not for people in this open space for speech. With hindsight, I can define the methodological position as follows: the researcher in the field of organization studies (and consequently the manager) cannot control the emergence of words. But s/he can focus his/her interest on four possible tasks, namely: (1) devising and creating a formal context for dialogue, (2) make a note of all the factors which hinder true speech, (3) emphasize the emergence of this true speech when it occurs (and the conditions which are conducive to it), and (4) remain open to this speech himself.

Furthermore, I made a point of sharing my observations with the group I was working with at the beginning of each meeting, and thus opened up an unusual intersubjective dimension in a place where people focused on the objective organization of their working methods and procedures. The selections of dialogues which follow are derived from my experience of the situation through the phenomenological attitude I just presented. I will link these selections to the phenomenological concepts I presented in the first part of this paper but, needless to say, other perspective and ways of reading the situation are, of course, possible.

A Path to 'Open Deliberation'

Certain members of management have deemed opening up to the subjective dimension, the dimension of life-world, irrelevant in the context of the rationality of this western

firm. When I showed these people the results of the first series of meetings, I was surprised by their baffled reactions: 'we have to pursue goals: these bottom-up procedures aren't enough – we need top-down procedures too.' The open space for speech that we had set up was seen as a hindrance to these goals. 'Isn't this all cosmetic?'

However, despite these difficulties, we were able to find with this group a way towards the 'speaking word,' paving the way for an enjoyable life with the other through deliberation. Here, in chronological order, are some of the highlights of this journey;

The body and its Space-Time Points of Reference (1st and 2nd Meetings)
The 'speaking body' which 'points out and speaks', in the context of an environment dematerialised by working in data processing networks and by the digitisation of all media of information, appeared to be a body in search of new reference points:

Nicole (assistant): *I'm on the Avoriaz server, can I link up to Plotmi* (the application server)? (1st meeting).

Denise (Assistant): *Where* are *the files, by the way?*

Christian (Project Leader): *In the data base.*

Denise: *Yeah, there are some files floating around but we don't quite know where they are.* (2nd meeting).

When Existential Fears can be Expressed, from Force to Meaning (3rd Meeting)
The idea of a formal space open for speech allows the assistant to express, their 'lack to be', their experienced fears of losing their job. The dialogue between the technical assistants and the computer programmers enabled the assistants to say that they found the introduction of this network rather destabilizing. Indeed, they may well have feared that their role was under threat as the engineers would be able to input documents themselves. Thus, we went from a situation which was forced on us to a situation in which we were trying to create meaning.

Alain (Programmer): *Once the process engineers do it, the research department will do it.*

Nicole (Assistant): *And we'll go and sign on for the dole.*

Alain: *You say you've got nothing to do, but you could learn to check the documents: it's little details like that that make your job necessary and worthwhile.*

Denise (Assistant): *We'd need special training for the things we have to check. It should be made clear what our job is.*

Nicole: *We like to know and understand what we're doing.*

However, this discussion took place without any of the relevant engineers present.

From the 'Spoken Word' to the 'Speaking Word' (4th & 5th Meetings)
This time, and with one of the engineers present, the question of how the task of inputting data was divided up came up again. The project leader gave the feedback from management, who want things to stay the way they are; the computer programmer questioned this point of view and expressed a wish to bring up the subject freely in this open space for speech.

Alain (Programmer): *The important thing is what happens next and that we can talk about it freely.*

Christian (Project Leader): *It's management's view that it's the Technical Assistance Department's job to create the document.*

Alain: *The engineer's assistants do the dirty work. That's not a valid argument – that's just a way of keeping people stuck in their roles.*

Francis (Process Engineer): *we have a low input; I've only been here for 10 months. I was told that the Process Engineer did everything, now the Technical Assistance Department is supposed to take care of the documents…* (turns to the researcher for an answer).

Alain (Programmer): *The aim is client server architecture.*

Denise (Assistant): *I'm sure we'll still have a job to do.*

Francis (Process Engineer): *That still leaves the problem of creating the documents. Management says 'it's not your job to write the documents'.*

'I was told', 'Management says' these are examples of 'spoken word' which is meant to be heard and leaves no possibility for any exchange. In fact it is an absent other, 'he' – management – who is the subject of this dialogue. Instead of taking sides in this debate, I decided to bring up this perception which I call the 'arena effect' at the next meeting. This provoked a heated exchange.

(5th meeting) Francis (Process engineer, responds immediately, on the defensive): *Management set rules some time ago. Do we want to change these rules?*

Researcher: *What interests me is how we can talk about these questions. What you should do is, I don't know it will emerge from your discussions…*

Francis (Process Engineer): *If, and only if the person has the power of decision.*

Researcher: *Here you can exchange ideas and make suggestions to the managers.*

Christian (Project Leader): *Yes, making suggestions is useful. In that case I'll pass the ideas on to management.*

Here the researcher's intention is revealed in his words – words which aim to encourage openness where the rationality of the arguments could close the possibility of dialogue. After that, I illustrated how fruitful this kind of exchange can be by reading an extract

from the 3rd meeting, in which the question of checking documents was raised again. I underlined that this led to an interesting discussion on the possibility of a training course. The somewhat tense atmosphere relaxed, and, unexpectedly, an assistant who had worked in the department for a long time took the floor. Making a move toward incarnated intersubjective truth created then the openness which enables someone to become a subject who says 'I':

Véronique (Assistant): *I'd like to make some general comments about everything I've heard. The reason we're having problems is that our department is pretty big; there's a lack of communication because the systems are a bit too sophisticated, which has undermined the joint work effort between the assistant and the engineer. The engineers and us the technical assistants should pull together.*

Here we can see an expression of latent difficulties, followed by an interpretation of these difficulties, and the emergence of a desire for everyone to get along well together – '*pull together*': thus, concordance between self and others being aimed 'spoken words' gave way to 'speaking words.'

From 'Speaking Words' to 'Open Deliberation' (6th Meeting)
Within this dynamic of openness the group decided to have a meeting with the engineers from the Research Department. The next meeting was to take place in the Research Department, located 100 kilometres away, and the group planned to go in a convoy of cars. The scene I am about to present and analyse is the continuation of a process of opening up to the other which occurred in the last five meetings through several 'speaking words'. A key moment occurred in this sixth group meeting which had been held to review the progress of the project. Following a discussion with the project leader before the meeting, I began by saying: *"I have been told that some people were embarrassed by the fact that I named people when I spoke at the last meeting. I apologize for this, I didn't mean to make anyone uncomfortable."* I then went straight on to the last meeting: *"During the discussion about the relationship between the engineers and the assistants, I noticed a real dialogue, an open dialogue which respected the other person. There was a real desire for cooperation."* At that moment I perceived that the group was listening, that something was happening – like a crack in an ice field. A moment of silence, a pause seemed to be called for between each sentence. Thus, by opening up to the dimension of people's feelings – *"I have been told that some people were embarrassed … I apologize… I noticed a real dialogue"* the researcher was surprised to feel an unexpected dimension emerge from the density of silence. There was a need for silence, a need to momentarily suspend the organizing rationality for which the group had been assembled in order to acknowledge another dimension.

This initial feeling was confirmed in the car on the way back by one of the engineers: *You're talking about the life of the group. It's a bit strange; we didn't expect that. It gets us thinking; then, after a while, there's a moment of waiting around when we don't know what's going to happen next. It's good to have that at the beginning of a meeting.*

The next exchanges of opinions and feelings will shed some light on this strange dimension that emerges from silence and 'gets us thinking.' First and foremost, it

introduces a renewed presence to the self, a living incarnated self, in this dematerialised environment. This enabled people to articulate all the problems of organization which had been experienced as physical suffering and to be listened to: *"We're tearing our hair out over the suppliers because we don't know where to find out the information…"*

Furthermore, this dimension introduces a renewed presence to the other: I observed that the discussions progressed because people were able to shed their 'expert' image and admit ignorance: *"I'm sorry, I was wrong;" "I don't know;" "forget what I said, I got it all wrong."* Here, the pursuit of agreement with the other, of an intersubjective truth is more important than defending one's ego and image. Thus, in this meeting of experts, the *intersubjective truth* embodies their process to develop *exact* knowledge, through rational arguments, about how to structure the documentation. On the other hand, the dimension of the presence with the other creates a perception of time which allows people to distance themselves from the solutions they had previously come up with: *"That was another problem."* For just because an argument is rejected, it doesn't mean the person is. And thus we can see that the transformation of knowledge is linked to the phenomenological capacity of presence to oneself, the world, and the other: "The present mediates between the For Oneself and the For Others", as Merleau-Ponty says (1962: 452).

We are now going to finish off with the thorny question of how the tasks are to be divided up among the engineers, and how this dimension of a renewed presence to the other led to the pursuit of an *"enjoyable life with the other."* Following an in-depth discussion on how to structure documentation, which resulted in an agreement, the Project Leader raised the question of the allocation of roles:

Christian (Project Leader): *Now the question is: 'who modifies the files?' The question is, it's either you, the Research Department … or the Technical Assistance Department.*

Here, Christian spoke sedately, he poised after '*you, the Research Department*' giving time to silence where incarnated life can inform his colleague's significant intention.

Bruno (Engineer from the Research Department): *Seeing as they're a few weeks ahead of schedule, it should be the Technical Assistance Department's job to summarize the documents.*

Christian: *And what do the Technical Assistants in question think about that?*

An Engineer: *They're delighted!*

Eric (Process Engineer): *There is a potential risk of errors.*

Christian: *Which brings us to the question of checking. If there are any changes, the technical assistants send them to the Material Engineer, and she'll check them.*

Isabelle (Material Engineer): *I agree. I've checked, and there were some mistakes. Of course it's my job to check. I'll be working with X, Y and Bruno.*

Christian: *We'll make two separate documents. Who'll check the presentation of the Read Me?*

Isabelle: *I'll pass round a suggestion.*

Thus what emerged from this exchange was the rational organization of work and the pursuit of an enjoyable life with the other in which the jobs of the technical assistants were saved. One could reject this view, arguing that the agreed solution is not viable in the long run because it is less reliable and more expensive than having the Research Department do all the work – which was hinted at when one of the engineers talked about the potential risk of error. With regard to the checking process, the Project Leader found the answer, which consisted of turning logic upside down – escaping in the sense of Merleau-Ponty. In fact, in the computer programmer's opinion, the Research Department was supposed to input the files into the system and the Technical Assistance Service was to make up for some of the work they had lost by checking them (3rd meeting). At this point, another point of view was raised: the Technical Assistance Service would input the files, and their work would be checked by the Material Engineer. The group was able to "appropriate a de facto situation by endowing it with a (new) meaning". As to the objection on the grounds of the increased costs generated by this course of action, one could argue that if the Material Engineer checks the documents correctly and has all the necessary information, she will understand better what happens and will be able to pass on reliable information to the suppliers (as the cost of mistakes in this area is incomparable to the cost of this partial redundancy).

Furthermore, it is very interesting to note that this open deliberation concluded with a resolute determination to act in a spirit of responsibility and cooperation: *"I agree...I've checked. There were mistakes. Of course it's my job to check. I'll be working with X, Y and Bruno."* Phenomenological opening to incarnated life generates the subjects' will for a good life. In the end, there was joy and peace in the social body: *"That went well. We came up with a solution, and yet we didn't follow any of the usual meeting procedures: everyone was allowed to express themselves freely."* This is interesting because it appears that we are given some intuition that life (as the source of perception) is enjoying life (shared in the social body) and recognises what is good for life. In this situation, through experience, the desire for an enjoyable life was incarnated in a specific existential situation, so that each person was able to synchronize their life with another's, without knowing beforehand what was going to happen. If the goal to be attained had been set in a precise way, and if an objective had been fixed beforehand, such freedom would never have been possible. This is precisely how Merleau-Ponty defines freedom: "the polarization of a life towards a goal which is both determinate and indeterminate which, to the person concerned, is entirely unrepresented, and which is recognized only on being attained" (1962: 446). This freedom follows, I argue after Henry, a deeper freedom which is an opening, a consent to incarnate life which frees from internalized servitudes (see meeting 5).

Discussion

This experience enabled me to conceptualise open deliberation as a specific moment of organised collective action in which decisions are made. Here, opening to the world no longer means merely opening to a relationship based on conflict with the world but that

the living being has a resource that empowers him to undertake the act of speaking, dialogue and deliberating which transforms a relationship based on conflict, force struggle, into once based on sense. This article shows the possibility of such a perspective but without reducing it to a mere technique. There are several reasons for this: first of all, because reason as a way of opening to life is not possible without the subject's consent which is, for him, a fundamental freedom. However, this freedom can also be hindered when organisations impose targets which one experiences as going against reason (as defined here): feeding, housing, nursing, and educating, etc, the needy. For example, there are goals which are contrary to reason when the strategic team seeks the accumulation of the exchange value as an end in itself and imposes this, through systems of control and their ratios, on the people within the organization. The crucial point is when these ratios stifle the development of life hurting reason. This could be developed in the course of future research. Another basis for research could be the negative reduction of the notion of development to the notion of technological progress, technological progress becoming an end in itself.

Such gulfs between the teleology of life and the teleologies of organisations is for the living subject a source of suffering that calls for taking action or speaking out. There is the choice between "Exit, Voice or Loyalty" (Hirschman, 1975) and resistance. In each singular situation, the subject can appreciate, if possible with others, in reason, the time and methods of action; the risk of uttering risky words. This is why it might be worthwhile illustrating complementary ways for the living subject to consent to reason, particularly by establishing a network of personal relationships based on trust. The stronger the constraints of teleological orientations outside life are, the fewer the possibilities for negotiations will be (with associate repression and sometimes persecution) and the more the subject will suffer. In his book *La Barbarie* (1987), Henry speaks of a subjectivity forced into an underground life. What remains is humour, the living looks and gestures that the living subjects exchange among each other. In any case, this article shows the alienated side of any identification to organisations, which allows me to suggest the posture of a critical cooperation as being favourable to the living, reasonable subject.

Furthermore, this article has pointed at the restricted side of ethics based on social values. If values and social constructs are to be valued (Rosannas and Velilla, 2005), the ontological foundations of this valuation is, according to Henry, life, as affective flesh, which enables the subject to assess values, standards and social constructs. This argument offers new perspective on reason and suggests a way out of the rationalist gangue, straight jacket, in which the most widespread modern thought too often becomes trapped. This thought, after becoming free from traditional institutions, freed itself from reasonable reason as proposed by Locke (1690): this very modern thought, following Mandeville's rationalist utilitarianism (1714), made a public virtue of a private vice. With this article, as researcher, I have attempted to show that another way of thinking, reasoning (episteme) and acting (praxis) are both possible and desirable. These ways of thinking and acting based on phenomenology and the experience I relate here aim at clarifying concepts to reinforce all those who organise, discuss, and deliberate by consenting to the voice of reason. They strive not to switch off the voice of reason whilst working in organisations. True, in order to follow this road they must suffer the rationalist methods which are imposed upon them.

Conclusion and Opening

I suggest that following the phenomenological framework presented in this paper, the unexpected dimension is the dimension of reason understood as subjects' deep connection with life. This emerges like a crack in the ice field of rationality and then confirms the presence of the body, agreement with others and ultimately the pursuit of an enjoyable life with others, by realistically overcoming organizational difficulties. During the field study reported in this article, this dimension of reason emerged through an initial and unexpected moment of silence at the beginning of the sixth meeting. A moment where, according to my reading, and confirmed by the quality discussion, participants' consented to open to incarnated life. This opening gave a specific grounding to their way of talking, one to another. The fact that during this meeting, the rational organization of the documentary structure was that way, referred to the opening to reason and led me to call this series of exchanges 'open deliberation'. Consequently, I would like to stress that an opening up to incarnated life had a liberating effect both on the organizational issues and on the lives of the subjects

Reason is what sides with life in the flesh of human beings; reason is the expression of life in human affairs. This is a metamorphosis of reason. In order to argue this, I have relied upon Husserl's critique of western rationality and upon Merleau Ponty's phenomenology which opens up to "a more fundamental Logos than that of objective thought". I then went one step further and relied upon Henry's phenomenology of life to assert that this more fundamental Logos is the Logos of life which manifests itself in the flesh of living beings. Life is there to be understood as pure Self-affection. This enlightenment of reason as an expression of life which manifests itself through living beings' flesh is a renewed foundation to the thinking of organised collective praxis. This new understanding opens up possibilities for future research in social and human sciences.

In the field of organization studies, the phenomenological perspective which I have followed in this article enables me to identify two types of innovation. The first kind, which I call rational innovation, is merely the result of rational methods and analyses. Thus, such an innovation resulting purely from rationality is a lifeless, mundane, destructive innovation which conflicts with the subject and causes him to suffer. The subject is perceived through the resistance he develops to such changes. It is therefore a case of developing a 'carrot and stick' communication strategy in order to convince the subject to stick to the changes and become involved in them. Through the situation described and analysed above, I suggest that another form of innovation is possible – deliberated innovation. By opening up to the 'speaking body,' allowing the people in question to speak, I have discovered that it is possible through 'open deliberation' to refer the rationality of action to reason, and thus aspire to an "enjoyable life with and for the others." We could at this stage call this a creative innovation which is open to the subjects' lives. Thus managerial guidance consists in adequately structuring spaces for open deliberation, in the context of real open spaces for speech, or, as Ricœur (1992) says, in the sense of 'fair institutions.' For this to be possible, management must of course take the risk of suspending, momentarily, the exactness of its rational analyses, in order to let the living, embodied and incarnated intersubjective truth come through.

Then, provided that they are not subjected from the outset to a closed rational logic, open deliberations should allow unexpected innovations to emerge.

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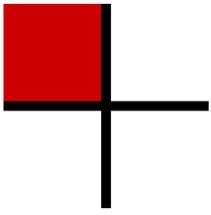
Confrontations of Philosophy, Management and Politics*

Mark Tadajewski

The intellectual is the eternal irritant. (Fuller, 2005b: 163)

Introduction

Appeals concerning the value of philosophy are increasingly well documented. We are, after all, only a few years past the call by Gadamer, Derrida, Ricœur, Rorty and Putnam for the introduction and underwriting of philosophy by government as a way to stimulate cultural and civic consciousness (Feyerabend, 1994). While I feel less secure about the value of government sponsored philosophy into education given the philosophical myopia stimulated by the support for 'positivism' in the mid 1950s by the big three philanthropic foundations. The idea that management scholars are continuing to come into closer contact with philosophy does *seem* to be moving us to question the usefulness of the frameworks through which we all work. Given that an intellectual peccadillo of my own is the relationship between these disciplines I was looking forward to the possibilities that this meeting of philosophy and management might hold. What follows then is a discussion of my own experience of the practicing philosophy of management conference held from the 7th to the 11th of July 2004, at St. Anne's college, Oxford based on notes taken at the conference and informed by my interpretation of the papers distributed prior to the conference.

Consuming Philosophy

I find myself frequently pausing to reflect on how philosophy, management and academic capitalism have become so tightly entwined. Where once people brought the

latest multivariate methods from psychology, we now see such intellectual beachcombing from philosophy. This philosophic turn can be found throughout the conference program I have in front of me which reads to my romantic eye like a mental random walk through the Accademia del Cimento where the motto '*probvando e riprovando[1]*' reverberates throughout the various papers that pique my interest with their concern to 'reprove' or 'reject' that which cannot be "maintained in the light of reason and experience" (Eco, 2004: 7). Of course, these terms are heavily loaded, but the central tenet appearing to guide those who want to bring philosophy into closer conjunction with management is the rigorous questioning of extant opinion, whether this means returning to now forgotten literatures, questioning particular readings of established texts, using philosophy in consultancy work or, to otherwise, make sense of empirical data. Certainly the movement of philosophy into management looks to hold great promise for management research and no doubt, provides those involved in promoting this cross fertilization with the kinds of intellectual differentiation tactics that make the respective participants stand out from the academic herd (Desmond, 1999).

Indeed we may even be the old, asthmatic wildebeest that trails behind this particular herd, for as Žižek reminds us, an old thesis formulated by Claude Levi Strauss "affirms that every philosopher, every theoretician, had another profession at which he failed and that marked his entire being" (Žižek and Daly, 2004: 23). Is the marketplace for philosophy in management populated by failed producers of ideas who regurgitate other people's work simply to put a spin on what would otherwise be classified as detritus, unworthy of publication, even in books by the Haworth Press, had it not received its gloss of philosophy (see, Brown, 1998: 201)? Perhaps. What we can say without fear of contradiction is that there is a market demand for these types of intellectual products and the mechanics of publication support such changes. Maybe I've started this essay being too negative – I'm all for the will to thought triumphing any will to docility. Like Kristeva (1986) I see the former as a central component in intellectual dissidence; a will to heresy, a will to be interesting, a will to perversion if you want. What better way to stimulate dissident thought in this otherwise managerialist enclave than to push management research/research on management into the space where philosophy and social science meet, since to "confront a professional philosopher is to confront one's own ignorance" (Burrell, 1994: 15).

Arrival

The Saïd Business School with its Illuminati style architecture greets the excited traveller. First thoughts, as ever, revolve around finding the accommodation and depositing the luggage. The accommodation was nice (*en-suite*) but the external structure of the college looked like a multi-story car park; although the smell that usually accompanies such structures was notably absent, to my relief. Despite the aesthetic deficiencies of the outer shell of the College, it is after all, only one part of the fabric of a city and Oxford has an exceptionally rich canvas to traverse. Moving around the city mid-afternoon experiencing architectural superlatives including the spire of St.

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1   To try and try again.

Mary's, the Bodelian library and the intellectually magisterial and aesthetically pleasing All Souls College, it is hard not to begin to be overawed. Oxford, of course, is well known as a centre for scholarly 'excellence' and has provided the scenic backdrop to numerous books and movies that I have consumed recently. Alas time had not stood still as I had hoped it might. This was not the Oxford as the old books represent it. There were few bespectacled boffins riding bicycles with their long scarves trailing behind them and more of the usual – commodification *writ large*. Where street corners would later support the sexual economy, there are now hordes of American students buying sweatshirts with the University of Oxford emblazoned across them – perhaps this is a more honest way of procuring the identity we desire. It certainly appears to be the way that things are headed.

Ruminating on what might be a manifestation of the consumerist syndrome Bauman likes to talk about (e.g. Rojek, 2004), I wonder what impact this syndrome might have on the practice of philosophy in management? This was one question I was trying to grope toward in my mental preparation for this conference. My engagement with the literature did not lead me to hold a positive view of the interaction between philosophy and management scholarship; a view that was reinforced by the book I was reading while my colleagues made themselves at home in the conference venue. The particular text discussed (among other things) the epistemological stance of Paul Feyerabend. Despite being quite faithful to his intellectual thought at the time of *Against Method* (1975), an otherwise functional analysis concluded by suggesting that Feyerabend finished his lectures by jumping out the window on to a motorbike. Not bad for someone whose legs were partly paralysed in WWII. The source of this misinformation; that font of wisdom: *The Bluffers Guide to Philosophy* aka *Bluff Your Way in Philosophy* (see, Hankinson, 1985: 42).

Poaching

Standing in the hallway waiting to enter the lecture theatre where a keynote speaker is scheduled to speak, it seems to me that a more appropriate name for a philosophy and management conference would be poaching philosophy into management. The hunting metaphor is entirely apt given that management scholars routinely hunt through the forests of history, trapping strange things discovered in a past literature, to sell in the marketplace of ideas. After all, academic careers are made from the poaching of philosophy and the pounding and slicing of the material into ever thinner products evincing, on occasion, little concern for the heritage of these ideas (Jones, 2002a, 2004a). Maybe this is the real reason I am here: to poach the ideas of others and use them to my own ends, most likely in a future paper. This, I should quickly add, is no bad thing. For Certeau poaching is an act that we should embrace in our consumption habits. We live, he writes, by poaching in countless ways '*using* the products of the dominant economic order' in (very, very occasionally) ingenious ways (Certeau, 1984: xii-xiii; emphasis in original). It seems strange that this practice is actively encouraged within certain spheres of intellectual activity while poaching in the management literature is usually disingenuously labelled borrowing, as if one discipline owns the content of their ideas.

This said philosophy and social theory provide us with suitably legitimate vocabularies to engage in those activities that might otherwise be denied the support of the current socio-economic order that delineates what is and what is not an appropriate object of management theory. Judging by the content of the conference program, there would appear to be a niche market for making the corpuses of philosophers, economists and psychoanalysts bend and groan, with all the usual suspects including Freud, Hayek, Kuhn, Popper, Bergson and Spinoza (among others) represented. While these were novel readings in their own respects, sometimes it feels as if we are unwilling to refuse the advances of philosophers because they allow us to remain immature at heart. It is, as Kant (1996) pointed out, often convenient to be immature and our immaturity is sometimes manifested in our drafting in professional philosophers to buttress, otherwise obvious commentary. Philosophy, in other words, provides us with the branding needed to negotiate the marketplace of ideas; it breathes authority. Far from encouraging the kinds of transgressive acts that Foucault (1997) saw as desirable, we are seen so often to be quoting the same limited number of people in the same way that they were introduced to the community at large. The enrolment of philosophy into management can, if we let it, have the potential to become a limiting function where we become "dominated by someone else's vocabulary" (Phillips, 2002: xiii).

In our secular academic environment the philosopher takes the place of the spiritual adviser and from whom it is difficult to move beyond. And where Kant bemoans those who fail to strive for his ideal of human life and submit to the authority of reason rather than remain constricted by the irrational forces of religious fact, we now find the idea that the incorporation of philosophy into management is inherently a good thing frequently touted, and maybe it is. Certainly as I wander from seminar room to seminar room on my first evening here, the monologues that emanate from these scholarly environs are peppered with quotations from the likes of Hegel and Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari, and the spectres of these writers continue to haunt the various discussion throughout the night.

Perversion

While poaching of philosophy into management causes management scholars little concern, the perversion of philosophical thought is an issue that troubles Campbell Jones. In his presentation on the first evening he offers us some indication of what 'perversions of philosophy' might look like. Following the Oxford English Dictionary perversion is defined as: "To turn (a person or thing) aside from its proper use or nature; to misapply or misconstrue (words, etc.); and to lead astray (a person, a person's mind etc.) from the right opinion or conduct)" (Jones, 2004b). And at the most basic level, Jones argues, we might see perversion ranging from "minor mistakes and technical errors" to, at the other end of his continuum, "wholesale misunderstandings of philosophers and philosophical concepts". Now none of this is new and Jones would be the last to claim so. What he does contribute to the current discussion is he exposes some far wider and more complex issues relating to the way our readings decide themselves in the face of what we can call, if we assume some distance from 'positivism', undecidable texts.

In outlining his argument Jones draws from two prominent theorists of perversion, namely Freud and Foucault. Jones, unlike Freud, seems to move away from the idea that there is some content criterion regarding what is and what is not going to count as perverse. While he remarks that the two examples he cites, one from Catherine Casey and the other from Richard Elliott, can 'perhaps' be seen respectively as 'a simple blunder' and 'a seriously questionable interpretation', he is not arguing for one correct interpretation of a text. There are indeed numerous criteria of what constitutes 'perversion' in Freud's work. It is only when we have some idea of normal, sexual development and maturation that we can decide what is perverse or not. In short, we need some rule or convention that signals when we cross a boundary from the normal into the perverse, where we move from the conventionally sanctioned philosophical cunnilingus to the apparent perversity of digging up corpses in the cemetery and using them for an unconventional puppet show.

Bringing Freud and Foucault together, perversion, says Jones (2004b), "is a matter of pleasure, it is a matter of knowing when there is a rule, but breaking it anyway"; when this desire to transgress finds its outlet in the critical philosopher, she 'acknowledges that the limit has been breached, but that this was the intention, the goal of their philosophical activity'. This checking of *doxa* aside for the moment, what some may find troubling in this call for perversion is whether this transgressive ethos will be 'useful' for the pursuit of the mantle of science in relation to management, organization studies or marketing. Doubtless Pfeffer (1993) would sniff at Jones's proposal, seeing it as tantamount to inviting economists or some such imperialistic force to over run organization studies. This aside, the value of transgression and perversion seems to offer such promise because it can, in the right hands, open discursive space for alternative forms of thought that offer a counterpoint to the kind of dogmatism and normalising force that are apparent in the recent calls for Popperian rationalism and falsificationism (see below). However before this begins to sound excessively idealistic, we must recall Foucault's comments on power/knowledge; talking about perversion and transgression within the interstices of power relations cannot allow us to forget that this transgression has to be sanctioned by the academic community. As the limited number of published cases show us, if material is to negotiate the gate-keeping parties, it frequently has to be diluted to socially acceptable levels as a condition for publication (e.g. Weaver and Gioia, 1994). As John Shotter affirms, intellectual debate is usually subject to both implicit and explicit strictures and academics

> must function within a culture of domination, of hierarchy, a Cartesian culture of mastery and possession, and we experience a certain anxiety when we begin to speak out against it, to "speak the truth to power." As such, it tends to disorient us, to distract us from the words we need, we find ourselves saying what we know will be acceptable, rewarded; it is an anxiety that tends differentially, to silence us, we tend to speak of some things but not others, in certain styles but not others. (Shotter, 1997: 18)

What is worth considering here is whether a line can be drawn between what might be considered 'good' or 'bad' perversion, although Jones might not want to draw absolute lines here. We could nonetheless suggest that a 'good' perversion is one that opens discursive space rather than close it down – it works to reveal bullshit, rather than clothe and support it in the academic marketplace (Frankfort, 2005).

Naturally the attachment that academics feel toward their respective positions is something that should not be underestimated and most academic debate, it is said, simply ends up with academics talking past or remaining "staunchly bellicose" towards each other (Case, 2004: 61). This is not unexpected. Freud, in one of his more extreme moments, offers us some insight into the human condition. Men (sic), he suggests are not the most gentle creatures but are prone to use their neighbours as punching bags, as forced sexual objects, in short, they like to torment and cause pain (Freud, 2003). Given Freud's predilection for introspection, this may reveal more of him than other people. What is clear is that the games we play when entering into intellectual debate reveal a considerable amount about our intellectual virtues and vanities and, heaven forfend, we may even be more intolerant of others beliefs than we would like to acknowledge. It is not simply that people lack the intelligence to engage in productive academic debate since "intelligence is not itself enough for understanding: one must *want* to understand, and try and be willing to sustain that effort" (Magee, 1998: 511; emphasis in original). We may say we are willing to enter into dialogue with other communities but on the other hand what we say we are willing to counternance and what we actually do in practice are usually far from consistent with each other as the sociology of science serves to reiterate.

Like science, the practice of philosophy is context dependent in a variety of senses. On the one hand, individual philosophers will pursue questions that they find particularly interesting and this pursuit will be dependent on the local environment (i.e. the availability of research funding, time limitations and cognitive abilities of the researcher and so forth); which, in turn, is subject to the exigencies of the political, economic and social environment. Reflecting the vitality of the emerging interest in the practice of philosophy in and for management, participants at this conference will necessarily have divergent research interests but as the conference website indicate that the aim of this conference was to bring together those interested in the meeting of philosophy and management in order to encourage stimulating discussion, by providing "an opportunity for theorists and practitioners to present new work in the philosophy of management, engage with philosophical and practical issues…*and experience the power of philosophical skills and methods in practice*" (Oxford, 2004; emphasis added). With this discursive openness in mind I was somewhat dismayed to see practicing, practical philosophers (for want of a better label) drawing from secondary sources in order to support their arguments. The exemplar here being the use of interpretations and quotations from Sokal and Bricmont's notorious (1999) *Intellectual Impostures*, otherwise known as *Fashionable Nonsense* (Sokal and Bricmont, 1999).

Now using a secondary reading of a text is perhaps more understandable if the material has not been translated into a language that the reader can understand, or if the material is extremely hard to procure, but where the material is comparatively easy to obtain as is the case with much of the philosophical content currently used by management scholars, (although, of course, there is material that falls into the categories indicated above) the use of secondary sources rather than the primary text is questionable.

Turning to secondary sources while not entirely desirable might nonetheless be a contemporary manifestation of the demands that, for example, the Research Assessment Exercise, tenure tracking or other institutional constraints place on academic labour.

Such strictures are not, however, new. They are simply another modified form of intellectual policing that forces intellectual products to operate within certain bounds that have been present since time immemorial. We would do well to recall that within the academy it is coercion that is the natural state of affairs with academic freedom socially engineered (Menand, 1996). Here I might gesture towards the impact of McCarthyism on philosophy which led to greater importance placed on analytic philosophy since "one way to indicate that one was not Communist, or fellow traveller, or a sympathizer (and do so) was to engage in a quasi-scientific search for the truth" (McCumber, 2001: 46). Apparently because it was not possible to "simultaneously give allegiance both to Communism and to the search for truth" (*ibid.*). Whatever. While the dragging of philosophers before various un-American Committees is far removed from having to manufacture four publishable papers every few years or so, it is this willingness to place oneself in the firing line, so to speak, that has characterised the greatest intellectuals from "Jesus to Galileo, Voltaire, Zola and Bertrand Russell, all stood trial, and most of the rest courted lawsuits" (Fuller, 2005a: 17).

In the academy today we might presume constraints on the seeable and sayable are long gone (assuming Vice Chancellors, Dean, Heads of Department, research committees are benevolent souls which, of course, they are). We must however remain aware that it is all too easy for people to try to squash the "free-ranging and reckless spirit" that makes academic debate so interesting. This can be achieved through the invocation of "rules and standards that you know – and in other contexts would admit – are arbitrarily imposed for the sake of administrative convenience" (Fuller, 2005b: 4). Or, we might add, for intellectual convenience. But equally I wonder whether there is something in Burrell's suggestion that despite claims otherwise, disciplines in academia are not about dialogue, "Conversation and gossip possibly, but dialogue is eschewed" (Burrell, 2001: 18). Now while I am not convinced that any incommensurability between paradigms necessarily results in wholesale translation failure between paradigmatic specialities (Tadajewski, 2004a), I remain sceptical with regard to the extent to which dialogue does take place, and the implications of attempting to subject knowledge claims to empirical test based on the critical tenants of Popperian rationalism. These and related issues were highlighted in one particular paper at the conference and deserve close attention precisely because subjecting knowledge claims to evaluation seems so reasonable and this is what makes it dangerous.

Falsificationism

Responding to a paper previously published in the journal *Philosophy in Management* which proposed that management theory needed Popperian falsificationism because the "openness and [criticality of] Popper's approach…should perhaps make us more critical of the claims raised [by management theorists] rather than reject them outright" (Moss, 2003), Loughlin argues that whether management needs Popper is a more "tricky question" than Moss acknowledges. So that I do not distort his main argument it is worth using his own précis of his response to Moss:

> To recap, there are problems for falsification (a) as a methodology of science and (b) as a model for management theorists. In summary they are: a) Its conservatism: better, but newer theories can

be killed off when they come into conflict with older, well-established theories which colour the 'horizon of expectations'. Observation statements rooted in entrenched, but false theories are allowed to count against newly emergent theories. (Conclusion: strict falsificationism holds up scientific progress and so could hold up progress in management theory.) b) No conclusive testing is possible because too many theories are implicated in every test situation. Any bit of the structure could be amended following falsification…(Conclusion: in the end, respectable science is in the same predicament as the bulk of management theory, with no decisive falsification really possible.) (Loughlin, 2004)

Loughlin presents his paper as a counterpoint for the "anti-rationalism (including postmodernism and relativism) [that] threaten to provide a rationale for the worst excesses of management theory" and against the views of those "on the left, including those who pride themselves on being 'critical'". In the place of such epistemological positions Loughlin demands that management researchers "approach their work with a fallibalist 'mindset and self-critical spirit' in order to militate against the "worst excesses of management theory". These excesses, he adds, are symptomatic *of a broader intellectual malaise: debate is increasingly characterised by the exchange of persuasive rhetoric, making it difficult to hold those in positions of power to accountable for rationally justifying the positions they espouse*" (Loughlin, 2004; emphasis in original). Continuing in this vein, he bemoans the extent to which management theory has failed to be subject to careful, rational debate, while it nonetheless remains widely marketed throughout the academic and practitioner communities. Rational debate and the ability of management theorists to systematically question the value of producing particular theory leads Loughlin to propose that the realism and rationalism which underpins Popper's falsificationist philosophy of science is something that needs "to be preserved".

The claim that Loughlin makes about academic debate being 'increasingly characterised by the exchange of rhetoric' is perfectly plausible. Whether or not it is desirable for those involved in the production of theory to *rationally* justify the positions they espouse as Loughlin would like, is an issue worth examining in some detail. As a gesture in this direction let us now turn first to falsificationism and following this to Galileo's propagandist tactics for de-positioning the Aristotelian theory of perception.

Popper

Since Popper's reception by management scholars has been called into question (Jones, 2002b), it is worthwhile outlining what we mean by falsificationism. Registering Hume's argument that induction can never verify a hypothesis, Popper rejects the principle of verificationism and adopted the criterion of falsificationism according to which, if a statement is to speak about reality, it must be falsifiable, and if it is not falsifiable, it will not speak about reality (Popper, 1980; 1988). For Popper theories cannot be conclusively verified, but they can be confirmed. These confirming instances will never be sufficient to verify a theory because a finite number of confirming instances cannot verify a universal claim to truth, although one piece of evidence may serve to falsify a theory with science seen to progress through the trial and error of conjecture and refutation (Popper, 1963). Popper was, it should be recalled, no naïve empiricist. Falsificationism did accept the theory-laden nature of observation with

empirical, experimental results always seen to involve some degree of interpretation of the facts observed in light of the underlying theory. Falsificationism, however, presents us with a number of difficulties. On the one hand it is clear that Popper lays down overly strict guidelines for adjudicating 'scientific' claims to knowledge by suggesting that they must be falsifiable. As Chalmers (1999) notes, when we turn to history of science the idea that falsificationism is actively undertaken borders on laughable – we need only cite examples such as the serious experimental evidence against special relativity theory and the disinterest of the physics community to question this theory (see, Feyerabend, 1975; Kuhn, 1970a, 1970b; Polyani, 1958). Not only do scientists evince an extreme reluctance to falsify their work, but if falsification had been followed as a strict methodology then many of the theories generated by some of the best minds in science would never have progressed beyond their infancy, that is, these scientists exhibited varying degrees of adherence to what is called the principle of tenacity. Commensurate with Popper (1963: 312n1) Feyerabend thinks that this 'principle of tenacity' is a desirable feature of scientific practice as it allows scientists to develop and improve their theories. And as the following case study highlights, it is often of greater benefit for the long-term development of science if this principle of tenacity is occasionally, and irrationally, subscribed to whether or not one's contemporaries agree.

Galileo, Galileo Here We Go…[2]

As an example of the desirability of the principle of tenacity Feyerabend presents the tower experiment that was used by the Aristotelians' to demonstrate that the Earth did not rotate on its axis, as Galileo argued. According to an Aristotelian position, if a rock is dropped from the side of a tower and the earth rotated, then it would fall some distance from the tower itself. This is because the earth was rotating while the rock was descending to earth and this interpretation, Feyerabend, tells us, was so convincing because of the naïve realism that underpins an Aristotelian theory of perception where "apparent [motion] is identical with real (absolute) motion" (Feyerabend, 1975: 74). Here perception "is a process in which the object perceived enters the percipient as precisely as the same form that characterized the object so that the percipient, in a sense, assumes the properties of the object" (Feyerabend, 1975: 148). According to this worldview, perception is untainted, in that it does not allow room for any form of optical illusion or deception. In empirical terms this means that the perception that the rock does not fall far from the building will substantiate the Aristotelian thesis and, in turn, serves to falsify the Copernican thesis that the earth revolves. In this case, the experimental data were incontrovertible and from the point of view of 17th century thought the thesis that the earth was not in motion was "impeccable and quite forceful" (Feyerabend, 1975: 75). So rather than trying to refute the Aristotelian thesis Galileo adopted a different strategy and tried to 'defuse' their arguments by attempting to change their conceptual system by introducing a new interpretation of what was happening to the rock while falling: "Galileo at once admits the correctness of the sensory content of the observation made assuming that heavy bodies such as rocks,

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2   Note that the demonstration and rhetoric used do not express any "deep convictions of mine. They merely show how easy it is to lead people by the nose in a rational way" (Feyerabend, 1975: 32).

when falling from the height of the tower will as a matter of course, fall perpendicularly to the earth" (Feyerabend, 1975: 71). Rather than directly question this assumption, Galileo found it more practical to bracket the appearance of the rock falling perpendicularly from the tower as something 'on which we all agree'. The task remains that "the power of reason [is used] either to confirm its reality or to reveal its fallacy" (Galileo in Feyerabend, 1975: 71). In his attempt to question the "natural assumption"[3] in Aristotelian theory that sense data were foundational and uncontaminated by extraneous influence, Galileo sought to problematise their theory/observation distinction by introducing the equivocation that we might somehow be deceived by our sensory experiences:

> The event is the appearance to those who travel along a street by night being followed by the moon, with steps equal to theirs, when they see it go gliding along the eaves of the roofs. There it looks to them just as would a cat really running along the tiles and putting them behind it; an appearance which if reason did not intervene, would only too obviously deceive the senses. (Galileo in Feyerabend, 1975: 71)

The task of reason in relation to this example is to interfere where the natural interpretations lead us to make erroneous conclusions about sensory experience. In the example above, real motion and relative motion are conflated. Nonetheless Galileo continued to support a falsified position questioning the veracity of the interpretations of sensory experiences (not the sensory impressions themselves but the interpretation made of them) that empirical experiment at the time supported. And it is here that Galileo adopts Plato's theory of *anamnesis* to surreptitiously introduce new 'natural interpretations' to replace the Aristotelian theory of perception. Providing additional empirical interpretations would have been simple had Galileo subscribed to the theory/observation distinction of the Aristotelians, but he did not. So in this context he had to carefully market his theory reminding the Aristotelian reader "that there are situations in which the non-operative character of shared motion is just as evident as firmly believed as the idea of the operative character of all motion in other circumstances" (Feyerabend, 1975: 81): "The interpretation which Galileo uses restores the senses to their positions as instruments of exploration, *but only with respect to relative motion*. Motion "among things which share it in common" is "non-operative", that is, "it remains imperceptible, and without any effect whatsoever" (Feyerabend, 1975: 78; emphasis in original).

What Galileo is arguing here is that if Aristotelians' have always, to some extent, accepted the relativity of motion then why can they not accept that what occurs at the terrestrial will also hold at the celestial level. This, of course, is a major problem for Copernican theory and frustrated by the lack of recourse to a theory/observation distinction[4] Galileo has no option but to avoid questioning the assumption base of his potential interlocutors.

Galileo's problems did not end here. The Copernican theory was not simply refuted terrestrially but was fundamentally problematic at a celestial level. Apart from the

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3   A natural interpretation represents the '*a priori* presuppositions of science or else…prejudices*'* that frame all observation (Feyerabend, 1975: 73).

4   Since this did not exist in the extant Aristotelian epistemology (Feyerabend, 1975: 72).

difficulties Galileo faced regarding the continued support of the Aristotelian natural interpretations he runs into further problems in relation to his attempts to observe celestial events concerning the sizes of Mars and Venus over successive stages of their orbits. "Mars, when it is close to us…would have to look sixty times as large as when it is most distant. Yet no such distance is seen" (Galileo in Feyerabend, 1975: 101). Venus poses similar difficulties: "which, if it circulates around the sun, as Copernicus says…ought to appear to us a little less than forty times as large when it is beyond the sun and near conjunction. Yet the difference is almost imperceptible" (Galileo in Feyerabend, 1975: 102). In addition to these empirical difficulties, Feyerabend offers us a number of examples that suggest that Galileo's activities run counter to falsificationism and 'rationality', in this historical context. Let us briefly consider two more points to substantiate the argument that falsification and rational debate are not necessarily qualities we should place on a pedestal. The first relates to the use of the telescope and the second to the content of Copernican over Aristotelian theory.

Telescopic Observation

When we examine the above analysis it seems clear that supporting Copernicanism in the absence of any corroborating evidence was to subscribe to an irrational position. Certainly prior to the invention of the telescope this was the case. We should not, however, rush to assume that Galileo's use of the telescope would corroborate the Copernican theory of perception and motion, as early telescopes were notoriously unreliable. Not only were optical theories at the time underdeveloped, but Galileo himself was far from versed in the latest theory. He was, to put it mildly, an enthusiastic DIY telescope builder. Even Kepler with his superior knowledge of optical theory refrained from building a telescope since he had 'misgivings'. Galileo however had none of these because he was 'totally ignorant of the science of optics'. This was, Kepler writes, "a most happy accident both for him and for humanity at large" (Feyerabend, 1975: 105n21). While the telescope was an undoubted commercial success, allowing further terrestrial sight than was previously possible, it nevertheless remained that its "application to the *stars*, however, was another matter" (Feyerabend, 1975: 108; emphasis in original).

It was far from certain that what worked terrestrially would function celestially, because of the contemporary view that terrestrial and celestial objects were made of different materials and thereby obeyed different laws. Outside of this domain of sensory experience the data gleaned from telescopic observations was likely to 'give misleading reports'. As an example, Feyerabend draws attention to the view of the moon reported by Galileo, which gave "us an entirely false idea of its distance and size" (Feyerabend, 1975: 122n2; see 1975: 131, 148-149). These difficulties were further compounded since the empirical evidence derived from "even the best observers were either plainly *false* and capable of being shown at the time, or else *self-contradictory*" (Feyerabend, 1975: 127; emphasis in original). In spite of these difficulties, the observations Galileo made using the telescope did have one advantage over the naked eye which supported Copernican theory in that it was now possible to observe the changes in brightness of

Mars and Venus that Galileo had expected to see, but which, remained imperceptible to the naked eye:

> Compared with the total performance of the telescope this change is still quite puzzling. It is just as puzzling as is the Copernican theory when compared to pre-telescopic evidence. But this change is in harmony with the predictions of Copernicus. *It is this harmony* rather than any deep understanding of cosmology and optics *which for Galileo proves Copernicus and the veracity of the telescope* in terrestrial as well as celestial matters. And it is on this harmony that he builds an entirely new view of the universe. (Feyerabend, 1975: 142; emphasis in original)

Here we have one refuted view, the idea of planetary motion, partly supported by another similarly tenuous proposal empirically derived from an apparatus that was known to produce optical illusions. While Popper might be body-popping in his grave now, his torment is not yet over. Since Galileo's development of an entirely new view of the universe certainly did not conform to Popper's objective ideal of a better theory, that is, one that came closer to finding out the truth. Nor did it explain or predict "all that the earlier hypothesis explained and predicted successfully" or succeed "at those points which found the old hypothesis to be at fault" (Popper, 1988: 262). What we have is a theory that does the opposite. The Aristotelian world-view, its astronomy, psychology, physics and epistemology all "collaborate in the Aristotelian philosophy to create a system that is coherent, rational, and in agreement with the laws of observation" (Feyerabend, 1975: 149). All of these facts combined to make Aristotelianism a very powerful system. Compared to this Galileo's view was fragmentary and incomplete, replacing a comprehensive theory of motion, by a much narrower theory which reduced a wealth of empirical evidence to "an experience that contains speculative elements" (Feyerabend, 1975: 100). This shift backwards was, as we now know, a huge advance for science. In this case, the "method of conjectures and refutations – would have had disastrous consequences" (Feyerabend, 1975: 143). It is only because these ideas survived, however irrational they may have appeared to Galileo's contemporaries, that they can now be said to "be in agreement with reason" and rationality (Feyerabend, 1975: 155). Or to express it slightly differently, "Copernicanism and other '*rational*' *views exist today only because reason was overruled in the past*" (Feyerabend, 1975: 155; emphasis in original).

The use of rhetoric, propaganda and persuasion by Galileo in this example, and which Loughlin so dislikes, reveals that in this case Galileo's 'persuasible proof' was a rational move (Moss, 1993). Loughlin on the other hand would, on his own criteria of requiring management researchers to engage in 'rational' debate to produce inter-subjectively certified 'objective' knowledge, have to argue *ceteris paribus* that Galileo was being irrational, a trait Loughlin would not apparently admire. This was because Copernican theory was "inconsistent, not just with other theories, but even with *experiments, facts, observations*" and current inter-subjective convention at the time[5] (Feyerabend, 1975:

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5   Other notable examples include Bohr's atomic model, special relativity theory and general relativity theory, Newton's theory of colours, classical mechanics and the propensity towards the "renormalization" of results (crossing our calculations and replacing them with a description of empirical observation) (Feyerabend, 1975: 56, 57, 59, 60). In addition, we might consider, Darwin's theory of evolution, since despite gaps in the fossil record, Darwin refused to acquiesce to the view that he might be wrong; something that subscribers to creationism continue to point out now (Bird, 2000).

55; emphasis in original). It was, Feyerabend concludes, "philosophically absurd" (1975: 64), "outlandish and… obviously false" (1975: 77). And its "invention, defence, and partial vindication runs counter to every methodological rule one might care to think of today" (Feyerabend, 1975: 66-67). And we might add only became accepted by the wider scientific community by virtue of Galileo practicing supposedly irrational means of persuasion, including propaganda, *ad hoc* hypotheses and appeals to emotion, all amplified "by tricks and jokes" (Feyerabend, 1975: 154). Galileo was not the only theorist to engage in such practices and neither have thinkers today eschewed such practices. If anything, Feyerabend suggests, "modern science is more opaque, and more deceptive, than its 16th and 17th century ancestors have been" (Feyerabend, 1975: 64). The same might also be said for management research.

Politics and the Marketplace of Ideas

Galileo was well aware of the politics of the marketplace of ideas to which he targeted Copernican theory and was a major supporter of the use of persuasion and propaganda in his communication with influential scientific and religious communities alike. In all his propagandist activities he was "guided by the insight that established institutions, social conditions, prejudices may hinder the acceptance of new ideas and that new ideas may have to be introduced in an 'indirect' manner, by forging links between the circumstances of their origin and the forces that might engender their survival" (Feyerabend, 1975: 106n22). The idea that it would be beneficial if we had more Popperian rationalism and realism in management theory is either less aware of the politics of academic debate or prefers to refrain from passing comment upon it. And it is here that Loughlin's (and Popper's) demand that we refrain from the use of rhetoric in academic debate and engage in attempts to inter-subjectively certify our knowledge thereby producing 'objective', third world theory which he appears to argue is "a truth independent of one's language and belief system" runs into difficulties.

Somewhat paradoxically it is here that Loughlin is at his most convincing and likely to enrol third parties into his vision of the current state of philosophy in management. Taking philosophically loaded terms such as realism, truth and other technical philosophical terms he is, I assume, acutely aware that these also carry everyday meanings that any reasonable reader of the journal organizing this conference would be sympathetic to: "Neutrals, undecideds and those who prefer empirical action to philosophical talk are more inclined *certeris parabus*, to cheer for hooray words and jeer at "boo words" such as "relativism", "subjectivism", or "anti-realism"" (Brown, forthcoming). Loughlin's discursive strategy is, in spite of this, perfectly in keeping with what is now viewed as the second scientific revolution in science; a revolution characterised by the rise of the importance attributed to rhetorical moves in establishing scientific credibility. Unsurprisingly Galileo is seen as the figurehead of this discursive shift – the "supporters and opponents of Copernicus invoked "persuasible" proof to tip the balance created by dialectical arguments that seemed equally probable" (Moss, 1993: vii). In this context Galileo is heralded as leading the way for rhetoric to be used in a scientific domain in order to advance the cause of science. And whether he likes it or not, Loughlin, engages in the same games. He is consequently not what Popper

would see as a rationalist, that is, someone who engages in reasonable discussion and "who attempts to reach decisions by argument and perhaps, in certain cases, by compromise, rather than by violence" (Popper, 1963: 356). Nor is he "a man who would rather be unsuccessful in convincing another man by argument than successful in crushing him by force, by intimidation and threats, or even by persuasive propaganda" (Popper, 1963: 356) since he appeals to the "emotional make-up of the man and not his reason"[6] (Popper, 1945: 228). Of course the reasons why such appeals are made are clear. Since as Kuhn has pointed out a falsificationist position underpinned by rationalism is 'extremely odd' because "where a whole theory or often even a scientific law is at stake, arguments are seldom so apodictic" (Kuhn, 1970b: 13). Furthermore the requirement that a theory is held to be 'truthful' when it is inter-subjectively corroborated raises a number of problems that again highlight the way that philosophy can be used selectively to present a rational argument, while at the same time, effectively shutting down debate. Here is one brief example taken from the marketing literature.

In an unusually honest paper we are told that the development of knowledge in marketing is subject to 'certain rules and conventions' that determine what contributions are to be admitted "as *bone fide* knowledge by those working within and outside the domain" (Greenley, 1995: 665; emphasis in original). These rules and conventions, Greenley reminds us (as if we could forget), are based on the conventions of 'positivism' which presuppose underlying uniformities in the subject matter that can yield law-like generalizations. Controversial and new research Greenley argues, must adhere to the rules and conventions deemed acceptable by this paradigm: "if they do not build-on existing knowledge in a justifiable manner then they are outside the doctrine of criticality" (Greenley, 1995: 668). In this case, "persons who violate the rules do not enter a new territory; they leave the domain of meaningful discourse" (Feyerabend, 1994b: 17). The language used by Greenley along with that of Lakatos (1970), Popper (1963) and Loughlin (2004) is indicative of the distain in which they hold forms of knowledge that deviate from either the 'rationality' demanded by the latter three commentators or the subscription to his personal cosmology (and that of many others) demanded by the former.

Where we have commentators proposing that it is reasonable and rational to work through academic debate in a rationalist fashion, their actions say otherwise. For example, either we are rational, reasonable Popperian's or we are violent: "I frankly confess that I choose rationalism because I hate violence" (Popper, 1963: 357). The production of knowledge, whatever the philosophical tradition we work in, has more similarity to power-games than any of the above authors are likely to admit and yet they freely provide us with examples of where, if a researcher is not rational, reasonable and refuses to play by the rules that they outline, it is likely that their work will be confined to the margins of academic debate, if it is admissible at all. Lakatos is most explicit here, pre-empting many of the later debates in management, marketing and organization studies when he admits not only that science is rule governed but that this is a good thing: "Editors of scientific journals should refuse to publish…papers which will…either contain solemn reassertions of their position or absorption…by ad hoc,

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6   As Popper himself does.

linguistic adjustments. Research foundations, too, should refuse money" (Lakatos, 1971: 105). Here Lakatos is quite willing to act as a policing force for science, refereeing the methodological rules of the game, as it were. As Phillips acknowledges: "whether they are rule-makers or referees, they too have and use power in enforcing their views. This is often lost sight of where 'reason' is contrasted with violence as Popper is prone to do" (Phillips, 1977: 159).

Both Popper and Loughlin argue that the persuasive force of an argument should be detached from the reputation of the individual, their power or accumulated authority – it is the argument itself which must be evaluated, not the producer, "it is the rules and the players' ability to follow them correctly which are important" (Phillips, 1977: 160). What we have to remember here is contrary to the individualistic position Feyerabend (1999) is prone to take, those participating in scientific 'games' are in competition with one another and this necessarily brings such debate into the realm of marketing and politics. Whether Loughlin would like to acknowledge it or not, individual management researchers have to sell their ideas to their intended audience, they have to *persuade* their marketplace, they have to use *rhetoric and propaganda.*

Incommensurability and Related Matters

In science, as distinct from theology, Popper opines "a critical comparison of frameworks is always possible" (Popper, 1970: 57). If it is not, then one community of thinkers is likely to be so different from another, "that no intellectual bridge may exist and no compromise be possible between these two systems" (Popper, 1945: 213). Popper clearly finds this incommensurability unappealing since it effectively destroys any basis for rational discussion between the two communities: "I do admit that at any moment we are prisoners caught in the framework of our own theories; our expectations; our past experiences; our language. But we are prisoners in a Pickwickian sense: *if we try*, we can break out of our framework at anytime. Admittedly, we shall find ourselves again in a framework, but it will be a bigger and roomier one: and we can at any moment break out of it again" (Popper, 1970: 56; emphasis added). Popper's argument is less than convincing, although resistance from dominating epistemic structures, those frameworks in to which we are schooled, can be found. This is an important point and motivated me into writing my own presentation at the conference (Tadajewski, 2004b).

Looking at the translation of the paradigm concept from Kuhn by Burrell and Morgan I suggested that Burrell and Morgan might be better thought of as 'tempered radicals'. Tracing how the marketing strategy they used broaden the paradigmatic basis for organization theory I argued that their tempered, somewhat deferential approach towards functionalism enabled them to assuage the potential criticism that could have been expected from the functionalist quarter. While Burrell and Morgan's text was only a tentative sketch, it appears to have had the effect of reinforcing a paradigm mentality far removed from the kind of Proteus style scholarly activity that Foucault (1997) supported and Burrell and Morgan showed through their own journey across all four paradigms. Certainly far from their text encouraging the intellectual malleability that

they obviously saw value in, it is clear that those players in the paradigm debate do not change their ideas and paradigms but instead academic positions rapidly solidify into a form of intellectual branding that is hard to discard and the reasoning behind this is easy to fathom. Producing knowledge is a roman gamble, where the intellectual rich get richer and the poor get poorer (Simon, 1991). Our academic selves are, unsurprisingly, more likely to be characterised by an easy immutability reinforced by the structural conditions of a pressurised academic environment that delimits knowledge production within certain bounds and demands "more scholar per dollar" (Wernick, 2003: 142):

> One can argue that after tenure, scholars should no longer have to care about such pressures. Although tenure does bring freedom for some…it may be unrealistic to believe that pressure for quantity decline with tenure. Not only do tenured associate professors face a similar review on promotion to full professor, but by the time scholars achieve tenure, their identity is often tied to their publication record…The retooling required to address [alternative paradigm styles and associated research questions]…is more than most are willing to risk. (Stern and Barley, 1996: 156)

These institutional constraints deal what I think is a relatively decisive blow for the ideas marketed by Popper and taken up by Loughlin. The idea that we are likely to falsify, critique or otherwise throw our own research positions and intellectual capital into doubt bears little resemblance to actual scientific and management research. This, however, should be expected whether we like it or not; where Feyerabend writes physics we could substitute management theory:

> Methodologists may point to the importance of falsifications – but they blithely use falsified theories; they may sermonize how important it is to consider all the relevant evidence, and never mention those big and drastic facts which show that the theories they admire and accept, like the theory of relativity or the quantum theory, may be as badly off as those they reject. In *practice* they slavishly repeat the most recent pronouncements of the top dogs in physics, though in doing so they must violate some of the most basic rules of their trade. (Feyerabend, 1975: 65; emphasis in original)

This where I think the advice of Diderot is useful for thinking about the practice of philosophy in management. His suggestion is that we should strive to be more eclectic[7] in our everyday lives: "The eclectic is a philosopher who…[tramples] under foot prejudice, tradition, venerability, universal assent, authority – in a word, everything that overawes the crowd" (Diderot in Wilson 1957: 237). The eclectic must *strive* "to think for himself, to attend to the clearest general principles, to examine them, to discuss them, to admit nothing save on the testimony of his own reason and experience; and from all of the philosophers he has analyzed without favor and without partiality, to make one for himself, individual and personal, belonging to him" (Diderot in Wilson, 1957: 237) We must reserve the right to "…remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information, to emphasize different postulates, to point out faulty reasoning, etc. As for the person answering the questions, he too exercises a right that does not go beyond the discussion itself; by the logic of his own discourse he

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7   The extent to which it may be expedient for the eclectic to hide their eclecticism is something that remains debated within the management literature (cf. Avital and Gormonperez, 2004; Gabriel, 2002; Sutton, 1997; Tadajewski, 2004a).

is tied to the questioning of the other" (Foucault, 1984: 381). And that goes for whoever is speaking.

Of course I am not advocating that all approaches are equally valuable or that we should simply blend various strands of social theory together. Rather greater benefit may be derived from the tensions that each creates. Perhaps this might result in the kinds of schizophrenic research projects that Lincoln (1985) is concerned about. Perhaps not. I'm more inclined to think that the kind of tension created will function to push the discursive limits of whatever discipline we happen to operate in. This will naturally require that we package our ideas in a way that negotiates the appropriate gatekeepers. But once that first citation is planted a thousand lovely flowers can bloom (or not). Here we might gesture towards the work of Spivak as an inspiration (see, Jones, in press). Certainly her work highlights the extent to which we must take responsibility for what we say and do – whether as academic researchers or in trying to negotiate our everyday lives. What philosophy can offer us in this context is a way to reflect upon and think about our beliefs rather than uncritically perform them. The reader should however not be fooled that in writing about philosophy my own objectives were any less self-interested than those who I may have implicated via omnibus citation. At the moment though, simply thinking about my beliefs, rather than thinking with them, is enough of a project in itself. Like philosophy into management it is an exercise that I can see continuing into the far distant future.

Post Philosophy in Management

By now it has become clear that this note on my attendance at the philosophy in management conference has evolved into something more than a brief recitation of this experience. I make no apologies for this. Practicing philosophy in management takes time and requires that we cover a wealth of often complex, theoretical material. Here I have taken some time to examine a number of papers that are loosely linked by their willingness to look at the practice of philosophy in management and state whether or not this is a 'good' direction for it to be headed; this has required me to read a great deal of the output of both Popper and Freud. If we recall the quotation from Magee above that we must try to understand what other people are saying if we are to continue the debate that surrounds philosophy in management, then it seems reasonable to say that there was no real way I could legitimately have sidestepped such intellectual work, even if it was too time consuming. This paper has taken time to write, read, redraft, redraft and redraft again and so it is with the practice of philosophy – it takes time, but it is time well spent. As I hope I have illustrated by my own practice of 'doing' philosophy.

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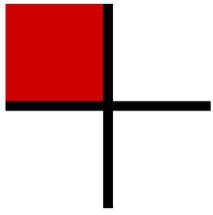
The Invisibility of the Organization

Ole Thyssen

abstract   The system theoretical thesis that organizations are social systems, consisting of communication, has as a consequence that organizations are invisible for both internal and external observers. The communication of the organization is invisible, not just because of its ephemeral nature or its overwhelming quantity, but because communication itself is invisible. Nevertheless it seems possible to observe and describe organizations. This paper shows how organizations make themselves accessible in spite of their invisibility. Based on the analysis of Marcel Proust in *Remembrance of Things Past,* the name is presented as a simplified token of unity, followed by the text, the story, management and rhetoric as means of representations of unity. As management is a symbol for the organization as a whole, its function is to coordinate the 'directing distinctions', which are used to observe and evaluate an organization. Therefore, management is a political function and must make use of rhetorical devices.

It is a central tenet in the systems theory of Niklas Luhmann that a social system is operating in the medium of communication. Focusing on one of the three types of social systems, which Luhmann deals with, the organization, this means that communication is not something that an organization engages in once in a while, in between other important tasks. Communication is the very stuff that an organization is made of, which leads to a range of related theses: that it does not consist of things or people and that it is invisible – to itself as well as to its surroundings.

Communication

In order for communication to take place, a sender must encode a form – *information* – into a sensory medium and a recipient must decode the encoded information. Using Gregory Bateson's tricky definition of information as "a difference, which makes a difference" (Bateson, 1973: 428), Luhmann defines communication as a unity of three differences, information, utterance and understanding (Luhmann, 1984: 212). I am going to pay special attention to the following two details: first, that *information* is not something *out there,* as a physical thing, and second, that communication equals neither the sender's *utterance* nor the recipient's *understanding*. Therefore, it happens neither in the sender nor in the recipient but between them – in a vacuum in which there is only light and air. "Communication cannot be observed directly and hence one has to infer its existence" (Luhmann, 1984: 226).

Communication does not consist of sound waves in the air, images on a screen or words on paper. Nothing material constitutes communication in itself. Communication requires signs, which are two-sided forms[1] in which one side is accessible to the senses of both sender and recipient whereas the other side unfolds an invisible world of meaning (Luhmann, 1999: 23). Manipulating visible structures of signs, invisible structures of meaning are manipulated, hopefully in a way which coordinates states of the sender with states of the receiver. Whether coordination takes place as understanding or misunderstanding is often hard to tell (Luhmann, 1984: 196). Through signs, the world is redoubled and obtains a double perspective.

At a closer look, communication is a precarious affair. Sender and recipient cannot see it or hear it but have to test from the outside whether they are using signs with reasonably similar meanings. They have to organize communication backwards, using later events to test earlier events. But since signs do not only have standard meanings but also private and sub-cultural meanings, communication cannot be reliant on understanding in the radical interpretation of the word where encoding and decoding are identical.

One can refer to increasing levels of complexity in which the simplest form of communication merely sends the message that 'I am here'. The sender utters a sound while the recipient decodes the sound as a message, which states nothing outside itself: that a message is being sent. The effort of understanding is minimal but does, however, carry a *communio ergo sum*. More complex, although still manageable, is the communication in which the sender's message, 'pass me the salt', is immediately tested against the behavior of the recipient. Outright disturbing is communication of complicated mental constructions where the understanding cannot be directly tested against behavior whether it is music, abstract painting or theoretical claims such as for example: 'organizations are invisible'.

As consciousness is invisible and cannot be 'expressed' directly, consciousness and communication are totally apart. They do not overlap, not even a tiny bit. Communication arises as an *emergent* phenomenon in its own right and with its own principles from a double expectation in which sender and recipient *internally* handles the difference between information and message and between 'you' and 'me' (Luhmann, 1984: 196). It has no centre because none of the parties possesses or controls it. It can therefore be said, somewhat pointedly, that it is not persons but communication *itself* that communicates. But of course, this is an exaggeration as a sender and a recipient are necessary for communication to take place

Normal language users are daily confirmed in their conviction that communication is possible as they speak and send e-mails to each other. Communication releases the small child from his inner dejectedness when he is able to define himself as 'me' in opposition to 'you' and to 'it', proudly conquering his identity as a pronoun, 'I', in the triangle of communication between I and You and It. Despite disappointments, we resign ourselves to the soothing illusion that as long as we operate on the inner side of

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1   The concept of form, as used here, is introduced by Spencer-Brown (1994:1), who identifies form and distinction.

the signs, using sounds, letters and images, the space of meaning will ultimately articulate itself in harmonic rhythms to sender and recipient respectively (Luhmann, 1999: 24).

In the communicative conundrum of everyday life, the tragic dimension of communication is made invisible: that it is not only presence but above all absence, that there is a discrepancy between the amount of words and the amount of memory – to remember is primarily a question of forgetting – and that the nature of communication holds an inherent paradox: The same is different to sender and recipient so that the sweets of understanding are reflected in the irritation of misunderstanding.[2] Often, sender and recipient can only be comforted by agreement to the extent that they abstain from testing the reality of this agreement. Habermas speaks of the way in which all understanding is enveloped in "shadows of difference" (Habermas, 1988: 56), and von Humboldt states that "all understanding is always also a non-understanding, all agreement in thought and emotion also a deviation from each other" (von Humboldt quoted in Habermas, 1988: 56).

The Invisible Organization

According to the systems theory of Luhmann, an organization is, as a social system, made of communications, not of artifacts or people. Taking the perspective of an ant and enumerating everything that meets the senses when moving around through its offices and corridors, one will never meet 'the organization'. It is not an element, parallel with other elements. It is a unity, and it is a category-mistake to confuse a unity with its elements (Ryle, 1963: 17f). And its elements are not artifacts or people since no amount of things stacked on top of each other or people standing shoulder by shoulder will constitute an organization just like that.

The artifacts and employees of an organization are not joined through physical ties, and despite the linguistic coincidence, an organization is no organism. Observing the organization as an autopoietic system, Luhmann argues that it, as a unity, precedes its elements because it itself creates its elements in its network of elements (Luhmann, 2000: 45f). The organization defines its own connectedness, it is not random and detached bits of communication that amass from below and finally give birth to an organization.

Like consciousness, communication might be directed at things but is not as a result transformed into a thing. It is not identical with what it is about, and there is, as Luhmann keeps saying, no point-to-point relation between language and world (Luhmann, 1999: 24). Artifacts – and people – belong to the environment of the organization, and what happens to them does not in the same way happen to the organization. A warehouse can burn to the ground, and a person can drink coffee or be

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2   Cf. Luhmann (1984: 194): "The identity of a bit of information must, by the way, be thought of in a way that is compatible with the fact that it means something very different for the sender and the recipient". Later, it is stated that understanding includes misunderstanding as something normal (Luhmann, 1984: 196).

divorced, which an organization cannot. The stuff an organization is made of is different from material objects and it cannot, therefore, connect to objects. All material possessions of an organization can be replaced in the same way that a person can have his organs or cells replaced without turning into a different person. Material objects are externally related to the organization.[3]

On the other hand, an organization can transform artifacts and people into signs, giving them meaning which communicates about the organization. It can redouble artifacts and people so that they become both more than and less than themselves because the unveiling of meaning obscures the observation of the physical, biological or mental entity. One sees the sign and not the thing, the uniform and the role and not the man. Even the products of the organization have no social existence outside the communication, which happens around them. It is easy to be seduced into thinking that one sees the organization when looking at its symbols attached to products, buildings and cars. And when seeing its manager, or headquarters, one is tempted to believe that what one sees is the organization incarnated, whether in flesh and blood or in stone and glass.

Thus modern towns are filled with easily recognizable signs, with logos and names that are massively repeated and related to particular organizations. However, even when a sign relates to an organization, one should not confuse the sign with the signified. One sees the signifier, not the signified, even if they are spontaneously connected like words and their meanings. As Saussure told us, the relation between the two sides of the sign is purely conventional (1916: 26).

The fact that an organization is invisible does not merely result from the fact that only a negligible part of its communication is available, whether one is located inside or outside it, and regardless of the strength of one's sensory organs and brain. In the present, too many things are taking place simultaneously to allow observation or control, and the past and the future are for obvious reasons not accessible. Neither does it result from the fact that communication is a transient occurrence, which incessantly flows back in time so that communication always happens in the present. It is not a thing among other things and is not lying about on the street waiting to be picked up (Luhmann, 1984: 77f).

To assume that organizations consist of invisible communications leaves an unusual question unanswered: How to observe organizations? How to ensure durability and even constancy when communication is transient whereas organizations have a long life? How does the organizational system, which ties together invisible communication, obtain sufficient identity so that we can speak of it? The fact that an organization is invisible does not define it as absence or nothing, and its invisibility is different from the invisibility of X-rays and black holes. Impractical questions of this kind constitute the contribution of organization philosophy to organization theory.

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3   This opens for the complicated problems of interpenetration or "structural coupling", which will not be treated here, cf. (Luhmann, 1984: 286ff)

To claim that an organization is invisible is admittedly to push the issue to its extreme. No random extreme, however. If, for a short while, we give up the linguistic routines, which, according to Nietzsche, create the illusion that the world is simpler than it is[4], and if we ask what it means to observe an organization, it regularly leads to a kind of embarrassment. One senses something tricky about organizations although they are spoken of as if they were small round things.[5] However, the aim here is not empty provocation but an attempt to push the issue to its extreme in order to enjoy the trip back: What makes us *capable*, as internal and external observers, of talking about of organizations regardless of which 'guiding distinction'[6] we are using? How is unity created from incalculable and invisible communication?

The Unfolding of a Name

Let's begin with the beginning. When an organization is born, it must, like other children, be given a *name*. A modern organization also needs to obtain a birth certificate, a *text*, which states its identity and purpose in legal terms. However, that does not suffice. Like a person, an organization must present an overall *description* of itself, which, adding time and decisions, turns into a *story*. If we focus on organizations, this leads us to the *management* that is responsible for the organization's public texts and stories, faced with many other texts and stories, told by the employees, the customers or the mass media. In order for a manager to adopt his own text and his own story and carry it through vis-à-vis other texts and stories, he must use *rhetorical* devices.

I will follow a central path that can be articulated by a number of discursive *tricks* that will enable us to observe the invisible organization. The path goes from the organization's name, via its texts and stories, to its management and rhetoric.

Identifying an organization requires a semiotic operation since it is not a physical but a social system that operates with meaning (Luhmann, 1990: 27) – and the only way to observe meaning is by using those small relays which are called signs and which give unity to the invisible and foothold in the stream of communication.

A name does not need to mean anything – it could be a date – but it does assert an address. As time passes it might establish a content of its own and become almost natural, in the same way that a child's name is at first random and strange until it gradually fuses with the child and becomes enriched by the emotions one has for the

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4   "With words we are constantly and all the time seduced into believing that objects are simpler than they are, separated from each other, indivisible, each existing for itself" (Nietzsche, 1997: 878-879).

5   "What is a thing or object [*Sache*]? A round and whole thing is asked for" (Hegel, 1976: 105).

6   The phrase 'guiding distinction' is a technical term used in the system theory of Niklas Luhmann. According to him, modern societies are differentiated in functional subsystems such as science, politics and science, each of which simplifies observation by using a simple binary code, a 'directing distinction' such as the code of money, of power or of truth. On the basis of this simplification, semantic and social systems of great complexity can evolve. Further details can be found in Luhmann (1987).

child. Like the pronoun 'I', which puzzled David Hume (1965: 252), a name is not en entity nor a center, but a frame, which can be filled with an immense amount of observations, descriptions, explanations and consequences from many points of view. Still, these different observations presuppose that there is an organization to observe.

A name of an organization creates unity in a chaotic diversity of communication, which can be connected, in the present, with the open horizons of the past and the future. For this to happen, it must be possible for an observer to identify the organization *in other ways*, that is, to distinguish between the organization and its environment. In the case of human beings, the body is used as a reference point. In the case of organizations, this device will not do.

According to Luhmann, the *decision* is the vital knot of an organization, and as decisions presuppose earlier decisions, an organization is a network of (communication of) decisions (Luhmann, 1992: 208; 2000: 123). Only persons who are officially appointed can make binding decisions, and even their decisions are often made void. Everything in an organization is decided, not only members and artifacts, but also their decisions-making procedures and competences. Moreover, even if an organization has no sense organs, it must be able to irritate itself with information about its own state and the state of the world. It must have channels of communication so that one can contact the organization through a *front stage*, a door or a phone line, and for example listen to a person's voice, maybe recorded, which lets you know that you are talking with the organization. By a hermeneutic effort the observer places himself in an organizational system, guided by his cognitive routines and the available signs in physical space. The whole structure of experience is covered by the name, even if the person using the name may be utterly ignorant of what happens 'inside' the organization. The name holds a creative mystery because it seems to provide access to a unity that is otherwise evasive and difficult to grasp. It is the same mysterious qualities that are found in personal pronouns such as 'I' and 'you'.

A name is shorthand and can be saturated with meaning, circulate quickly and eventually become a symbol, a self-referring signifier that melts together with the signified (Luhmann, 1999: 32f). That requires a double operation so that one first learns the meaning of the name and then forgets the learning process, letting the name emerge as a spontaneous sign.

A name refers but has no standard meaning. When one probe into the meaning of a proper name, however, no solidity is found, only what Luhmann calls distinctions and Derrida calls traces (Derrida and Bennington, 1993: 105). Luhmann talks about "transport of differences without beginning or end" (1992: 217) and as a consequence he claims that ontology is a by-product of communication (1984: 205). Both Luhmann (1984: 115) and Derrida (1978: 70) observe the violence done by proper names.[7] Even if a name means different things to different persons, they can assume that what is different is still the same, so that difference presupposes sameness.

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7 Between Luhmann's theory of distinctions and Derrida's theory of writing, as presented in the first part of (Derrida, 1978) there is a profound kinship, which goes as far as to similarities in the combination of singular words.

Even if a name is purely arbitrary, it is not a performative in the sense of Austin (1963). In using a name one is not doing anything (1963: 132). Even if a name might be used wrongly, it is not the performance, but the name, which is wrong. While *naming* might be a performative act, the name is not.

A name is like a keyhole through which the organization opens up, both to the meaning which is installed in the name, and to the reality to which the name refers, depending on one's previous experience with the organization. In the further analysis of the name I will follow Marcel Proust who also reflects on what proper names are and do. He does not, however, have in mind the names of organizations, but instead something as old fashioned as names of cities.

According to Proust, a name absorbs and transforms the image of a city so that it replaces the city and obtains an opaqueness of its own. It reveals and obscures by putting focus on the city while also hiding it behind a shield of meaning. Proust mentions 'Florence' and 'Venice':

> But if these names thus permanently absorbed the image I had formed of these towns, it was only by transforming that image, by subordinating its reappearance in me to their own special laws; and in consequence of this they made it more beautiful, but at the same time more different from anything that the towns of Normandy or Tuscany could in reality be, and, by increasing the arbitrary delights of my imagination, aggravated the disenchantment that was in store for me when I set out upon my travels. They magnified the idea that I had formed of certain places on the surface of the globe, making them more special and in consequence more real. (Proust, 1989: 420)

The name employs a double mechanism that could be called an *explosive condensation*. Once it has concentrated meaning like in a spicy sauce, compressed the springs of meaning so to speak, it can explode and eject meaning so that the invisible becomes accessible as an imperative emotion. Proust says: "How much more individual still was the character they assumed from being designated by names, names that were for them alone, proper names such as people have! Words present to us a little picture of things, clear and familiar, like the pictures hung upon the walls of schoolrooms to give the children an illustration of what is meant by a carpenter's bench, a bird, an anthill" (Proust, 1989: 420f). Whether words can be said to be pictures is an open question. But the fact that names hold strong powers is beyond dispute, which is why the meaning of names is always a matter of conflict and struggle.

A name gives everything in a city the same uniform quality so that the meaning of the name becomes transferred to the city, detached not only from context but also from insight. One can love the meaning of the name 'Florence' without knowing anything about the real city in Tuscany, Italy. The name separates the signifier from the signified and creates distance between them at the same time as the name itself becomes charged with a meaning that replaces knowledge with an emotion, bewitching or repulsive or both.

Thus the name becomes a 'safe custody', which Proust sees as misleading because it is 'much simplified' (Proust, 1989: 422). However, it can be argued that precisely this combination of *displacement, simplification* and *emotion* makes up the contribution of the name. It relieves memory so that it does not merely refer to for example an organization, known from personal experience, but takes over the creation of meaning

so that it is no longer the products of the organization, which cast a spell on its name, but the name that casts a spell on the products. Rather than an invisible reality we encounter an emotional concentrate, which might find expression in a *logo* and eventually through repetition descend to the invisible, but current-carrying layers of the soul.

The names "magnetized my desires", writes Proust who senses that "perhaps, indeed, the enforced simplicity of these images was one of the reasons for the hold that they had over me" (Proust, 1989: 423). A name is more than a sign; it is also an aesthetic device. But when Proust arrived to the physical city, Florence or Venice, the names lost their beautiful and pure ambience, and he became consumed with the task "to include in each of them two or three of the principal 'curiosities' of the town" (Proust, 1989: 422). Who has not experienced the discrepancy between what is said about an organization and the way it appears from personal experience, that is, who has not found himself in a messy office and in vain tried to relate the visible reality to the invisible image of the organization?

Proust follows the transformation through which a name turns into an "inaccessible ideal" and goes on: "Doubtless, if, at that time, I had paid more attention to what was in my mind when I pronounced the words 'going to Florence, to Parma, to Pisa, to Venice', I should have realised that what I saw was in no sense a town, but something as different from anything that I knew" (Proust, 1989: 423) – that is, a name, which both replaces and incarnates the invisible so that it might subsequently be *manipulated directly by symbolic means, beyond contact with reality*.

Proust says that he was not "paying any heed to the contradiction that there was in my wishing to look at and to touch with the organs of my senses what had been elaborated by the spell of my dreams and not perceived by my senses at all" (Proust, 1989: 424). However, the link between the invisible and the visible is readily at hand: *The name* joins them. And as man is a communicating animal, being brought up in language, it is an automatic achievement for the observer to install a distinction between visible and invisible, so that sensory experiences are traced to something different from themselves. The imaginary qualities of the name endow it with an alluring obscurity. The name attains its own magic and hence its own value.

Names provide that which in rhetorical terms is called *pathos*. Proust speaks of "the atmosphere of dreams, which my imagination had secreted in the name of Venice" (Proust, 1989: 427). However, organizations do not leave their names to the randomness of tradition but hire experts to saturate them with meaning so that dreams are not only fictive in the sense of being "unreal" but also in the sense of "having been". Dreams work in reality, which makes them real – that is, *facts* – so that fiction and fact do not only meet by means of a shared linguistic root but also in reality. Ideological constructions are collective fictions, but may have very real consequences for the persons involved. And Proust takes the point farther: Only the reality which finds a duplicate reality, a simulacrum, in the imagination is truly real, creating a desire to re-experience the imagination in reality (Proust, 1989: 427).

When a name becomes rooted in the desire of an observer a hyper-sensibility arises, which reflects back upon the name or the organization that holds the name. Proust speaks of "the supplementary sense with which love had temporarily endowed me" (Proust, 1989: 450) and which gives access to invisible qualities and also activates emotions.

Finally, Proust explores what happens when a name looses its magic, and since he is neither an apologist nor a consultant, he is able to follow through on his theme. As an older person, he returned to the places of his youth, where he once, as a believer, experienced the spell of a yearning which was not brought on by anything exterior. Once the spell was broken, he no longer had "a belief to infuse into them [the 'new components of the spectacle'] to give them consistency, unity and life" (Proust, 1989: 460). They assume no solid form and have no meaning. Without belief one is left with "a fetishistic attachment to old things" so that reality becomes inhumanly empty (Proust, 2002: 460, 462). Names, and hence the unities created by names, are powerful but also transient like time.

From Name to Text

For Proust, a name represents not only a linguistic point but also a text, a complex of meaning. A text, according to Paul Ricæeur, is "any discourse fixed in writing" – where "writing" is not just "fixed speech", but just as by Derrida precedes the normal distinction between writing and talking (Ricæeur, 2001: 339). Whereas a name spreads itself invisibly in the waters of the soul, a text presents explicitly some chosen characteristics of an organization. Instead of the vague associations connected with a name you have the explicit statement of a text. Of course, such associations might be intended by an organization as a means of making an *image*, but still the organization is unable to control the patterns of meaning.[8] Following the name, the text is *the second way* in which an organization becomes visible. When it cannot be pointed to, one has to describe it in order to find out what it is. An organization attains access to itself through a self-description, which cannot include itself, so that the self-description is and is not a part of the whole – the self – to which it refers. However, it also finds access to itself through outside descriptions, so that an entire choir of texts created from different perspectives and using different guiding distinctions competes for the organizational soul. And outside these texts there exist no tangible organization, only more texts because, as Humberto Maturana states, everything said is always said by an observer (Maturana, 1980: 6). As a consequence Maturana speaks of "multi-verses" instead of a universe.

Despite the evanescence of communication, an organization has to construct a self that has some permanence in order for it to be observed and described. Besides names, this requires texts that provide simplification and stability. Even though a text does not change it can only contribute to communication through an interpretation that activates

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8   The concept of meaning is here used in accordance with the definition of Luhmann: meaning is "a surplus of references to other possibilities of experience and action" (1984: 93).

it in the present and opens to conflicts. A text is constructed on the basis of experience, but the same reality allows for different texts, depending on guiding distinctions, perspective, knowledge and feelings. In Proust's words a text throws a shadow of the past in front of it, into the present and the future (Proust, 1989: 873). Thus, an organization's own text, its self-description, can be seen as its memoirs (Luhmann, 2000: 465) – what was considered important at a specific point in time. However, it can also be considered to be a tool, which it employs in order to present itself through factual, normative and aesthetic effects, that is, to create presence for itself and giving itself some solidity. In the circular relation between texts and reality, reality creates texts and texts create reality, so that fact and fictions are both *done* and fictive texts might have very real consequences. Even if some facts might be hard to deny, a text that combines facts and places them in a context changes their meaning, and in the overwhelmingly complex network of causes and effects, which combines the part with the future through the loophole of the present, an observer can make his own selection and create his own text.

We might make a distinction between basic texts and descriptions. An organization has a *basic text*, which describes its *purpose* in order for it to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant and between success and failure.[9] The basic text also has to include a *program* that establishes how to make decisions so that the organization can prescribe its own 'enforced decision making' and distinguish between valid and invalid decisions.

A basic text is a legal text and the courts thrive on disagreement over its meaning. However, despite its status, it is a meager text, maybe even the dead hand of the past, which says very little about what keeps the organization alive in the present. It has slipped out of focus, out in the peripheral blind spot of observation, where it unfolds itself as a mere routine so that the interest can be focused on the living texts, which we can term *descriptions,* whether they are self-descriptions or external descriptions.

A description can be made from many perspectives, from within or without, from the past or from the future, and in terms of economy or science or politics. An observed may construct different motives and choose between different causes, so that the observer, as Luhmann (2000: 455) argues, becomes 'the cause of causation' because causality depends on a decision. If the organization's identity is established in a text, it has to deal with the disturbing problem that there are many texts, which are only partially compatible with each other. Although many facts, as already noted, cannot easily be disputed, a text is inevitably selective and arranges the facts it prefers in an idiosyncratic pattern. In the same way that Proust describes beauty, we may claim that organizations are "a sequence of hypotheses" (1989: 766).

Attempts have been made to distinguish between true and distorted texts. For example, in his influential writings on organizational culture Edgar Schein (1985) distinguishes between basic assumptions, which are unconscious, and values, which are only manifestations. On the first level we meet the organization as it is, that is, its assumed *identity*; on the second level we meet it as it appears, that is, its *image*.

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9   According to James March, decisions are 'framed' by assumptions which define the problem to be solved, the information to be collected and the dimensions to be considered (1994: 14).

This distinction might be useful because an organization normally hides behind an idealized text about itself in order to reap the benefits described by Proust. An official description of an organization is idealistic because its purpose is not to present facts. It is also a tool to commit and motivate, that is, create facts by contribute to a minimization of the difference between ideal and *status quo*. An organizational text must make a delicate balance between 'too much' and 'to little' truth, even if the audience may not be in a position to distinguish between what is true and false. It must blend the past 'was' of the organization with a current 'is' and adds to that a moral 'should' and maybe a futuristic 'would like to be'. It must present a picture of the future, which might come true, so that the very presentation of the text motivates employees, the public, shareholders and customers to support it. This double purpose means that organizational texts normally are observed with some tolerance. When one listens to after dinner speeches or reads brochures, one need not overburden oneself with demands of exact and verifiable empirical truth.

A self-description is a contract in which an organization commits itself to a select audience. The orientation towards the future legitimizes a range of deviations from the truth and much discrete suppression of what is known to de true. Even if the text is not lying, it does not present the whole truth. With the excuse that *no* text can present the whole truth, the organization allows itself to cloud what it knows is highly relevant information.

An official text is a beautiful lie that is a little more than *just* a lie and therefore is not simply rejected as a lie (Thyssen, 2003b: 173). The official self-description of an organization, as presented in management speeches and brochures, belongs to a specific genre and its aim it not just to describe, but also to motivate. But it is surrounded by other texts, which create a mirror-room of texts that not only describe the organization from different perspectives but also describe and criticize each other. There are not only texts about battles but also battles between texts.

The difference between identity and image has no theoretical basis. When a text describes something invisible, that which it is about is *itself* a text. 'Identity' and 'image' flow into each other in endless loops, so that the difference between them is a *difference used for unveiling* or a means of distributing trust. To claim that something is *merely a question of image* means that one subscribes to and hence trusts some other text. When it is argued that an image is an organization's "fabricated and projected picture of itself" (Alvesson, 2004: 164), it must be added that so is identity.

Generally, only few texts become successful as 'normal'. They condense as structured centers of meaning, allowing for normal presuppositions or what Heinz von Foerster (1981: 274) calls *Eigenvalues*. Even when they conjure up illusions, they are, for better or worse, effective, either within the organization or in the public or in a loop between them (Morsing, 1999: 30). But which description prevails and obtains model power? Before addressing that question, let us widen our perspective from text to story.

From Text to Story

A text is a static construction even though it can be interpreted dynamically. One can choose to freeze it in a seemingly timeless crystal that describes a *state*, or one can unfold it in time as a *story,* which is, next to the name and the text, *the third way* in which an organization becomes visible.

A story has a content, which is a temporary, often sequential arrangement of events, caused or experienced by one or more persons (Bal, 1994: 8). More detailed, it can be described as the symbolic presentation of a series of events, connected by a theme and related in time (Scholes, 1981: 205). In the case of organizational stories, the principal character is always the organization itself. Just as, according to Ricæeur (1981: 167), a story is made of events in the same degree as it makes the events to a story, an organization is made of events and makes events to an organization, so that the organization becomes the plot, defined by Ricæeur as the comprehensible whole which organizes a series of events (1981: 167).

There are intimate ties between organization and story. Indeed, stories have been appointed the natural form of organizational communication (Fisher, 1987). When one decision is based on former decisions and leads to further decisions, and when texts meet other texts, dramatic developments occur which everyone affects and no one controls. As there are no logical or causal chains between decisions, the story is introduced as another ways of connecting events (Brooks, 1984: 9). The plot described by Peter Brooks is not a mechanical connection, but 'causes causation' and is, therefore, an effect of its own effects. Brooks talks about the 'double logic' of stories, according to which elements of a story on critical points are produced by the necessities of the story itself. In the same manner, an organization tells about itself according to what is considered important, so that one may talk about 'auto-narratives', which structures processes while they take place.

If a decision were made on the basis of complete knowledge, rational means and compelling goals there would be no need for a decision maker, only a computer. But, in the words of Aristotle, a decision is only rarely "determined by necessity" (1984b: 1357a, 2157). When the decision has to balance many considerations, each with its own rationale, it is unfortunately unable to lean against a super reason. When it cannot relate to all knowledge, non-knowledge becomes an important but unfortunately principally non-objective resource (Luhmann, 1992: 184).

For that reason, a chain of decisions has no logical force like a syllogism, but contains information like a narrative sequence. It is contingent in the sense that each decision is a selection between alternatives (Luhmann, 1984: 47). Just as the organizational flow of decisions allows for winners and losers to mirror each other, a story follows a flow of events that could have been a different flow.

An organization is not a theoretical structure but a historical sequence, a "way it happened". If the end of a story is the pole which attracts the whole development (Ricæeur, 1981: 170), so for the organization the future is the attractive pole, as an organization normally has no wish to foresee its own end. When "all things are not

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determined by law" (Aristotle, 1984a: 1118a, 1796), theory and story do not compete but become supplementary ways of description. Stories are not simply entertainment, as opposed to more serious ways of describing. They transfer their own pattern, and hence their totality, to the organization in a congenial way.

A story unfolds what could be termed *the logic of the specific* in which events are brought into a manageable and comprehensive format in time and space, making the invisible observable. A story is a machine for remembering, a time-syllogism as Peter Brooks calls it (Brooks, 1984: 21). Whereas a theory is based on principles and deduces from principles to individual incidents, a story moves in the opposite direction. It focuses on *the singular example*, which – according to Aristotle (1984b:1356b, 2156) – is not related to any science but does allow for learning processes.

The sophistication of the story is that by confining itself to a specific sequence of experiences and actions it can handle information that is inaccessible to theory. Whereas a theory must specify its presuppositions, data and method, a story can just start. The trick is to engage the audience. A story obtains an "advantage of speed" (Luhmann, 1984: 169) because it does not have to include its preconditions or make itself generally applicable, but can plunge directly into a sequence of events, catch the attention of the audience with a dramatic suspense and leave it to the pleasant considerations of the audience to create a comprehensive picture, fill the gaps and draw in hidden preconditions. A story even curbs the desire for reflection by postponing the redeeming moment as new dangers appear and demand a response. And contrary to the stories of art, organizations have no ambitions of putting a final end to their stories or to itself as a grand story.

Organizational stories can be divided into internal stories and external stories. An organization tells stories about its past, present and future, that its heroic past can be woven into its desperate present and its expectant future. Therefore, the organization's internal stories are not pieces of art that begin when everything is over but have the same structure as the stories of Jesus in which it is said that 'thus he spoke so that what is written shall become reality…'

The official organizational stories have a purpose. Therefore they tend to be positive or even devotional in a manner which literary criticism often abhor. An organization knows that both optimism and criticism are contagious and will more readily be lavish in doling out the positive than the negative. It seeks to motivate through optimism and tries to avoid de-motivation by suppressing criticism. The function of the organizational story might be to disturb but not to discourage employees, customers or the public.

Whereas fictive stories are better the more open they are and the more they require interpretation, organizational stories are about living people and influence their fate – and 'organizations' here include political parties and ideological movements. The choice between an open story, which appeals to freedom, and a closed story, which restricts freedom, is not a choice between bad or good but between different effects that can be employed depending on the requirements of the situation.

Organizational stories are always in the plural since the same sequence of events can be narrated in different ways depending on the choice of perspective and guiding distinction, the ascription of motives, the focus on certain causes, the themes selected as central and who determines who are the bad guys and the good guys. Thus there are not only stories *about* success and failure but also stories *with* success or failure. This raises once again the same question: Which story prevails? Unfortunately, the answer cannot be given in the form of a user's manual that can describe four easy steps and a guaranteed success for the way that stories obtain an impact. We can only point to the connection between management, politics and rhetoric.

Management, Politics and Rhetoric

The responsibility for an organization's texts and stories is left to the *management*, which describes and decides on behalf of the organization. Representation implies symbolism and visibility since 'to re-present' means 'to be present on behalf' of something or somebody. After the name, the text and the story, management constitutes *the fourth way* in which an organization becomes visible, and with the additional twist that management is not a tool like the previous three but has to employ all of them, *including it.* That generates a diabolical and never ending game in which battles over names, texts and stories give rise to new texts and new stories about these battles – and maybe even new names, in the event that the old names become tainted and filled with distaste, such as Arthur Andersen or Enron.

In the person of the manager, the organization performs the *trick* of pretending that it is able to act and reflect as a whole. Therefore, the manager is shrouded in a certain mystery – he or she[10] is present as a person among others and at the same time is a symbol of the absent unity so that a strong manager almost invisibly wears 'his' organization as an aura. No matter whether he controls the organization or the organization controls him, he is responsible for an organization self-description and for the implementation of an organizational auto-story, and he is judged on his ability to live up to that responsibility.

Whereas a specialist is responsible for his profession and its texts, a manager is responsible for the whole organization. Conflicting texts with conflicting demands – or values – meet the desk of the manager, not as theoretically interesting suggestions but with demands for clarification and intervention. No manager can disregard the circulating stories and the way his organization is described. His job is to strengthen or weaken texts. That requires sensitivity towards other texts as well as a brutality in putting his own text on the agenda and ensuring its impact by motivating others to accept it, with force, persuasion or seduction. If he fails, criticism will be prompt. If a manager's description is irrelevant, he has made himself irrelevant as a manager.[11]

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10 In the following, I will for the sake of brevity present the manager as a male.

11 Even if it is possible to describe a manager as a parasite of the organization, defined by the responses of other stakeholders and with no real access to the power formally built into his role, the description

The clash between texts does not happen in a fictive space but on a political arena –
since a problem becomes political when incompatible texts clash in public and compete
to triumph. Disagreement between specialists becomes political in a strange way
(Mintzberg, 1983: xxiii) so that management is a political function.

The *rhetorical tradition* since antiquity has studied ways in which a text can be made
more attractive than others in situations where texts compete. Rhetoric is based on the
insight that there are always two or more descriptions of the same event. We use
rhetoric, says Aristotle, when we do not have a scientific answer and therefore are
forced to consider how we can observe "in any given case the available means of
persuasion" (Aristotle, 1984b: 1355b, 2155). If management is politics, we are forced to
take the issue one step further: Politics is rhetoric, which allows us to conclude that
management is rhetoric because a manager has to display rhetorical skills when trying
to influence different types of audiences to support and accept his text and his story.
This does not require theory but practical skills which Aristotle called a faculty, a
dynamis (Aristotle, 1984: 1355b, 2155). Rhetoric constitutes *the fifth and last* way in
which an organization becomes visible.

When a manager has been appointed and given authority to describe and decide on
behalf of the organization, his text becomes official whereas other texts are degraded to
private texts with little impact, *folgenlose Privatmeinungen* (Luhmann, 1996: 31), for
example gossip that circulates with no ambitions of creating an open political conflict.
However, no manager can isolate his own text and ignore other texts. If he tries to
enforce his text on the organization or to suppress other texts, it will probably be
counterproductive and instill fascinating and explosive stories of coercion and
suppression in the organization. Thus he has to mobilize his Aristotelian *dynamis* and
build alliances so that his power of description is not only formal but also a reality.

According to Aristotle, a text can be supported by rational arguments, *logos*, but also
with personal reputation, *ethos,* and by appeal to emotions, *pathos* (Aristotle, 1984b:
1356a, 2155f). Organizations have a product to sell, which requires solid reasoning and
empirical insight into the potential of the market. A manager can also use his personal
example, or *ethos*, to support his text, since the credibility of a manager is dependent on
whether he acts in accordance with his words. Often, says Aristotle, "his character may
almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses" (Aristotle, 1984b:
1356a, 2155). Finally, one may influence the feelings of the audience, *pathos,* whether it
is the public who needs to be convinced by a message that everything is working out
well or the employees who are to be alarmed by a message that everything is working
out bad.

In order to make the organization visible, a manager has to work frivolously with
fictions and well prepared illusions, with metaphors and purified simplifications so that
his description of the organization becomes both comprehensive and appealing
(Luhmann, 2000: 191). Rhetoric is not only a matter of *tricks* – although it is also tricks

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of the manager as just another rat in the maze is a theoretical exaggeration. Such a claim can be found
in (Luhmann, 2000: 324, cf. also Luhmann, 1992: 218) and is criticized in (Thyssen, 2003a: 231ff.)

– but it also delivers inescapable tools for the identification, and thus the protection, of the organization.

On way to protect the organization is to nurture what we might call *necessary illusions*. Often, an organization has to feign an impenetrable unity to the public and save criticism for internal discussion, corresponding to the indignant *pillow talk* of the smiling married couple. A manager has to glorify his organization publicly. And if it is impossible to dismiss criticism because an infected issue bursts open, the miserable conditions will have to be presented almost as a parenthesis of the past. Hence, management preaches, in spite of knowledge to the contrary, that the organization is strong and unified, that it is socially responsible, that its employees are competent, its prices fair and its decisions well-founded.

This can be formulated in another way: a manager has to be a hypocrite as a consequence of the role he is performing (Brunsson, 2002: 27). According to Machiavelli, a prince must be a master of illusions and be able to "pretend and dissemble" (Machiavelli, 1947: 51). When conflicting demands are directed towards an organization, a manager must be able to differentiate "the available means of persuasion" according to different stakeholders, so that legitimacy can be upheld and open contradiction avoided. Even without lying directly, he must say different thing and appeal to different values depending on whether he is addressing the public, the employees, environmental groups, the board, etc. This means that what is said, what is decided and what is done fall apart (Brunsson, 2002: 172), so that a public statement might be made *instead of* making a decision, that a decision might be made *instead of* doing something, or that something might be done without telling anybody. It goes without saying that this calls for extraordinary rhetorical skills.

Conclusion

We started by asserting that an organization consists of communication and thus is invisible. The aim was to cause doubts about the form of existence of something we are all deeply familiar with in order to pave the way for an exposure of the mechanisms, or discursive tricks, that allow us to observe an organization despite its invisibility – regardless of the distance between, on one side, the robust names, the suggestive descriptions, the heroic stories and the optimistic managers, which we are introduced to at a distance, and, on the other side the messy, the often ungraceful and always incomprehensible reality which meets our eyes and ears as we live day to day deep down in the gut of one of those many-headed monsters which we call organizations.

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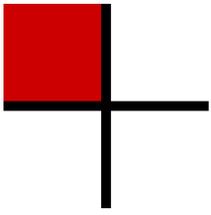
Building an Ethic of Difference: A Dialogue of Politics in Organizations

Gazi Islam and Michael J. Zyphur

Prologue

The following is a case study of an artifact of surveillance, the 'TargetVision', within a business school, and the attempt of two organizational members to respond to this artifact. It is held that the mechanism of surveillance uses the members' own actions to institute its control, and because of this ambiguity between the subjects and objects of control, a clear ethical space of action is made problematic. In a search to find a coherent ethics of action, two speakers air their perspectives on this space of action from within the organization. Their perspectives are the object of this study. The first speaker, allowing the surveillance mechanism to remain in place, secretly supports the attempts of the second speaker to subvert the mechanism, and in doing so, takes a position of indirect resistance through aloofness. The second speaker, whose response to the first speaker follows, is the one taking active measures to disrupt the surveillance. By doing so, this actor personifies the ethics of control that led to the surveillance, but through this identification, finds a place for personal voice. However, this voice is shown as projecting the wrongs of the TargetVision onto the first speaker, and, in order to avoid the personal identification which was found so problematic in the TargetVision, the second speaker eventually destroys himself, and in doing so ends up in a position similar to the first speaker. Thus, in the end, both positions seek to find a voice through a strategic self-effacement. However, this effacement takes very different forms in the two strategies and each is shown as reinforcing the other in a dialectic of two incommensurable positions.

Both speakers draw on the works of Edgar Allen Poe in their conceptualization of the other, with the first speaker using *The Tell Tale Heart* and the second following *The Cask of the Amontillado*.

The Tell-Tale TargetVision: A Note on Poe

> And have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the sense? (Poe, 1850: 382)

> Psychoanalysis is then experienced as a journey into the strangeness of the other and of oneself, toward an ethics of respect for the irreconcilable. (Kristeva, 1982: 182)

I am not the culprit in this story, am not the brilliant madman of Poe's tale, condemned by the beating heart and perpetual gaze of my victim. No, I am more like the officer, who, on a routine inspection, stumbled upon a new perversion of subjectivity, and upon a subtle form of resistance that, despite its simplicity and ultimate futility (or perhaps because of it) showed me a space of ethics within a world of unconventional surveillance.

I had never noticed the looming TargetVision monitors, hanging above every elevator, and around every corner of the department. But to my colleague Poe, as I found out later, the gaze of the screens were crippling to his very being. I called him 'Poe', of course, as a pseudonym, based on a memory of the madman in *The Tell Tale Heart*, who was driven to madness by the ever watching eye of an old man, and who finally put the eye out. The crux of the tale, however, was the old man's heart, which continued to beat in spite of the murderous act, and finally gave the madman away.

But again, the TargetVision, which I later realized was that very eye, was something that I had never noticed in my daily life. Wittgenstein once said "the aspect of things that are most important for us are hidden because of their simplicity and familiarity…and this means: we fail to be struck by what, once seen, is most striking and most powerful" (1999: 129). I first noticed the TargetVision when Poe and I were waiting for the elevator, and he immediately turned the screen off.

Although I hadn't noticed the screen until that point, I didn't have to ask why he turned it off. It became clear at the moment it happened. Or, to be more precise, in the moment that he turned the screen off, I understood what it was that I had missed, not because of his action, but *in* his action I recognized what his action was, what it aimed to, and what it demanded.

From that point I began to watch the TargetVision carefully. At first glance it was simply a television. A television, on every floor of a Business School, around each corner. Someone had decided that from all vantage points in the school, it was important to have a television. The TargetVision, just a television essentially, was everywhere.

The TargetVision's content consisted of streaming stock prices, and information about the business school, streaming also. There were no cameras in the apparatus, as far as I knew, and no orders given from the speakers. Just streams and streams of numbers and words against a kitsch background of pastel waves, or plant life, or an occasional newscast. Three years earlier, crowds had gathered in front of the TargetVision one morning, while behind the streaming numbers, the background showed two airplanes sequentially dive into the glass walls of the World Trade Centre in New York. And

although the buildings had crumbled, the TargetVision still faithfully watched us three years later, with benign information such as streaming numbers.

But Poe turned off the TargetVision at every possible occasion. I never followed suit, but just watched, and felt a simultaneous terror and relief at the disconnection from our informational source. My attempt to understand Poe's relationship to the TargetVision is the theme of this note, and my attempt to place myself in an ethical position with regards to this relationship is its conclusion; I hope to convince the reader that my ethics, which is a coward's ethics, is paradoxically a powerful form of resistance, while Poe's ethics of engagement, which is the basis of all revolutionary goals, never reaches its *telos*, preserving throughout its movement the beating heart of its oppressor, which was, of course, his own heart as well.

But first, the TargetVision. Why was it significant at all? That it drew the reaction from Poe is evidence enough for me that one could be strongly affected by something as seemingly benign as a voiceless stream of facts. But was it naïve to think of facts as 'voiceless'? Why, if it was insignificant, would anyone have installed these television screens in every corner of the building? There must have been some logic in the act, and once brought to attention, I became convinced that the TargetVision was a panopticon.

This conclusion was not at all unproblematic, and I struggled over its implications. Foucault's notion of the panopticon was an all seeing watcher, but where was the eye in the TargetVision? It was the blind eye of Poe's tale, all powerful but unseeing. The force of this blind, film covered eye seemed to emanate from the TargetVision. In particular, the panopticon, as the 'functional inversion' of the traditional notion of discipline by exception, makes discipline more palatable by normalizing it (Foucault, 1995). In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault describes the goal of contemporary forms of control as "an interrogation without end, an investigation that would be extended without limit to a meticulous and ever more analytical observation, a judgment that would at the same time be the constitution of a file that was never closed" (Foucault, 1995: 227). The panopticon takes the place of the juridical subject, displacing subjectivity from its centralized point of judgment and redeploying it into a network of surveillance posts. This structure (or in Lacanian terms, its structured lack of presence, Lacan, 1977) promotes the maintenance of patterns of power and conformity among those who inhabit its space. Knowing they are surveyed, they govern themselves, or more insidiously, they begin to survey themselves.

What made the panopticon so horrifying is perhaps best explored through Kristeva's concept of the abject. Kristeva (1982) described horror as the moment of abjection, the point at which we see ourselves reflected in an other, yet prior to when we can securely objectify and encapsulate that other. The abject is an other that is ripe with our own subjectivity, and is experienced with awe and disgust. We must not abandon the abject, because with it we lose our own subjectivity; in Kristeva's words, we learn to live in the contemporary world when we become one of those who are "reconciled with themselves to the extent they recognize themselves as foreigners" (1991: 195). At the same time, the thought of a watching other, an 'I' outside of 'I', fills us with the repulsion of our primal alienation from ourselves. The abject is, in Kristeva's words 'the desire of the other'.

But this panopticon, this vision which 'targets' and catches us in its alien desire, was not like most visions of surveillance. For that matter, it was not vision at all. The TargetVision was a misnomer; it did not watch, but was to be watched. It was an object that *we* watched, and in our watching, submitted ourselves to its passive control. Thus, in a second 'post-modern' movement after the generalization of surveillance, the surveyor itself did not adjudicate through its gaze, but somehow turned the tables on its target. We watched the TargetVision, the vision was ours all along! It was a Panopticon, but the optics were our own eyes, and the judgments it doled *were our own*!

Here was the strange subject-object switch made famous by Hegel (1935) in *The Phenomenology of Mind*. We were being watched, but not by the TargetVision, but by its potential to structure our perceptions. The observer becomes oneself through the object, but this object gains its power through the observer, and then uses that vision to target its master. The TargetVision had moved beyond Foucault's analysis, controlling the passers-by of the business school not by inciting the self-corrective tendencies of those who know they are watched, but by reinforcing the very watching, the watching which, structured by an object-world of stock prices and terrorist threats, *creates itself* in the model of the surveyor. TargetVision exerted its force despite its blindness, and that force was our own.

The protagonist, Poe, poignantly felt this oppression, and thus revolted by shutting the mechanism wherever he passed it. The subject lashed out against the structure, the oedipal child, against the father. Like Oedipus, Poe sought out justice against an oppressor who, in the end, was himself. And like slow dawning of Oedipus that, in the end, it was the mystery 'Man' that was the victim of this crime, committed against himself, and his source. As foretold in Poe's work a century ago, the tell-tale heart beat relentlessly and blinded.

Kristeva tells us that our ethics should embrace the other, not in a totalizing unity, or an evangelical persuasion, but in an acceptance of our nature as foreigners. Watching Poe repeatedly shut off the TargetVision, which, within the hour, was always back on again, I thought about the politics of revolt.

The mistake, it seemed to me, was that Poe revolted against a mechanism that was driven by the subjective gaze. Sympathetic or not, to be lulled by or turn oneself against the TargetVision was to be caught in its trap. It was to affirm the self as self, to realize its possibilities, and in the true German romantic style, to bar oneself from being in constant becoming. That was the trap of management. Work for it, or work against it, but work you continue, and the buried heart beats louder still with revolt.

In the face of this seeming double bind, I proposed what could be called an ethics of cowardice. Like the ethics of 'otherness', I proposed to turn the heart away from the TargetVision. The other does not join the march, the union, or send in complaint letters to the Complaint Division. I watch the revolt with glee at the actualization of possibilities, and keep myself as the other. Conscience, as Hamlet noted, is a coward, the tell-tale heart is best stopped not by the dagger of violence, but by the pale cast of thought. Neither here nor there, but not even in becoming, the only ethical space left in the new panopticon, the mundane yet conscious repetition of the stock prices, and the

mundane periodic disconnection of the stream, blend together in the foreigner's curious, aloof and unimposing gaze. When we live in a world where our ills come from our own native hue of resolution, we must bear those ills we have, in order to not create those of which we know not.

I confronted Poe, not to critique his ethics, but to present my own, in the hopes that this would both allow him a sounding board from which his voice could amplify itself, and to allow myself to both plant my difference in a public light, and revel in my own identification with that difference. To my disappointment, he retorted what follows below.

The Truth of Amontillado: The TargetVision Turns Itself Off

> The thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. (Poe, 1850: 346)

Inherent in the comments of my detractor (who I call the The-Cool-Observer, for his patronizing rationalization of my being, see Niehbur, 1952) is the antiquated lie of the subject and of the object. Even with the most advanced of techniques (explicitly conjured in rhetoric with sirenic overtones such as 'psychoanalysis' and 'postmodern') for attempting to explain the life-world, the above argument rests heavily on a bifurcation between self and other. I am accused of suffering from a type of malady that disallows my reconciliation with myself. You are told that I hate the father, my own internal system of governance and self-regulation that the TargetVision embodies and indicates, leading me to extinguish a television's piercing radiation. In this tale you, the audience, become Fortunato as my interlocutor attempts to lead you to his lair, whispering, "Let us be off to the vaults; let us make our way to Amontillado."

The-Cool-Observer is only too happy to lead you into the catacombs of his dialectic, replete with the bones of the Cartesians (what a noble family in their time!) who lost their duel with the more-modern mind, relenting under The-Cool-Observer's destruction of their bifurcated soul with incantations like 'post-structuralism' (something you viewed with voyeuristic glee). As you walk among the decay of thoughts-past, and the mould creeps along the damp stone walls of antiquated Enlightenment, which he obliquely references (to your delight), he shepherds you forward with the ignis fatuus of Amontillado's intoxicating truth, that you might understand the underlying, the subconscious, the veiled 'really-real' which has surpassed the démodé reality of yesteryear. As you move you are oblivious to The-Cool-Observer's trowel underneath his cape, enraptured by his necromancing of a better-than-the-old-reality reality.

Along the way he wets your appetite for the truth of the Amontillado by proffering insights into 'real' motivations which are not apparent at first sight. He explains that instead of the classic 'subject' and 'object', the truth of the Amontillado will allow you to have subject and object split into a multiplicity of intentionality, personality, and phenomena. You may understand the seemingly mundane behaviours of everyday-life (i.e., my turning off the TargetVision) with a lens capable of peering directly into the subconscious. In short, The-Cool-Observer knows the language used in the past, knows

the aspects of this language which are now despised, and leads you to believe that, if phrased properly, the world of the subject and object once again makes conceptual sense ("even critical theory… belong[s] to the second-order simulations", Baudrillard, 2001: 125). In this way, The-Cool-Observer denies his own destruction of the subject and the object for its repackaged, sanitized clone (itself a mechanism of control), for to break from an ever-shifting 'self-created' subjectivity would surely lead to schizophrenia (as the mantra goes).

At this moment, when your mind opens to the possibility that a Phoenix can ascend from Enlightenment's ashes, that Cartesian duality can be transformed into a palatable bolus of interfused self and other, I will see you in your shackles, I will gaze at your smiling face and palms turned towards the sky, while The-Cool-Observer begins to enclose you in your tomb, brick by brick. I must leave you, for I have only enough time to slip out of the vault before The-Cool-Observer lays the last piece of stone, returns to the party, and leaves you caring not because you have again found your subject and object.

My friend, benign as his 'ethics' seems, is re-enacting a role often seen in 'postmodern' management studies. The 'postmodern' scholars attempts to erect a structure meant to replace the edifices of the past. They guide you into the world of the new reality claiming that they will not expose you to the problems of past epistemologies and ontologies (e.g., McKelvey, 1997). They assure you that your voice will be heard, vowing to avoid the 'totalizing' speak of the 'dark side' which oppressed your subjectivity for so long (Grice & Humphries, 1997). However, in doing this, they recreate that which they most despise, the totalizing speech of self and other. The comments made about me attempt a description of the indefinable and totalize the holiness of my life-world by giving me a name and analyzing my intentionality. It states me as an object, and this aggression will not stand.

'I' remember not a single moment when 'my' organization as a being could be encapsulated into a form adequately signified by the term 'Poe' (further, 'I' would have much preferred the term 'Puck!'). However, this is because, simply, 'I' remember not. My memory is as my intentionality: an eternally shifting polyarchy of fleeting voice, enclosed in the vestige of ooze which has been transformed through some freak Darwinian occurrence that may be likened to an accident; 'I' am random. The ephemerality of 'myself' is indicated simply: When I look for myself I am not to be found, when I examine my body and this hand writing I find I am not there, when I seek help from my friends the empiricists they tell me 'look closer' (as described by Wittgenstein) and I become lost in the incalculable milieu of possible selves into which I may split the simulacra. Upon reflecting, 'I' am forced into submission under 'my' inability to wield a counterweight against Lacan's (1977: 166) articulation of the Cartesians, "I think where I am not. Therefore I am where I do not think to think." There is no subconscious, there is no conscious, for there is no I.

What might be called the action of the 'I' may only be described as infinitely self-reflexive and without 'my' agency. I cannot be held responsible for a conception of myself, much less give insight into the machinations or beneficence preceding the action of pushing a button. For insight into this poorly partialed datum of the illimitable

you must seek the sage, who will tell you to drink from the postmodern cauldron of frog's eyes and periwinkles which he calls 'The Oedipus complex'. As far as 'I' can surmise, 'my' field of operation is 'myself': all is simply life-world. At times the life-world moves, at times the life-world is changed toward a conception it holds called 'those fucking business-people should stop poisoning the life-world with TargetVision', at times this change The-Cool-Observer calls "turning off the TargetVision". There is no ethical space within which this occurs, for there is no ethical space and there is no occurrence; there is no thing. And with this realization, the TargetVision turns itself off.

Epilogue

The informants for this study finished their discussion with consternation, each flustered by the other's opacity, but somehow also reassured by it. Their argument was one site of the dialectic of the observer and the unchecked revolutionary. Through these oppositional forces it may be apparent that, while neither may be said to be truly right or wrong, and both have their merits, they necessarily owe their being to each other and, in their self-revolving, indicate two poles of critical being which should be taken together. On the one hand, the first speaker, accepting the value of resistance but refusing to become complicit in a power struggle that tightens the very knot wound by surveillance, loses the impetus for action but gains a space of freedom through resignation. The second actor, however, by moving into the space of action without looking back, achieves a self-realization through the very 'false consciousness' that they both despise. However, the insistence on, and refusal to define, the 'I' institutes a space for the unreflective, this oppression works most strongly. The first actor, through his insistence on reflection, reproduced the words of an unbearable system, and the second, though his action, reproduced its silence.

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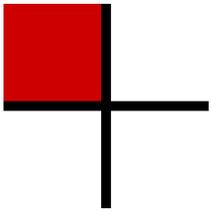
Disneyfying Disneyization

Philip Hancock

review of: **A. Bryman (2004)** *The Disneyization of Society*. **Sage.** (PB: pp. 224, £18.99, ISBN 0761967656)

A refinement and extension of Bryman's previously published work on Disney theme parks and what he terms the process of Disneyization (see, for example, Bryman, 1995, 1999; Beardsworth and Bryman, 2001), *The Disneyization of Society* is a book clearly compiled for the introductory market and general reader or, as George Ritzer puts it in his cover endorsement, 'beginning students'. Owing much to Ritzer's own McDonald's flavoured vision of a rationalized social settlement (a fact readily acknowledged by Bryman himself), *Disneyization* is offered both as a description and diagnosis of the current trajectory of (post)industrialised societies – particularly with regards to the organisation of consumption both as an activity and a cultural logic.

As is often the case with such diagnoses of the contemporary condition, Bryman's argument centres on what he identifies to be four inter-related institutional practices each of which either individually, or at some level of combination, exemplify a process by which "*the principles* of the Disney theme parks are coming to dominate more and more sectors of American society as well as the rest of the world" (p.10, *emphasis original*). It must be noted straight away, however, that this in itself is something of an over-ambitious claim. For despite the book's title, rather than an account of fundamental social change, this is essentially a book about consumption and the proposition that the global organisation of consumption is increasingly conforming to a template provided by the practices and principles of the Disney theme parks. This is not to deny that potential changes in the realm of consumption (and indeed production) do not have consequences for social organisation – far from it. However, this is not a text that particularly demonstrates the nature of those potential changes outside its own relatively narrow sphere of interest.

Before I proceed to a critical commentary on the substance of the book, let me introduce you to these practices which Bryman argues are constitutive of a process of global Disneyization. The first of these, *theming*, is described and illustrated in the second chapter and refers to a mechanism directed at infusing objects with meaning above and beyond their immediate use or exchange value and, in doing so, creating experiential destinations rather than simply consumer outlets. This points, therefore, to the

preponderance of specific narratives or themes which are increasingly employed to provide coherence to a particular service or product *à la* Wild West theme parks, American style diners and even themed University halls of residence.

Next we are presented with what the author refers to as *hybrid-consumption*, the co-location of multiple consumption opportunities within a particular bounded space. A prominent illustration of this are the increasingly ubiquitous shopping malls with their combination of shops, restaurants, cinemas, amusement parks and even hotels and art galleries or, perhaps more bizarrely, sites such as hospitals where not only are health services provided but increasingly opportunities exist to take part in sport and other recreational activities as well as visit numerous shopping and dining outlets. Once again the importance of the destination is invoked here, as opportunities for hybrid-consumption convert the old fashioned afternoon at the shops into a fun-packed family experience or a trip to visit ill-relatives into the opportunity to have a swim and a pizza.

Related closely to such potential consumption practices is, Bryman argues, the importance of *merchandising*; the "promotion of goods in the form of or bearing copyright images and logos, including such products made under licence" (p.79). In this instance rather than destination it is 'synergy' which is identified as the underpinning principle of this particular process; that is, the mutual reinforcement of commodity visibility across product ranges as diverse as movies, fast foods, stationary and toiletries. As they used to say, see the movie and buy the t-shirt; which is today joined, or so it would seem, by wearing the pyjamas, waking up to the breakfast cereal, playing the video game, eating in the restaurant and so on. Interesting examples of this include the merchandising of people such as Princess Diana and the increasing importance UK universities are placing on income generated from merchandising activities – something I can personally identify with, having just witnessed around a fifth of my own institution's bookshop being given over to the sale of branded merchandise.

The fourth and final of these practices is identified as that of *performative labour*. This is, as Bryman notes, effectively a combination of what has been termed elsewhere emotional and aesthetic labour. Thus, employees of such Disneyized institutions are identified as frequently being expected to fulfil the role not only of service providers in the more traditional sense, but also of entertainers. Presentation of self is key to the 'successful' execution of this particular labour process, one underpinned by an ability to look, sound and feel right in the eyes of both employers and customers, by putting on an emotionally and more generally aesthetically pleasing show.

Now, as I noted at the outset of this review, *Disneyization* has clearly been written with an introductory market in mind. As such, it would be woefully easy (particularly in a journal such as *ephemera*) to denigrate it for what is an apparent lack of theoretical sophistication, imagination and sociological scholarship. Nevertheless, even an introductory contribution such as this is required to demonstrate something above and beyond a concern with narrative description, and this is a concern which the author appears, in this instance at least, to have overlooked. What strikes me first of all in this respect is the almost total absence of any meaningful attempt to make sense of a series of empirical observations within anything that one might recognise as the sociological tradition within which the book claims to be embedded.

After all, this is a self-professed piece of sociology that discusses commodification yet never mentions Marx; one that is, in part, beholden to the rationalisation thesis but omits Weber; concerns itself with surveillance and control in the workplace but sidesteps Foucault, and identifies the emergence of novel configurations of cultural production and manipulation but bypasses the Frankfurt School (amongst others). Nor is it a critical text as we might understand it. The author appears to pride himself in his social scientific objectivity; an objectivity that allows, for example, the siting of a Wild West themed McDonald's close to the location of the concentration camp at Dachau to pass completely without comment.

Without doubt this is a book that excels is in its ability to present, in a straightforward and immensely accessible style, a host of empirical illustrations of organisational locations at which one or more of these characteristics may be discerned. Page after page after page, of hotels, restaurants, theme parks and shopping malls – often condensed into simple lists – abound. But there, as one might suspect, 'is the rub'. For that is pretty much all one finds here, descriptions – many of which verge on, it has to be said, the banal.

In particular one cannot help notice that, despite the author's protestations that Disneyization must be understood as an organising principle that extends far beyond the actual realm of Disney and its various parks, practices and outlets, the bulk of the illustrations are examples taken from Disney theme parks; a somewhat tautological activity supplemented by what can in many instances only be described as the kind of bland description – most commonly of McDonalds, zoos, and other theme parks – that many an undergraduate is chided for.

This is not to say that some interesting historical observations and conceptual distinctions are not occasionally made along the way. For example, each chapter is at pains to detail certain historical antecedents to the practices the author then closely ties to the Disney corporation, while throughout the text he looks to make an important conceptual distinction between what is termed *structural* and *transferred* Disneyization – the latter referring to structural similarities between Disney and non-Disney organisations, the latter the direct and deliberate appropriation of them. Yet when it comes to the quality and sophistication of analysis and, more significantly, the case for extrapolation, we are frequently presented with the simplistic if not, as I have already suggested, the banal. Take as an illustration that which is offered as an explanation for why such theming, as discussed in Chapter Two, has become a significant element in the design of shopping malls

> Theming turns a mall from a neutral and otherwise potentially uninteresting group of shops into something of interest in its own right. In other words, in addition to differentiating itself from other malls, the themed mall becomes a *destination* in itself above and beyond being a place people want to visit and shop. (p.34, *emphasis original*)

Many more examples throughout the text display not only a similar vapidity but an attempt to extend the conceptual limits of Disneyization until they render it, if not meaningless, then most certainly inane. So while there is much to agree with in terms of observations about say, the spread of sites of hybrid-consumption and the increasing ubiquity of the themed consumer outlet, one has to question whether the overall power

of the case that is being made is assisted by, for instance, the inclusion of petrol stations within the list of current exemplars. Perhaps somewhat ironically given the technicolour subject he is writing about, even Bryman's photographic illustrations frequently appear unable to provide significant insight, seldom demonstrating any level of detail capable of substantiating the points they claim to be making (see, for example, Fig 4.1 on page 89).

Admittedly, the penultimate and final chapters do go some way towards addressing the obvious lack of theoretical or indeed even analytical content encountered thus far, but even here the attempt rarely exceeds the strictures of description and generalisation. Chapter Six is predominantly concerned with the existence of coercive control and surveillance which, according to Bryman, is necessary for the maintenance and stability of Disneyization. Yet while several types of potential control are identified ranging from control over consumer behaviour through the control of employees to that of the physical and cultural environment within which such Disneyized organisations operate, no effort is seemingly made to make sense of those underlying economic or political relations which render such activities necessary or institutionally desirable. Control is taken simply as enabling for the various institutions; even the issue of resistance by both employees and consumers is raised, but this is as far as it goes – Disneyization is posited as sufficient reason in itself, rather than as a potential element of larger socio-cultural reconfigurations.

Even the final chapter, which claims to explore Disneyization not only in relation to globalisation and the often posited dedifferentiation of culture and economy, but also the politics of anti-Disneyization, fails to inspire a more involved and convincing engagement from the author. Reiterating his belief (and extending Appadurai's (1990) terminology) that Disneyization represents a systemscape rather than a tightly defined set of practices or products – one directed towards the goal of "encouraging consumers to spend more than they would have done otherwise" (p.159) – he questions the proposition that Disneyization is in itself a globally homogenising force. Rather, Bryman seems to claim that if it does appear that way, it is only because consumers in various parts of the globe demand it (citing the apparent desire of Japanese visitors to Tokyo Disneyland for it to be an 'American' experience). Thus, it is a case of cultural diversity rather than centralisation as indigenous populations around the globe are granted the opportunity to sample an essentially alien culture – that of the USA.

Where this desire is not forthcoming, however, we are comforted by Bryman with the fact that what is more likely to occur is a process of 'glocalization' (Robertson, 1992) whereby local needs and conditions are met both in an anticipatory and responsive fashion as a response to the vagaries of local market demand. Here examples are once again listed such as the lifting of the alcohol ban at Disneyland Paris as well as the emergence of various themed restaurants that draw on vernacular narratives rather than imported ones.

Indeed, the author goes as far as to suggest that Disneyization not only allows such diversity, but indeed positively encourages it. For even though it is admitted that many of the institutional carriers of Disneyization, are themselves often "global brands and chains" (p.168) – he argues that not only are the local operations of such chains often

highly responsive to contextual conditions, but Disneyization is something that local producers and providers of services can apparently adopt without fundamentally affecting the localised qualities of the actual commodity or service itself. While the system may have originated in the USA, its institutional principles can, therefore, be translated into almost any market due to its inherent plurality, an outcome of the fact that as a system it is not reducible to any single product or theme.

Nevertheless, despite this somewhat positive appraisal of the capacity of Disneyization to promote a degree of cultural diversity in consumption practices, the final chapter presents us with what Bryman himself acknowledges is an attempt to "inject a more critical tone than is usually apparent in other chapters" (p.vii). Yet while such an endeavour is well taken, as with so much of this book, it manifests itself neither in the form of theoretical incisiveness or even self-righteous indignation, but rather in what is a somewhat cold and immensely derivative listing of potential objections; ranging from the manipulation of children to the destruction of the natural environment. Yet it is hard to remember at times that this book claims to be a sociological analysis of what is presented as a significant reassemablage of socio-economic practices and, ultimately, relations when issues such as the potential destruction of large swathes of the natural environment, the global exploitation of child labour and the widespread propagation of relations of social exclusion are reviewed over less than five pages of the entire 199 page text – C. Wright Mills would surely be turning in his grave.

Don't misunderstand me, I don't expect that every published text that concerns itself with the subject of global change, in whatever form it may be posited, should take up arms in the anti-corporate cause. My ultimate feeling about Bryman's work, however, is that it is just rather uninspiring sociology, lacking both theoretical depth or sophistication and, with an almost curious appeal to the romanticised ideal of the sociologist as scientific practitioner – the detached, honest seeker of facts – concerned only with bringing a kind of descriptive disembodied knowledge to the world.

And it is here that another irony raises its head for, not only is this an immensely bland book about a very colourful topic, it manages at the same time to take on a curiously Disneyfied quality of its own – note I said Disneyfied not Disneyized. Bryman is himself at pains to mark a clear distinction between the idea of Disneyfication and his own Disneyization thesis. For while his own concern is with describing a globally pervasive process of institutional isomorphism, Disneyfication he argues is a far more radical and, one gets the feeling that in the author's eyes less systematic, body of cultural criticism. One that focuses on the proposition that not only is the Disney corporation guilty of a systemic sanitisation and trivialisation of both a global cultural heritage as well as increasingly the everyday lives of people (particularly through its theme parks one might add), but that it has become an increasingly widespread phenomena across what Adorno (1991) once identified as the burgeoning culture industry.

Yet while Bryman explicitly rejects any identification with this position one cannot help but observe that in many respects this is a book that suits itself very well to criticism from this very position. For what Bryman appears to do is to take the dirty, messy and profoundly political activity of macro social analysis and reduce it to the detached

practice of the clinician. It re-imagines sociology's legacy in such a way as to render it inert, inoffensive and identical with a purely representationalist ideal of truth that has seldom ever existed. Equally, while issues such as the destruction of natural habitats, indigenous ways of life and the exploitation of child labour are briefly alluded to, these scary monsters are kept well controlled less they should frighten or upset the young and trusting student – unsettling their rosy view of an essentially benign Uncle Walt who, even beyond the grave is managing to make the world a more colourful and commodity rich place.

And just like the Disney canon, not only is this a work that is ultimately lacking in intellectual depth but one that, despite its accessibility, becomes increasingly enervating as one rapidly learns to anticipate the forthcoming content from page to page, list to list; each turn of the page increasingly diminishing any hope of critical insight or passionate engagement. This is not to say that passion was itself entirely absent from my reading of this book, for clearly there are interesting and important organisational issues contained here; issues which, somewhat annoyingly, deserved a far more rigorous treatment than they are accorded. For even if one may be quick to dismiss the actual term Disneyization as the product of a desire to inhabit a particular market niche – the concept provides at least one way of thinking about, and ultimately communicating, certain features associated with the current trajectory of global capitalism and its ongoing endeavours to penetrate ever deeper into the affective and aesthetic domain of everyday life in order to constantly renew its productive viability.

In conclusion then? Well, by all means adopt this book for teaching if you consider its broad subject matter appropriate. Indeed it somewhat pains me to admit that this may well prove to be a very popular book amongst much of today's student body. It undoubtedly provides a rich source of empirical illustrations not to mention attention grabbing anecdotes about a series of developments that resonate with many of the everyday experiences many of us will have had as producers, consumers and even academics. It is also incumbent, however, on those who do choose to employ Bryman's thesis to ensure that our students are also directed towards that body of literature and research which could genuinely enable us to start making sense of not only the context, but also the implications of such potential developments – whether Disneyized or not.

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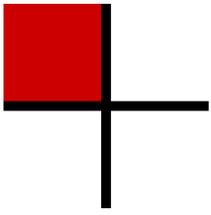
Production and Consumption: It's All Work

Yiannis Gabriel

review of: **P. Ransome (2005)** *Work, Consumption and Culture : Affluence and Social Change in the Twenty-First Century*. **London: Sage.** (PB: pp. 224, £21.99, ISBN 0761959858)

I read much of this book on the long train journeys from London to Liverpool and back. I was travelling to act as external examiner on a PhD and thought that the book would keep me happily occupied. I thus consumed the book, while I was also consuming the indifferent service of Virgin trains, along with a cup of coffee and listening to the remarkable Shostakovich violin concertos on my MP3 player. It may be thought that reading the book, like using Virgin's service, were sovereign acts of consumption, far removed from the dreary world of work and production. Far from it! Reading the book turned out to be quite hard work. Listening to Shostakovich first violin concerto at the age of nine was also very hard work. Consumption is often hard work. And consumption is also production. Without the consumption of the book, there would be no review. This is something that Marx was entirely aware of "Without production, no consumption; but also, without consumption, no production" (Marx, 1859/1973: 91). It is something that his sociological successors find difficult to understand or accept.

During my stay in Liverpool, I indulged in further consumption – a delightful hotel paid for by my generous hosts, a splendid meal accompanied, dare I say it, by a few glasses of wine, more cups of coffee and tea, and a bit of sightseeing in a city I could scarcely recognize after an absence of twenty five years. The reader will not be surprised to learn that, after such a consumer spree, I returned to my office in London thoroughly exhausted. And what was in store for me in the gleaming new palace that houses the Tanaka Business School? Further consumption, in the form of a champagne and canapé party, in honour of our recent MBA graduates with lots of joyful socializing, hearty congratulations, renewal of acquaintances and so forth. The reader will also not be surprised to know that following this two-day orgy I received a modest, though significant, 'compensation package' from my hosts at Liverpool University as well as my regular salary.

Paul Ransome, the author of this worthy book, is of course aware of the difficulties of disentangling production from consumption. He offers the under-powered example of picking an apple from a tree to eat – an act that involves simultaneous consumption and

work (production). Yet, while acknowledging that consumption and production cannot be separated, the book pursues a merciless journey addressing the question beloved of sociologists as to whether consumption has replaced production as 'the defining factor' for those living in the 'affluent West'. Ransome's core argument is that much of the industrial west has now entered an age of 'affluence', whereby most households have elevated themselves above consuming for survival. Affluence generates 'exciting and challenging kinds of consumption', introducing households to the miracles of 'choice' – choice of products, choice of lifestyles and above all choice of 'identities'. People increasingly turn to consumption for fulfilment of their 'needs', seeking 'pleasure' in 'consumption acts rather than production acts'. Far from lessening the importance of work, however, these developments accentuate it. "We are even more workerly than we were before, but always in the context of deepening consumption identity" (p.189).

Paul Ransome is too sophisticated a sociologist not to realize that every one of the words in single quotation marks above are highly contentious and problematic. Yet, in a curious way, while acknowledging these difficulties in some place of his scholarly text, he appears to build his argument as if they did not exist. Thus for example, having acknowledged the difficulty of separating consumption acts from production acts, he happily goes on to argue that the former have assumed greater identity-affirming, choice-affording, pleasure-yielding and need-fulfilling capacities than the latter. I return to my opening question of whether reading his book was an act of consumption or one of production and whether I should be correspondingly more or less fulfilled as a result.

Similar caveats can be expressed about the other core concepts of his argument. Having acknowledged that affluence is relative (in a land of BMW drivers, the Ford driver may not view him/herself as affluent), he goes on to argue that overall levels of affluence have increased, producing some dizzying statistics along the way. Yet, if affluence is relative, and if the masses compare themselves to exorbitant standards of consumption set by highly visible celebrities in the media, exactly the opposite can be argued – that the price of affluence for the few is the (perceived) deprivation for the many. Or consider his treatment of needs. Having acknowledged that needs are socially constructed (or produced) with references to Marcuse *et al.*, he proposes that there are two different types of consumption, simple and complex, each involving three sub-types of consumption acts, each characterized by a particular type of need satisfied. Necessary, elaborated and indulgent consumption acts form simple consumption, whereas affluent, conspicuous and symbolic consumption acts form complex consumption. Try as I may, my restaurant meal with my hosts in Liverpool cannot be fitted into any of the above sub-types. Or, more precisely, it can be fitted easily in all six equally comfortably.

One of the persistent difficulties of this book is the use of the word 'we', whose meaning easily shifts from "we=affluent westerners" to "we=all westerners" to "we=sociologists" or more commonly the use of passive voice that conceals the subject of the verb. For instance, "We have argued that concepts of social identity have altered to accommodate the greater variety of inputs and experiences which go towards the formation of identity in the late modern period" (p.116). Does this refer to the sociologists' concepts of social identity or to people's own concepts have altered? At times the book assumes an aggressive realism that will surprise sophisticated

organizational theorists, whereas at other times the book hedges its position by referring to putative actors and their perceptions: "Acts of consumption [solidly real] are considered [by whom?] more desirable than acts of production [dead solid] because they produce [notice how consumption 'produces'] high levels of intrinsic, spontaneous and immediate satisfaction [solid and real]. It is the immediacy of satisfaction which makes acts of consumption seem [soft-pedalling] concrete and real to the actor [back pedalling] and is in marked contrast to the more abstract [to whom? Call-centre employees?] and detached [ditto?] character of actions in the realm of production [objective]" (pp.49-50).

One of the most disappointing features of the book for me is its failure to problematize choice. Consumer choice is treated throughout as an unambiguous value, something that affluent consumers cherish and the basis of their freedom and "spontaneous satisfaction". Undoubtedly choice is an important feature of today's consumer ideology, one that extends into issues of life and death, procreation, bodily modification, spiritual transformation and so forth. Yet, choice is neither an innocent nor an untarnished entity. Going to Liverpool allowed me a choice of thirty-seven different train fares with different conditions attached to each. My generous hosts would have uncomplainingly reimbursed me whichever fare I used, but knowing the financial stringencies of our universities I felt bound to select an economical 'package'. I am sure that readers will be aware that such choices are far from pleasant. Choice, far from bringing pleasure, can generate anxiety, confusion and dissatisfaction. European visitors to the US rarely find the choice of 875 television channels stimulating or 'spontaneously satisfying'. Furthermore, choice may often be one between two lesser alternatives – in extreme cases as in William Styron's 'Sophie's Choice', choice may bring a lifetime of torment and anguish.

Critical sociologists must undoubtedly acknowledge the elevation of choice to a hegemonic consumerist ideology, but should be cautious about naturalising it or indeed fetishizing it. Choice is not a fact, but an experience. And it is an experience that is carefully and deliberately cultivated by marketers, spin-doctors, politicians and other merchandizers of meaning to pass the buck to the choice-maker, who is often left disempowered, bewildered and flumoxed. Remarkably, Paul Ransome scarcely refers in his book to any of the discourses critical of contemporary consumerism (e.g. Gabriel & Lang, 1995; Klein, 2000; Ritzer, 1999, 2001; Schor, 1998) and its brutal demands on those whose labour sustains it (e.g. Frenkel, Korczynski, Shire, & Tam, 1999; Sennett, 1998).

A final niggle. Am I alone in thinking that many of today's sociological analyses of whatever our times should be referred to as, post-modern, late-modern or whatever, construct an argument in opposition to a vulgar Marxist account of modernity – an account of uniform class identities and work-related meanings? It seems to me that it is as if all the subtleties of the Marxist argument and its numerous elaborations by authors as diverse as E. P. Thompson, Marcuse, Althusser, Gramsci (an author about whom Ransome has written in the past), and Lukacs and even non-Marxist theorists, like Weber and Veblen (of whom all but the first are cited by this author) fade into non-existence when confronted with the obliterating qualities of today's consumption. Thus, the subtle, multi-faceted, protean, complex, identity-rich, gendered, 'diversed' but stubbornly class-free consumer of today, in his full Technicolor splendour, is contrasted

to the black-and-white, class-defined, impoverished and barely subsisting subject of yesteryear. It seems to me that this caricature does as much injustice to our understanding of today as to that of yesteryear.

Consumers and consumption today are themselves not facts but ways of looking at the world. They are contested and argued over through a plethora of discourses. Whether what I am doing now is seen as consuming computing power on my desk or producing a review of a book emerges from such discourses. Whether Marx himself was consuming the midnight oil or producing some of the major works in social science also emerges from such discourses. Looking at some current explorations into the world of consumption, identities and the like I am left with the impression that Marx, living in what now seems the stone age of Victorian consumption, might have been more insightful into the dialectics of work and consumption than many of his sociological heirs.

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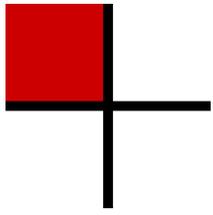
Reconfiguring Research into Historical Advertising Practice

Gavin Jack

review of: **L. McFall (2004)** *Advertising: A Cultural Economy*. **London: Sage.** (PB: pp. 224, £19.99, ISBN 0-7619-4255-6)

A constant presentism is found in the resignation of many to current conditions of production and consumption, an acquiescence based on the acceptance and normalization of the purported inevitability of the way things are. Such an ideological formation makes possible an erasure of history, a locking of our hearts and minds into the here and now, and a veiling of the view of systems of capital as historically evolving and essentially arbitrary artefacts. Paradoxically, however, capitalist ideology might also be said to be marked by a rhetoric of constant change, and a notion that the here and now is qualitatively different from the past. Declarations of constant change often transmute into imperatives driven by governments and big business for adaptation, adjustment and improvement. Perhaps this contradiction is best summed up by Marx's concept of capital's 'constant revolutionizing of production'. Within such teleological and epochalist frames of a progressive capital, history can never be taken seriously. Its study has the capacity to politicise contemporary socioeconomic ideologies, to reveal their arbitrariness and to point to their potential reversal. It must therefore become a casualty to the presenteeist clamour for both continuity, and change – a different kind of capital, but capital all the same.

In one of the most distinctive, critically engaged and empirically attentive contributions to debates on advertising in society in the last twenty years, Liz McFall's (2004) *Advertising: A Cultural Economy* takes history seriously and admirably succeeds in surfacing, dissecting and offering alternative visions of historical advertising to those contained in the teleological visions and epochalist predilections of received academic wisdom. With reference to the works of a number of leading figures ranging from Varda Leymour, Judith Williamson, and Richard Dyer, to Robert Goldman and Andrew Wernick, McFall articulates the centrality of epochalist frames in the assumed but empirically unsubstantiated claims by such authors that advertising in the current age is *different* from that of previous times.

By way of illustration, McFall explains that these authors often unthinkingly claim that: contemporary advertising makes greater use of *visual* and symbolic, rather than information-based appeals; that it is now a *pervasive* social phenomenon compared to the past; that it is also increasingly *persuasive* in its impact on consumers; and finally, that it is an increasingly *hybridised* social practice. In these accounts, such stark comparisons between the present and past are assumed to be easily readable from, and direct reflections of, wider social and economic transformations, an analytic move in which advertising is unproblematically reduced to a mirror of social change.

I read McFall's point of departure for her book as three-fold. First, she takes the view that such epochalist accounts of advertising treat the past in highly problematic ways. They are reductive and universalising, but most importantly they typically offer very little, and often no empirical detail or evidence about the past which is being counterposed with the present. Second, she is sceptical about the assumed, and rather simplistic, cumulative and linear model of socio-economic transformation, within which understandings of the novelty of present-day advertising are constructed. Third, she makes the observation that accounts of the purportedly increasing pervasiveness, persuasiveness and hybridisation of advertising are most often based on *semiotic* and *meaning*-centred analyses of advertising texts. She argues that such a focus on text, and its consumption, rather limits (or perhaps *should* limit) the wider claims that theorists might make about advertising in society, sidelining as they often do production-led questions about the practice of advertising. She folds these three concerns into a broader call not only for greater attention to *historical detail* in advertising research, but more specifically for greater attention to the *mundane and local practices* of advertising and the complex factors that, sometimes haphazardly, shaped the development of the industry.

McFall pursues these imperatives theoretically, by combining an ANT/AST[1]-based view of advertising as social practice and socio-technical device, with a Foucauldian-inspired genealogical approach to historical research. Keen to point out that her use of history will not 'solve' the problems of previous accounts, nor provide a singular, and undisputed version of the past, McFall more modestly suggests that her genealogical approach can demonstrate the specific histories of advertising practices whose diversity and locality contributed to the 'patchwork of events' through which contemporary advertising emerged. Advertising, as McFall puts it, is not the "product of a steady evolution, but … a plural and multifaceted *device* that is constantly adapting, often in contradictory ways, to changing circumstances" (p.191, emphasis in the original).

The exposition, structure, and development of McFall's genealogical thesis are exceptionally good. The first three of the seven chapters comprising the book isolate three sets of dualisms that typically frame critical theoretical works on advertising in society. She critically inspects each of these dualisms and points to the manner in which their deployment by key critics in the field, has served to limit understandings of advertising's mediating impact on the relationships between meaning and reality (Chapter One), people and objects (Chapter Two), and culture and economy (Chapter Three) respectively.

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1   Actor-Network Theory (ANT) and Adaptive Structuration Theory (AST).

In Chapter One, entitled 'colonising of the real', McFall argues that the materialist underpinning of the semiotic hegemony of critical approaches to advertising serves to overlook more recent post-structuralist critiques of the stability of meaning, to skew analysis towards the consumption rather than production of advertising forms, and finally to provide the theoretical basis from which an epochalist approach to understanding advertising becomes possible. In Chapter Two she diagnoses the inconclusive and limited evidence upon which claims to the increasing pervasiveness and persuasiveness of contemporary advertising are made, and cautions that viewing such changes in advertising as an "irresistible and inevitable move to a different sort of society risks overlooking the range, variety and inventiveness of approaches to promotion at different historical moments" (p.59). In Chapter Three, McFall continues by warning of the dangers of ignoring the formation and operation of advertising practices at a *local* level. With relation to critical accounts of the disruptive effects of advertising on the spheres of culture and economy, contained for instance in mass-culture/Frankfurt School-inspired analyses, she argues that the problematic separation of culture and economy which these views presuppose could be fruitfully overcome through an examination of historically contingent modes of studying social life, and through practice-based accounts of advertising.

These three opening conceptual chapters link extremely well with each other, and demonstrate McFall's incisive analytic abilities and exceptional clarity of writing. The surfacing and critical evaluation of the three key fault lines that support epochalist views of advertising in society in these three chapters represent in themselves extremely important conceptual contributions to the literature. Although one might quibble with the, at times, repetitious signposting of arguments within and between chapters, they all succeed admirably in drawing together key issues in the literature with analytic depth and deft.

Chapter Four provides some methodological reflections germane to the remaining chapters of the book, with specific reference to the relationship between theory and history. It is here that McFall makes her case for, and simultaneously points to the limitations of, an analytic framework that combines a genealogical approach to history with an ANT/AST view of advertising as material practice. Having Foucauldian sympathies myself, I need very little persuasion of the theoretical case and importance of a genealogical approach in this field of research. I think it is timely, and combined with a certain kind of anthropological sensibility to material practice, I think McFall's call for a more serious approach to history, and its embodiment in everyday social practice, is analytically crucial for the development of the academic field.

It is not, however, at the level of theoretical argumentation that I am most convinced of McFall's thesis (take this as read). Rather, it is through her application and instantiation of the genealogical method that McFall's work takes on particular persuasive powers and renders her text so important for the field. In this regard, it is in Chapters Five and Six where *Advertising: A Cultural Economy* really distinguishes itself. In these chapters (where the vast majority of my earmarked pages are located!), we get down and dirty with the diversity, discontinuities and contingencies of historical advertising practice.

Chapter Five takes to task the idea that contemporary advertising is necessarily more pervasive and hybrid than its predecessors. McFall begins by giving some fascinating evidence of the diversity of social actors, institutional arrangements and socioeconomic conditions that shaped advertising in the nineteenth century, mainly in the UK, and to a much lesser extent, the USA. She shows how early ad agencies also participated in other forms of business (e.g. the Streets agency was also a stationer and bookseller, Deacon's was a coffee house) and how the development of an agency system was crucially fashioned from *personal* connections between agencies. These connections patterned the emergence of competing models for the provision of advertising services, as well as the nature of institutional arrangements at that time.

Second in this chapter, McFall illustrates that advertising and promotional media were a very prominent feature of life in the 19th century, thus undermining the notion of pervasiveness as a *purely* contemporary phenomenon. She points, amongst other things, to critical essays in mid-19th century editions of the magazine *Punch* complaining about the ubiquity of poster media. As a promotional tool, posters came to prominence due both to restrictions on the use of press advertising in the UK, as well as its intrinsic benefits as a far-reaching communications tool. In the context of anti-billposting legislation, and technological advances, contractors emerged and were responsible for a more regimented system for using this medium. In addition to posters, the use of gas lanterns from the 1830s on, placard bearers on streets, company buildings as a promotional canvass, and advertising on a whole host of different forms of stationery illustrated the diversity and ingenuity of early forms of advertising. Taken together, McFall's historical work in this chapter points to the manner in which local technological and institutional conditions patterned early advertising, and illustrates the existence of multiple promotional forms during the period of analysis.

In addition to the wonderful wealth of examples, and the reproduction of early adverts in the book itself, this particular chapter raises the crucial, and often overlooked issue, of the need to historicise the categories that we ourselves use as analysts in our work on advertising. In the context of this particular chapter, McFall argues that we can suggest that advertising and promotion was as pervasive then as it is considered now, *provided that* we view pervasiveness not as a timeless and universal category of analysis, but as a category which itself has historically contingent meanings. The critical essays from *Punch*, for instance, showed that the pervasiveness of promotional/commercial activity had a particular referent and a particular resonance which was specifically reflective of concerns and understandings that emerged in the social and institutional context of 19th century Britain, and which cannot easily be transposed into our context in the 21st century. This is a crucial analytic move in this book, and an exceptionally important lesson that the field might do well to remember and see substantiated in this way.

Most fascinating in Chapter Five is the evidence McFall presents regarding the aesthetic dimension of historical advertising production. She focuses on the claim in contemporary accounts of advertising that advertisers, creatives and copyrighters constitute a group of *new* cultural intermediaries that possess large and very distinctive stocks of cultural capital which they bring to bear in their jobs. Whilst accepting the distinctive nature of the cultural capital offered by those employed in advertising, she challenges the view that such an occupational group is new and emerged as a response

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to the supposedly more aestheticized times in which we live. Insights into the lives and social connections of those involved in early advertising reveal that they typically emanated from very particular, usually privileged, social backgrounds, and possessed large reserves of cultural and aesthetic capital.

A letter referred to by McFall comes from an 1838 edition of the *Gentlemen's Magazine* and points to a close connection between the famous writer Samuel Coleridge and the proprietor of the *Morning Post*. In this letter, Coleridge complains how his 'literary department' consisting of William Wordsworth, Charles Lamb and Robert Southey had not been properly recompensed by the paper for their writing. Those working in, or connected with early agencies, as this one example suggests, belonged to a number of cultural industries including publishing, literary work, journalism and news production, and art. With famous writers and essayists as copyrighters, and connections engineered with the art world, early agencies had access to many different literary and artistic styles, and forms of cultural and aesthetic capital.

As the cultural capital of these early 'creatives' was brought together with the commercial aims of the agencies for whom they worked, early forms of what McFall calls 'constituent practices' were in evidence at this time. In this regard, she very interestingly talks of the role of women copyrighters in early agencies e.g. JWT's famous copyrighter Helen Lansdowne Resor who went on to become part owner of the agency. Brought in to address the need for a 'feminine point of view' on consumption and society, the employment of women at JWT, McFall argues, was aimed at using their cultural and aesthetic knowledges as/of women, to target more effectively their advertising at the 'mysterious psychology' of females across a variety of product categories. Not only was early advertising pervasive then, it also involved a multitude of different cultural workers with considerable stocks of aesthetic knowledge, who enacted the constituent practices that drew together cultural and aesthetic knowledge with commercial aims and objectives.

In Chapter Six, McFall continues her historicising work, in this case with regard to the claim that contemporary advertising is more *persuasive* than its predecessors. The idea of persuasiveness contains, she suggests, three comprising elements: the use of images; the use of persuasive rhetoric or copy appeal; the development of emotional/psychological types of appeal. She notes how in the work of many leading critics, these three elements are considered as substantiating evidence of the qualitatively different, and more symbolically-laden role played by advertising in today's consumer society. She takes each of these elements in turn, and demonstrates earlier uses and equivalences of these categories. Importantly, McFall once more emphasises the historical contingency of the notion of persuasiveness and looks at the use of persuasive elements in historical context.

To give a flavour of the examples McFall utilises to unpack her points, she shows that in pre-1900 press and poster advertising, a combination of technological factors, political and economic conditions and local institutional forces profoundly shaped how *images* were used in these media. Comparing papers in the UK and the US, for example, the 18th century saw the deployment in the US of a range of display techniques and small illustrations not available in the UK. To explain this, McFall describes how

between 1712 and 1855, stamp duty in the UK, as well as a flat tax rate, meant that papers were limited to a single folded sheet, resulting in the adoption of small typefaces, and larger numbers of columns per page. Without these restrictions, US papers had more sides in comparison to the UK until, that was, a national paper shortage combined with a shift in institutional approaches to press advertising created a typographic uniformity in US newspapers and a concomitant limitation on the use of images.

By the 1870s, however, the development of lithographic and printing techniques created low enough production costs to encourage the manufacture of full-colour posters. Such a technological advancement enabled the widespread use of this image-friendly medium, a development which was often decried in critical essays of the time. The examples of such technological, institutional and political forces meant that the unfolding use of image-based advertisements was stunted, historically and culturally specific, and led to the emergence of changing and a highly variegated set of styles of verbal appeal in its stead.

Most interestingly in this chapter is the historical evidence McFall presents on the emergent use of *emotional* appeals in advertisements, a phenomenon that goes back to at least the 17th century. She illustrates emotional appeals with the fascinating examples of early deodorant ads which threatened consumers with social embarrassment unless they bought bodily protection products. Furthermore, JWT's emotion-led campaign for Chase and Sanborn Tea promoted the invigorating and stimulating properties of tea. With sexual allusions clear in the ad, this highly successful JWT campaign saw a several 100% increase in sales of this brand. Its success, and those of other campaigns at the time suggest that early advertising was not only pervasive, but also highly persuasive at times, a fact understood by both practitioners of advertising as well as its most ardent critics. Both these chapters are outstanding, original pieces of work that contribute in important and highly fascinating ways to the advertising arena. McFall's writing in these chapters, in keeping with the rest of book, is of exemplary clarity and structure, and the evidence and illustrations she gives are extremely effective.

In the final Chapter Seven, McFall's writing changes slightly from the gentle, but rigorous argumentative style of earlier chapters to something far punchier. This is a short but sweet chapter, where McFall really packs a punch, using her carefully built-up argument in the preceding chapters to deliver a heavy intellectual body blow to extant critical wisdom on advertising, and (rather unexpectedly) to Callon's work in ANT. Conclusions to books are usually rather limp affairs, best ignored. This is certainly not the case here.

Advertising: A Cultural Economy is a book of great importance for anyone wishing to understand the nature and role of advertising in society. In contrast to previous commentators, McFall has taken history seriously and in the process of doing so, produced a reconfigured intellectual territory for the study of historical advertising practice. It is a book positioned at an anthropologically and historically sensitive intersection of advertising research, marketing and cultural studies, and as such, it offers differently nuanced implications for each of these broad fields of study.

Its focus on studying the material practices of production in their historical context, for instance, not only adds to the relatively small number of practice-based insights in advertising research, but also exposes gaping holes in the empirically unsubstantiated 'über-claims' of the big names in the area. She challenges these names, and the field of advertising research more generally, to think more precisely about their tableaux for staging the past, and the categories through which this is made (im)possible.

The deeper incision of McFall's analysis, however, cuts into the epochalist framing and simplistic reading of developments in advertising as a simple reflection of wider social transformation. She provides compelling evidence which, at the very least, substantially nuances the grain of many grand narratives in cultural studies, advertising and marketing research of the increasing culturalization of society and its manifestation in the advancing symbolism of advertising. The spectre of epochalism and the various teleologies of modern marketing and advertising have, of course, been ripped open and gorged in recent years by the many snouts in the trough of postmodern marketing. Now unfashionable, it would seem, as many critical (marketing) types lose themselves in literary criticism or retrench themselves in mainstream marketing's (neo-positivist) backlash against its Celtic margins, McFall's text gives epistemological, methodological and political pointers that challenge and might be used to resuscitate the (UK) marketing discipline's attempts at critique.

Her focus on the moments of, and factors influencing the development and production (rather than consumption) of advertising, also has important implications for those in advertising and cultural studies: to 'get over' the obsession with semiotic analysis and acts of consumption, and to round out analyses with greater sensitivity to the institutional base and productive apparatus for capital (and its constant presentism). Finally, in introducing a Foucauldian-inspired take on these institutional questions, this book represents one of the very few pieces of work in marketing and advertising research to make use of Foucault's work. If for no other reason, this unusual deployment of Foucault in these disciplinary terrains makes this a very important addition to the field. This book should be on the bookshelf and reading lists of all students and scholars of advertising.

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