

CALL FOR PAPERS

*Behind the Scenes, Between
the Lines*

Dis-Membering...

The Dark Side of Organization

June 25-27th 2008

Wortley Hall, Wortley Village, Sheffield
“the workers’ stately home” www.wortleyhall.com



Daniel Spoerri : *Ça crève les yeux que ça crève les yeux*, 1966
(Blindingly obvious that she is blind)
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Organizers: Garance Maréchal (University of Liverpool); Hugo Leticche (UvH Utrecht);
Stephen Linstead (University of York); Torkild Thanem (University of Vaxjo).

Keynotes by: Professor Gibson Burrell (University of Leicester Management School)
Professor Stewart Clegg (University of Technology, Sydney and AIM)
Dr David Whyte (University of Liverpool)

Abstracts for full papers (500 words) or working papers (300 words) or proposals for other forms of presentation or event (300-500 or whatever you think is necessary) should be sent to darksideoforg@btinternet.com by 28th November 2007. Decisions on acceptance will be made by January 18th 2008. Full papers, where applicable, should be sent by 30th April for inclusion in the proceedings.

Registration will include all accommodation and meals from 2pm 25th to 2pm 27th and will cost £285 per person (single) £230 (sharing). Accommodation and registration forms will be available in autumn 2007.

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WEBSITE: <http://sinstead.userworld.com/darkside/dsindex.html>

What could be more upsetting than the sight of a corpse? Yet how often does its ghastly horror transfix us, making it impossible to look away? As a wistful cloud crosses a romantic full moon, a man takes a razor and slits open the eye of a young woman (Buñuel 1929) reminding us that “extreme seductiveness is probably at the edge of horror” (Bataille, 1929). If our thought is an eye, its ‘seductive quality’ could be exposed through the violence of such eye-slitting. And this violence both removes a way of seeing and opens the possibilities of seeing anew.

In this two-day conference, we wish to explore, track, display and dis-member the ‘dark side’ of organization. We are interested in the perhaps instinctual, impulsive, non organized and hidden dynamics that influence organizing, and especially its ‘upsetting’ part. Our aim is to confront the potential of the dark side of organization as an alternative focus for understanding organizational life. We invite submissions that seek to investigate the following themes in particular:

1. *What is the dark side of organization?* Pulsional human drives have been explored using the concept of the unconscious by psychoanalysis, a concept also important to the work of surrealists as a source of creativity, desire, violence or destruction. The popular concept of organizational identity, for example, displays some irony if dismembered into its components id- and entity, as the organizational “id” (the literally unnameable source of human impulses) is denied the status of an entity and therefore status as an appropriate object of study. How does the “dark” side relate to the “light”? Are “darker” impulses libidinal or anti-libidinal? Are they part and parcel of the normal activities of organizing, a formless and sometimes monstrous ‘matrix’ upon which organizations rest – often in a sublimated way? We would like to find ways of qualifying the absent presence of such neglected drives and of constructing them as phenomena for study.

2. *Tracking and displaying the dark side of organization.* We wish to make visible the taken for granted status of the dark side as a member of the normal community of everyday organizational practices. Academics have often been blind to the possibilities of acknowledging the full complexity of this dark side as well as being accomplices to the continuing obliviousness of much of organization studies to it. This neglect has allowed mainstream organization studies to lay claim to a firmly articulated vision of what organising is and can be: architectures and structures; entities; capabilities, capacities and competences; dependent and independent variables; systems and strategies; environments, boundaries and spanning mechanisms; constraints and choices; routines and crises; decisions and discourse; functions and motivations. Organizations also seem to have a history of and an interest in repressing basic human impulses such as sexuality, carnality or violence whilst institutionalizing them (Foucault 1977; 1990) Organizational processes of normalization create and define deviance and perversion in those activities that cannot effectively be eradicated, and generate disciplinary practices to police this body of behaviour. Is the repressed always subject to return and never completely eliminated or contained? Is organizational crime always with us? Moreover, do exposures of the dark side of organization : 1. indicate mismanagement, loss of managerial power, passivity, neglect of duties and inadequate surveillance, and invite intervention for improved performance; or 2. do they indicate the presence of fundamentally uncontrollable forces that are an inalienable part of the viscerality of human organising?

3. *Dismembering the dark-side of organization:* There is a hidden dimension, an elusive aspect of organization that can hardly be represented. Attempts to name this space are varied – the subliminal, the formless, the unnameable, the abject, the inhuman – but its status as an absent presence remains, behind the scenes of vision, between the lines of form, outside the borders of organised discourse yet exerting a power within. This aspect resists being en-formed and consists, not so much of a set of separate phenomena from those represented in mainstream accounts of organising, but of a *negative dimension* to all those phenomena that are positively recognised and named. Logocentric approaches to representation lead to epistemological closure and are ultimately ill-equipped to account for the leaking and formless dynamics that are at play. Here, we would encourage reflection on violent “eye-slitting” forms of representation and/or modes of thinking as a way to dis-member existing views and develop a dis-located and open gaze.

We invite papers that consider such questions as:

- Should we talk about a “dark side”? How can it be defined and why is it conceived of as being dark? Can and should the “dark side” be suppressed? Can it be creative as well as destructive? Is an ethics of the dark side possible? Is there also a horror of “whiteness”?
- Are organizations no more than trembling aggregates of human flesh, violence, pain and/or desires? How can organization studies engage with the nature of the formless? Is aesthetics one way to recognise its negativity? Are there others?
- Does dis-membering mean more than taking apart? Does it require the development of new methods of study and how can they be generated?

Possible themes that papers might address could include:

- Desire, sexuality, carnality, passion, sacrifice and the sacred in organization
- Depravity, perversion and transgression in organization;
- Corruption, bribery, organizational crime, fraud, post-Enron issues
- Abuse of power, harassment, bullying, intimidation, extortion, bystanding, suicide, murder.
- Secrecy, espionage, disinformation, surveillance.
- The creativity of the dark side and the dark side of learning.
- Decrepitude, decay, terror and horror.
- Organized aspects of human tragedies and disasters – war, genocide, exploitation and displacement of indigenous people by “development” projects.
- Technologies of horror and the horrors of technology.
- The monstrous in organization and organization theory – including consideration of excess, waste, hybrids, chimera.
- The significance of illusion, including dreams; symbolism, artefacts and language of the dark side; simulacra, escapism, gambling, risk.
- Non-knowledge, non-being and the Inhuman.
- Phantoms, spectres, spirits and ghosts.....!

We also welcome papers that:

- Explore the potential contributions to the understanding of the dark side of organization of specific authors and movements outside the boundary of organization studies, such as: Artaud, Bataille, surrealism or recent approaches to the application of psychoanalysis (such as Zizek’s appropriation of Lacan, and the work of Laplanche).
- Develop approaches to formlessness: the rhizomatics of the dark side; architecture, thresholds, transitions, ectoplasm, clouds, mess, pneumatology; challenges of the formless to organizational philosophy.
- Attempt further to explore arguments advanced in Burrell’s *Pandemonium*

We invite proposals for innovative forms of presentations as well as conventional papers; innovative forms can include performances, demonstrations of methods or techniques, and novel or unconventional utilizations of representational forms. Forms that unleash the dark side of individual or collective creativity (like the surrealists’ *exquisite cadaver*) and make it available for scrutiny are particularly welcome. Should your presentation require a timing or other resources outside the conventional format, please set out your requirements clearly. We hope to facilitate a wide range of approaches to the topic.

About the Keynote Speakers:

Gibson Burrell is Head of the Management School at the University of Leicester, having enjoyed a distinguished career at the Universities of Lancaster and Warwick. Co-author of *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* with Gareth Morgan (1979) he inaugurated debates in organization studies that continue and make him one of the most highly cited scholars in the field – on either side of the Atlantic. Gibson’s remarkable ability to open up new areas of the field was felt during the 80s in studies of gender and sexuality, and both individually and in collaboration with Robert Cooper he set the terms for another generation of debate on modernism and postmodernism. In 1997 he produced a creative landmark in his *tour de force* sole-authored book *Pandemonium*, which was a radical innovation in transdisciplinary

thinking, as well in the form of the work. Constructed as a theme park-style tour through the dark recesses of a mediaeval city of the organizational mind, it remains a dramatic source of inspiration for 21st century organizational thought.

Stewart Clegg is Professor of Management at the University of Technology, Sydney and at Aston Business School, as well as being a Visiting Professor at a number of European Universities including Maastricht University, Vrije Universiteit of Amsterdam, both in the Netherlands, EM-Lyon Business School, France, and Copenhagen Business School, Denmark. He has produced many books, including the Academy of Management George R. Terry award-winning *Handbook of Organization Studies* (1996; 2006 2e; with Cynthia Hardy, Tom Lawrence and Walter Nord), the Eight Volume *Central Currents in Organization Studies* (2003), *Debating Organizations* (2003), with Robert Westwood, and the *International Encyclopedia of Organization Studies* (2007 with James R. Bailey). His interest in the dark side of organizations stems from his world-renowned work on power, including the best-selling *Frameworks of Power* (1989) and the recent *Power in Organizations* (2006 with Nelson Phillips and David Courpasson), and the organizational “heart of darkness” that it often occludes.

Patricia MacCormack has published extensively in the areas of the visceral dimension of cinema, corporeality, the post-human, queer theory, feminism, ethics and continental philosophy. Not shy of controversy, MacCormack’s work fearlessly exposes the darker side of desire. She is well known for essays on perversion, masochism, body modification, polysexuality and the ethics of becomings which have appeared in *Rhizomes*, *Women: A Cultural Review*, *Body and Society*, *Theory, Culture and Society* as well as numerous anthologies. She is the author of *Cinesexuality* (Ashgate, 2008) and co-editor (with Ian Buchanan) of *Schizoanalysis and Cinema* (Continuum, 2008).

About the Organizers:

Garance Maréchal is Lecturer in Strategy at the University of Liverpool Management School (UK). She is particularly interested in the use of reflection and reflexivity in the construction of lay and scientific knowledge. Her PhD was completed at Paris-Dauphine University (France) and includes a reflexive ethnography of her own methodological and ethical practices, which offers a description of ‘the dark side’ of her own stream of thoughts during her research process. She is particularly keen on the artistic work of the Surrealists. g.marechal@liverpool.ac.uk

Stephen Linstead is Professor of Critical Management at the York Management School, University of York (UK). His research and publications have included work on organizational aesthetics, postmodern thought, identity, and gender and sexuality. He has a particular fondness for the work of Georges Bataille, and subsequent moves from ontologies of becoming to meontologies of non-being. sl519@york.ac.uk

Hugo Letiche is Research Professor in 'Meaning in Organization' at the University for Humanistics (UvH) Utrecht (The Netherlands). He has a fascination with 'magic realism' and is currently collecting stories of the ghoulish imprisonment and 'torture' of old age persons in so-called old age homes. His research interests include Artaud, social complexity theory and (post-) humanist thought and ethics. h.letiche@uvh.nl

Torkild Thanem is an Assistant Professor in Organization and Management at Växjö University (Sweden). After his PhD from Warwick Business School, he did post-doctoral work at Stockholm University on public health and public spaces. His recent publications include work on Deleuze, sexual spaces and the monstrous organization, on which he has a book forthcoming with publisher Edward Elgar. torkild.thanem@vxu.se

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