



# **Notework**

**The Newsletter of the Standing  
Conference on Organizational  
Symbolism**

**May 2000 issue**



# Editorial

## Jo Brewis and Tomasz Ludwicki

Welcome to our May 2000 issue of Notework, which as you will have realized is somewhat late. Apologies for this, but it was unavoidable due to Jo taking extended leave from work. Also mea mea very culpa from Jo if anyone has sent material for this issue to her by post. There is currently a pile of mail resembling the Leaning Tower of Pisa in her office and, with this issue being delayed already, it was felt best to leave this unopened for the time being. Do rest assured, however, that any submissions will certainly be included in future issues.

Hopefully many of you will be with us in Athens for SCOS 2000, which looks like being another excellent event. We also now have a **latest news** site in addition to our web site, at [www.linstead.net](http://www.linstead.net). Click on SCOS 200 CONFERENCE LATEST for details of plenaries, parallel sessions and paper titles. The early bird discounted registration deadline has now been extended to June 1<sup>st</sup>, if you haven't signed up yet ... so please do register now to take advantage. Those who have already registered will receive their invoices by the end of May.

Having mentioned the new site, can we take this opportunity to urge you all to also visit our main web site, at <http://www.scos.org>? Further to the last issue of Notework, the site now boasts archived past issues, a chat room, a bulletin board, details of past conferences, a link to the Athens conference home page, links to various Internet book sellers (including links to Amazon and Barnes and Noble which, if you use them to purchase a book, ensure a commission is paid to SCOS funds) and other goodies. The site has been thoroughly revamped and redesigned thanks to the doughty endeavours of Steve Linstead and Gavin Jack, and Gerard Leighton and Gareth Dowell at Leighton Internet, a UK-based digital communications organization. All in all, it is well worth a visit.

Further to the above, we should at this point ask **everyone** to (re)join SCOS, **unless** you have joined online or have sent the hard copy form from a past Notework to Marion Little at the University of Sunderland. The form appears again in this issue, or you can use the online facility which can be accessed via the web page.

**Please also note that anyone who attended the Edinburgh or Brazil conferences, or indeed any past conferences, still needs to join SCOS, contrary to previous information. This is because we now**

**need to separate actual members from those on our mailing list for the purposes, for example, of voting in forthcoming Board or Chair elections.**

And please do continue to pass copies of Notework, and/ or our web site address, on to friends and colleagues who might be interested in SCOS activities.

This issue includes Executive Board minutes from the meeting in Athens in November last year and a review of David Knights' and Hugh Willmott's *Management Lives* by Dave Richards. Please also note Monica Lee's call for papers and reviewers for HRDI. We are, furthermore, delighted to announce the inclusion of a free copy of volume 17, number 12 of the globally acclaimed *International Journal of Rapid Results Ethnography* (pinches of salt recommended with every reading).

The usual and heartfelt thanks are due to all contributors - responsibility for the less-than-fantastic bits is probably ours. However, **please please please** do send us more material for future issues ... the success of Notework ultimately depends on its contributors and, while we are only too well aware of the current pressures on members of all academic institutions and other organizations, we can't make it happen without you (cue cheesy music). Contact details for both of us are shown below, and the deadline for the next issue is **September 15<sup>th</sup> 2000**.

May the road rise with you ...  
Jo and Tomasz

### **Editors' contact details**

Jo Brewis  
Department of Accounting, Finance  
and Management  
University of Essex  
Wivenhoe Park  
Colchester  
Essex CO4 3SQ  
UK  
fax: +44 1206 873429  
e-mail: [jbrewis@essex.ac.uk](mailto:jbrewis@essex.ac.uk)

Tomasz Ludwicki  
International Postgraduate  
Management Center  
School of Management  
Warsaw University  
Ul. Nowy Swiat 4  
00-497 Warszawa  
Poland  
fax.: +48 22 6253180  
e-mail: [ludwicki@it.com.pl](mailto:ludwicki@it.com.pl)





## Notes from the Chair

### Stephen Linstead

As I write, we're very busy putting the final touches to the preparations for the Athens conference which we're all convinced will be a combination of exciting discussion and edifying fun in the best tradition of SCOS conferences over the years. The programme Costas Dimitriadis and his team at StudyNet Hellas have lined up for the social events is terrific and the plenary speakers outstanding. I can't wait – which is rather unwise of me to say as I still have so much to do! Late breaking information, papers, abstracts etc. can be found on my development site [www.linstead.net](http://www.linstead.net) – click on SCOS 2000 Athens Conference from the menu. But to the business in hand ...

#### **Board restructuring**

At the Board meeting in Manchester we discussed in some detail proposals for the future structure of SCOS, and I'd like to take a few moments to introduce the background to the proposals that will be presented to the general meeting in Athens. As you will know, in the past year we have moved from having a subscription-based membership system, which has been in place since the Milan conference in 1987, to one with free membership. The old system simply wasn't working. First of all, the conferences in recent years, for one reason and another, have not attracted the numbers of people we needed to make SCOS a continuing, viable entity, and to limit membership, and hence participation, to conference attendees was restricting our ability to draw on a wide population for the election of officers of SCOS. It also affected our ability to reach those newer entrants to academia – both scholars and researchers – who we all knew were out there researching SCOS-friendly issues, but were unaware of our existence and history. We need therefore either to wind down or to find a leaner and more effective structure to help us expand beyond critical mass.

The first step was the decoupling of our income from membership. Last year, membership became free – anyone can join, anyone can receive Notework and

information about our activities. We may rationalize this further in the coming years, but the idea was to make SCOS inclusive rather than exclusive. Income now is derived not from individual membership fees charged to conference delegates, but by a charge we make on the profits of the conference, which works out at about the same amount and is easier to collect. Subscriptions to the journal *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies* are included with the conference fee, not with membership.

This has streamlined things somewhat. However, we now have a mailing/membership list of some 700 plus people, and a constitution (of sorts) that gives our members certain democratic rights. This constitution was developed in the light of members having reciprocal obligations, ie though fees, which they no longer have. Accordingly, we felt that the balance of rights and responsibilities needed to be adjusted to make the administration less cumbersome.

The reality of our current board situation is that only a small proportion of board members attend board meetings, and fewer still play an active role. This is despite an undertaking that board members make to attend at least two of the three meetings each year. Some haven't even attended the conferences for two years. In response to this minor crisis, certain people were co-opted on to the board and have been performing tasks for which they were not elected, whilst others who were elected were not doing anything at all – in some cases not even answering e-mail!

So one objective of the restructuring was to create an **executive board**, in which people are elected to positions. We need to make sure the necessary work of rebuilding SCOS gets done. The proposals have a number of roles which are identified and to which there will be specific elections. We propose to replace, or put up for re-election, a third of the current board each year over the next three years, to allow for continuity and stability. The executive board will be expected to attend all meetings and conferences, except where absence is unavoidable (and in the case of *ex officios*). The board will have the right to co-opt others as and when it feels it to be necessary – so that those who are eager to contribute can be given the chance to do so.

The second objective is to enable SCOS to expand, and also to support people with SCOS sympathies in areas of the world outside Europe. Recent experience has suggested that there are scholars all over the world – in North America, South America and Australia in particular – who are keen but unable to get involved in SCOS activities for reasons of distance, cost, exchange rates etc. Add to this what we see as a need to reach new members (especially younger academics) and to reach out once more to some of our former members, we see that the way forward is via a grass roots movement with regional co-ordinators, empowered and supported in the ways these co-ordinators most think fit by the executive board. So we will suggest a system of **regional co-ordinators** who will be initially tasked with building up local support in their region (both within Europe

and outside it), and suggesting an appropriate programme of activities and structures to support it. These representatives will not be required to attend board meetings except for at the annual conference, unless there is a special need (although they will be expected to report regularly).

We think that the detailed proposals we will put forward will help us to deal with current problems effectively and efficiently, and also help us to promote our future growth. SCOS has played a very important role in shaping cross-disciplinary organizational theory, both during the 1980s with extensive and often seminal work on organization symbolism and culture, and in the 90s with the rise of (for example) organizational aesthetics, work on postmodernism and ethnography, and the founding of the new journal *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies*. Going into the new millennium, we have a new website and lots of ideas! We think that our proposals will help to ensure that we continue to make contributions to the field that are equally as significant as those made in past decades. Let us know what you think.

### **Recent happenings**

On the back of Antonio Strati's recent successful book *Organizational Aesthetics* (Sage, 1999), which was launched at the Aesthetics II conference in Bolton, Antonio and Pierre Guillet de Monthoux organized a conference on Organizing Aesthetics at the beautiful conference accommodation (a converted monastery in the Tuscan hills) of the University of Siena in Certosa di Pontignano. Not only were there papers, but also performances and guest speakers of the calibre of Alberto Alessi of the Alessi company. Alberto has turned the output of some of the world's best designers (how about a Charles Jencks teapot?) into industrial product, although his joint project with Salvador Dali never saw the light of day! The quality of the weekend was outstanding, and Antonio and Pierre were magnificent hosts, academically and socially. Personally, it was great to see my old friend Bob Grafton Small, despite his chronic health problems, back to his coruscating best. Bob doesn't do much conference work these days, being retired, but if you get the chance to see him, don't miss it.

Antonio and Pierre are also editing a special issue of *Human Relations* from the conference.

In April I organized, with John Mullarkey of the University of Sunderland Philosophy Department, what turned out to be the world's first conference on Henri Bergson, Bergson and the Social Sciences. Abstracts and some of the papers can be found at my website [www.linstead.net](http://www.linstead.net), if you click on The Philosophy of Organization from the menu and then the in-text link to the Bergson Conference.

## **I'm only human department**

I promised Jo I wouldn't but I'm going to anyway. In the same week of the conference, the edited volume by myself and Heather Höpfl for Sage, *The Aesthetics of Organization*, appeared. The papers were primarily drawn from the Bolton Aesthetics I conference, with one or two additions, and contributors also include Antonio, Pierre, David Silverman, Stewart Clegg, Brian Rusted, Harro Höpfl, Pippa Carter and Norman Jackson, Hugo Letiche, Stephen Cummings and Frank Barrett. It has photographs too!

Also in that week, Jo and I had our book *Sex, Work and Sex Work: Eroticizing Organization* published by Routledge. Now there must be something in its 350 pages (was it really that long?) for everyone with a title like that!

Don't forget – let us know if you have a book published and we'll use these pages to let people know about it. And if you want to buy a book online, make your first stop the SCOS website bookshop [www.scos.org/books.htm](http://www.scos.org/books.htm), where we have links to most of the major booksellers worldwide. We also have an arrangement with amazon.com and Barnes and Noble and get commission on titles sold by these booksellers. Every little helps - we'd like to be able to generate enough to offer a scholarship to the annual conference from our commission. So if you buy online, link via SCOS first!

## **For the future**

June/ July 2001 will be a busy period for keen conference-goers, and not for the faint-hearted! The season begins with a conference organized by the journal *Gender, Work and Organization* taking place at Keele University from June 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup>. SCOS 2001 will be in Dublin, at Trinity College, from June 30<sup>th</sup> to July 4<sup>th</sup>. EGOS follows closely in Lyon from July 5-7<sup>th</sup> and the Second Critical Management Studies Conference will be held in Manchester from July 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> (see the end of this issue). Keep a note in your diaries and if you have a conference you want to promote, especially if it isn't in the UK, let Jo know.

Enjoy the rest of the issue and see you in Athens.

Steve



# **Executive Board Meeting**

## **StudyNet offices and Titania Hotel, Athens, 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> November 1999**

### **(Very) edited highlights**

#### **Our noble scribe this issue: Peter Case**

A great opportunity for Board members to visit the conference hotel and to see a bit of Athens ... although, if we're honest, it was only Peter and Val who actually went to the Acropolis due to an important footballing event on the Saturday afternoon. Anyway the hotel is fantastic, especially the rooftop bar, which of course we only patronized for the sake of publicizing it to everyone else ...

We talked about

#### **Marketing and promotion**

Gavin Jack reported that the membership questionnaire is ready and being sent out with the November 1999 issue of Notework. He also indicated that the questionnaire would not be placed on the SCOS web site. The poster mailshot will take place when the mailing list has been fully rationalized.

Peter Case reported on a quotation he had requested for the production of SCOS T-shirts and mugs. In brief, the cost of 100 T-shirts on heavyweight white cloth in two colours would be approximately £500 and 250 mugs would cost around £450. The key issue here was whether to charge for these items or issue them as conference 'give aways'. As plans for the Athens SCOS are well in hand, it was considered too late to price in T-shirts and mugs as free items for that conference. It was suggested that we might make a speculative purchase of items and see whether or not they sell. However, given anticipated expenditure on the development of the SCOS web site, it was decided to delay a final decision until the full extent of this year's spending is known.

SCOS also sponsored a band at September 1999's British Academy of Management conference in return for a three day promotional stand. This cost £250.

## Treasurer's report: 1 November 1998 - 31 October 1999

### INCOME

|                     |          |
|---------------------|----------|
| Interest            | £145.91  |
| Fees from Sao Paolo | £2388.00 |
| Fee payment         | £42.00   |

£2575.91

### EXPENDITURE

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| Payment for journal   | £2638.48 |
| Postage (Bolton Institute of<br>Higher Education, for Notework) | £477.32  |
| Payment (D. Ssekasi)<br>- Notework preparation                  | £150.00  |
| Sunderland Board Meeting<br>Meals                               | £164.50  |
| Sunderland Board Meeting<br>Room                                | £142.50  |
| Journal payment   | £32.00   |
| Amsterdam Board Meeting<br>Meals + Homepage setup               | £358.43  |

£3963.23

Deficit for period £1387.32

### CURRENT ASSETS

|                                |          |
|--------------------------------|----------|
| Community account              | £2865.79 |
| Business Premium Account*      | £1395.08 |
| High Interest Business Account | £3684.71 |

£7945.58

|                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Opening balance    | £9332.90 |
| Deficit for period | £1387.32 |

£7945.58

\*£500 transferred to Community Account on 3rd December 1998.

## **Development of web site**

A digital communications company, Leighton Internet, who host our current site and sold us our domain name, has been approached with a view to enhancing the SCOS web site and a report presented to the Board was considered. Although this report needed further discussion with Leighton, especially in view of the proposed cost of the site (in the region of £3000), the pressing need to set up a conference web site for Athens 2000 as well as the time already invested in consultation with Leighton necessitated going ahead.

*Stop press ...* After a meeting between Gerard Callaghan, MD of Leighton, and Steve Linstead later in November, Gerard agreed to set up the redesigned SCOS web site and the Athens conference web site as a sponsorship for SCOS at no cost. Steve, Gavin Jack and Dave Richards then met with the designer Gareth Dowell and the site under development was viewed. Steve meanwhile obtained the name of a contact in the Computing School at Sunderland who will undertake the maintenance of the site for a minimal cost. The new sites have now been launched

## **Mailing list**

Steve Linstead reported on how the membership mailing list has been updated and considerably expanded by producing a composite list based on multiple conference sources (BAM, CMS, American Academy of Management, OBTC etc.).

Peter Case raised the issue of whether producing a composite list of this sort might contravene the UK Data Protection Act. Other Board members indicated that there was no danger of this as the SCOS list in no way compromised or altered the purpose for which the other lists had been constructed (i.e., distribution of conference details etc.). However, it was felt judicious to issue a formal disclaimer in future issues of Notework indicating to recipients their right to have their names removed from the mailing list.

*Stop press ...* the form now contains this disclaimer.

## **Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies**

The lead and second editors of Studies are due to reverse roles on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2000. Barbara Czarniawska will replace Brian Rusted as the lead editor.

The Board wishes to express its heartfelt thanks to Brian Rusted for all his hard work in setting up the journal, developing and maintaining the journal web site and generally putting the publication on a firm footing.

## **Restructuring of the SCOS Board**

Steve Linstead introduced this item by explaining the historical circumstances that had led to the present constitution of the SCOS Board. He and the present Board consider the present arrangements to be cumbersome and need of substantial reappraisal and redesign. We therefore reviewed the Board's constitution and analysed the various functional roles required to facilitate the healthy perpetuation of SCOS. It was unanimously concluded that the present nominal Board of 20 members was far too big and in need of significant rationalization. One suggestion made to address this issue was to create an 'executive' supported by 'representatives' of various geographical regions from around the world.

The existing Board will present finalised proposals to members at the Athens General Meeting. In the meantime, preliminary analysis indicated the need for the following 12 roles to be filled:

Chair  
Treasurer  
Editor of Notework  
Membership/ Database Secretary  
Board Secretary/ Returning Officer/ Meetings Secretary (to be shared between 2 members)  
Marketing  
Conference Organisers (2 members: past year and incumbent)  
Web site/ Internet Officer  
Journal Editors (2 *ex officio* members)

The Board also outlined some provisional job descriptions and sets of duties and responsibilities for each of the above roles. It is the intention that everyone elected to the Executive Board be an active member with a defined job.

The implications of the redesign of the Board need careful consideration and Peter Case volunteered to initiate a working paper on the subject of the Board constitution, election procedure, and so forth. This will be circulated to other Board members prior to the next meeting.

We also discussed the longer term status of SCOS and the possibility of it becoming a legal entity. It was decided that the pros and cons of such a move should be investigated and discussed further. Valérie Fournier and Steve Linstead offered to examine some of the alternative forms of incorporation available and report on the implications.

## **Athens conference**

Costas Dimitriades and Steve Linstead reported on preparations for SCOS 2000, including details of cost per person, sponsorship, provisional programme and special events. The Board thanked Costas and Steve for their hard work to date and congratulated them on the excellent state of the conference plans. Steve asked the Board for suggestions concerning the chairing of the second plenary session: “The End of History? Postmodernism and Marxism in the New Millennium” and the final session of “The 24 Hour Society”.

*Stop press* ... we now hope to welcome John Hassard of UMIST to Athens to chair the above session.

## **Future conferences**

### (a) Dublin 2001

John Bergin introduced his preliminary ideas and possible themes for SCOS 2001. The proposed venue is Trinity College, Dublin and possible themes, which lend themselves to the local architecture and human geography, are those of “Institution Theory” or “Changing Institutions”. John also suggested that in addition to attracting papers on the themes of various institutions (The Prison, The Hospital, The Parliament, The University, etc.) he would like to include International Human Rights as a sub-topic. Provisional dates are 9-12<sup>th</sup> July 2001 (although there is a need to ensure that these do not conflict with any other major conferences). John’s proposals were enthusiastically greeted and unanimously approved.

*Stop press* ... proposed dates clash with the 2001 Critical Management Studies Conference in Manchester. Agreed dates for SCOS 2001 are now 30<sup>th</sup> June-4<sup>th</sup> July.

### (b) Budapest 2002

There was a brief discussion of proposals to host SCOS 2002 in Budapest – a joint Keele University, Oxford Brookes University and International Business School Budapest event. Simon Lilley tabled the idea of ‘Speed’ as an organizing theme for the conference.



# ***Human Resource Development International: update***

HRDI is going to have its page size and number of pages per issue increased. From one point of view this is excellent news, as we are getting lots of contributions and, because of the extra space, we will be able to publish them without too much back-log. On the other hand it means we need still more articles and more reviewers ....

So - please get writing, and if you would like to become a reviewer for HRDI please send me your full contact details and your areas of expertise (preferred academic areas and methodological approaches, and areas of organisational experience). I can be contacted at: Monica Lee, Editor in Chief HRDI, Management School, Lancaster University, LA1 4YX, UK, or on [hrdi@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:hrdi@lancaster.ac.uk). You can also contact me via the HRDI web site at <http://www.lums.lancs.ac.uk/hrdi>



**Every Issue is Special**

**The International  
Journal of Rapid  
Results  
Ethnography**

*“Printed in Full Colour with Ideas in Black and  
White”*

*Volume 17, Number 12*

# Editorial Board

See List of Subscribers

Publisher  
RRE Products International  
Virtuville  
UK

**RRE PRODUCTS INTERNATIONAL<sup>®</sup>**  
*'Productivity Through Technology'*

**Introducing**  
*"Ethnofast 15.2"*

## **THE BENEFITS OF RRE<sup>®</sup>**

The need to adopt new technology to improve academic efficiency has never been so great. Demand for higher quality, lower cost products and better service continues to increase. Rapid Results Ethnography (RRE<sup>®</sup>) is at the heart of the academic re-engineering process that enables these improvements to be realised.

RRE<sup>®</sup> is the exchange of anthropological insights between academics to internationally agreed standards with minimal human intervention.

With this technology, universities can dramatically streamline their most fundamental business processes and gain a real competitive advantage when vying with their partners anywhere in the world.

RRE<sup>®</sup> brings with it many quantifiable benefits including:

### **INSTANT TRANSACTIONS**

Data can be transferred in minutes rather than days, months or even years by eliminating the delays associated with extended time in the field, troublesome informants, postal systems and the processing of fieldnotes and other such paperwork.

### **COST REDUCTIONS**

RRE<sup>®</sup> removes virtually all of the need for field data collection, improving delivery lead times, reducing work-in-progress and increasing efficiency

## **IMPROVED PRODUCTIVITY**

Staff are able to devote more time to deal directly with customers and suppliers rather than handling field inconveniences and paperwork.

## **AUDIT FOLLOW THROUGH**

Our citation production and tracking systems allow you to ensure that your quality audit is completed before it has even been requested. You are freed to produce and continually improve your customer satisfaction.

## **Why Choose RRE<sup>®</sup>'s *Ethnofast 15.1*?**

RRE<sup>®</sup> Products International is committed to the advancement and simplification of academic processes through technology and is at the leading edge of RRE<sup>®</sup> development.

The company has an impressive record of designing and implementing intelligent and cost-offensive solutions for a wide range of universities and other institutions trading in many sectors of the knowledge industry. RRE<sup>®</sup> Products International offers comprehensive consultancy, training, support and maintenance services providing total client satisfaction and peace of mind. RRE<sup>®</sup> Products International really can provide the best RRE<sup>®</sup> solutions that enable *you* to achieve PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH TECHNOLOGY.

## **Our Services Include:**

- Consultancy
- Installation
- Training
- Helpdesk
- Bespoke paper production
- data supply and refinement
- Project management

For further information please contact RRE Products International, Virtuville, UK.

## Editor's Notes

### Dr Peter Case, Senior Assistant Director, Marketing

#### *Why Rapid Results Ethnography? Why Now?*

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the recipe for success, in academia as elsewhere, is speed, reliability and flexibility. Information, findings and research publications need to be moved round the academic world with the minimum of fuss, the least possible time and with the maximum speed, reliability and impact. For the busy social scientist, the new demands of a competitive academic world create both a formidable challenge and a huge opportunity.<sup>1</sup>

Academics these days are frightened. And no wonder. 'How are we going to keep up?' they ask. There's just no time available. Try squeezing in a reading of Tom Peters' *Liberation Management* between a nine o'clock lecture on Business Ethics, a midday meeting on updating Quality Assurance programmes and a three-thirty seminar on Qualitative Research Methods. The evening's taken up with MBA Interpersonal Skills and the week has only just begun! Little wonder, then, that we're all scared and anxious. Little wonder that we feel overwhelmed by the proliferation of publications just at a time when life is getting even more hectic and there's no time to read even a newspaper. What chance of ever keeping abreast of the contributions of one's colleagues, far less the wider field?

"Global exchange of academic information has accelerated beyond our wildest expectations in recent years. Even as I speak, more and more players are getting in on the act. Being a cultural intermediary affects us ethnographers every bit as much as it does the numbers guys. Our market place has seen a shift towards faster, more sophisticated investigation and delivery options," says Martha Denzil, Professor of Communications Anthropology at South Western State University. "The key demands from consumers of academic output are for reliability and predictability. It is no longer satisfactory to drone on and on in tedious detail about the finer subtleties of Bantu courtship, or pontificate endlessly over the ontological status of 'IBM Culture'. There is the expectation of rapid, high quality results from ethnographic research."

So speed and reliability are expected. Any ethnographer who fails to provide them is on the fast route to extinction. What possible use is one publication every five years in some journal no one's ever heard of? It goes without saying that the onus must be on providing excellent results-orientated products for the knowledge consumer.

So is the situation hopeless? Do we just resign ourselves to being left behind and branded mere impotent scholars? NO! should be the resounding answer to such despondency. Help is at hand. RRE Products International know and understand the severity of problems faced by our academic peers. RRE Products have a mission. Our mission is to restore excellence in the field of ethnographic research.

Our motto?

"Delight the market with rapid results."

Fine words, I hear you say, but how are we going to deliver the goods?

By drawing on a shared set of values:

---

<sup>1</sup> The journal does not accept papers containing footnotes. Our editorial policy is strict here. There will be no footnotes in the IJRRE. Studies show that footnotes are a waste of time, ink and paper, being a significant factor in the slowness of read associated with other journals.

- \* Delivery
- \* On Time
- \* Every Time
- \* KEEP IT SIMPLE STUPID (KISS)

These values will assure those desired results. After all, as some of you have already had to learn the hard way,

- \* Quality = Speed

The new consensus must be on providing more customised *solutions*, not our old habit of raising perplexing and time consuming *questions*. Customers in the knowledge industry, and here we mean both external corporate clients and internal purchasers of information, now require instant access to meaningful results.

To help you understand our message, let us share a couple of examples with you. Undergraduate customers are no longer interested in hours of boring library research. As our customer feedback surveys repeatedly show, these consumers balk even at the prospect of reading a book. Instead, they need to know exactly what to include in their assignment and exam responses without having to 'pass go' in the process. It's increasingly the supplier's job to satisfy that demand.

Likewise, departmental heads need us to maximise research output and customer through-put at minimal cost. If we're to keep our jobs, the publication output just *has* to be there and we can't afford to let the customer evaluation figures falter. It's no longer a matter of choice.

As we approach the millennium, the research battle of the future will be a technological one. "Technology means we can work more closely with our customers," say Dr Simon Lilley, RRE Products Business Manager. "The need to adopt new technology to improve academic efficiency has never been so great ... Technology increases reliability. Customers wanting to collect and disseminate time-sensitive data and results around the academic world cannot afford to spend long periods of time in the field, or exhaust themselves by wading through piles of irrelevant literature."

Everything we do at RRE Products is focused on improving customer service through cutting-edge technological mastery - making it

- \* better
- \* cheaper
- \* simpler
- \* faster.

Until recently, no one really seemed concerned about whether or not ethnography was effective. A loose and ubiquitous communitarian ethos deflected such concerns. Added to that, direct, time consuming experience in the field was the name of the game. Expensive ethnographic studies, of highly questionable relevance to the customer yet involving ponderous data collection and analysis, were an accepted feature of certain academic traditions. In short, over the course of the twentieth century, ethnography gradually mushroomed into an uncontrolled, idea-mongering, wasteful, paper-producing industry. Ethnographers became part of the university furniture and having a few eccentrics in the department lent a certain air of credibility to proceedings. But just as ethnography increased, so, in proportion did the cost and waste.

In the 21st century, questions are now being asked: Big Questions concerning the nitty-gritty of what, when all is said and done, ethnography can do for the university and its customers. Departmental heads are now less likely to accept a token ethnographic presence for its own

sake. More probably they'll be asking, "What am I paying for exactly?" and "Is it value for money?".

It is here that RRE comes into its own. RRE can really boost your efforts in establishing credibility with both internal and external knowledge purchasers.

We guarantee results

on time  
every time.

Of course, a few thousand pounds buys very little at all these days. But ethnographic peace of mind can be purchased at a price to suit most individual and institutional purses. "Researchers and departments need RRE at all stages of their development," remarks Dr John Sinclair, Systems Developer at RRE Products and author of the best-selling *101 Ways to Get Great Ethnographic Results*. "If you are selling your research to students or to colleagues, RRE can help you do it more professionally and effectively. Like reality, success is virtual and guaranteed."

Sceptics, and perhaps even some of you reading this today, may question the value of investing large sums in RRE. We feel that is, quite frankly, short-sighted. Traditional means of conducting research, such as old style field work, large scale structured interview programmes, postal questionnaire surveys and so forth, may seem like a safe option. Money spent on these, often simply through out-moded institutional habit, is perhaps more easily justifiable. In comparison, RRE is an unknown quantity and might, therefore, be considered more of a risk. But three years spent in the field and a further two years to produce (if you're lucky) one book is hardly going to lead to departmental celebrations. Old style research is a tiresome and thankless task. By contrast, measuring the effectiveness of RRE is remarkably easy. The outputs, as you'll see shortly, are

- \* direct
- \* simple
- \* unambiguous

*And what is more*, our computers can produce an intense analysis of your RRE output, by counting direct and indirect citations, and highlighting the positive coverage you've received.

Recent university history is littered with the remnants of promising or successful academic careers laid waste by a failure to keep up and a corresponding failure to produce. To counteract this possibility for you, RRE methods are designed to bring matters back firmly under *your* control. They enable you to manage and influence the kind and quality of academic exposure *you* get, directly. RRE is an astonishingly powerful and successful system.

Here's the logic. The present proliferation of publications is obviously a response to an equivalent rise in demand for research findings and articles. To facilitate and simultaneously cope with this demand, we have set up twenty-four-hour access channels for your work. New research and results arrive with us for distribution all day, every day. We, in turn, have the media to make sure they get to the right people at the right time. The secret of our success is that we have refused to let the growing complexity of academic life complicate our approach to conducting and reporting research. "There is no mystique surrounding good ethnography," says Dr Rolland Munro, Head of Innovation at RRE Products, "it is based on common sense, an alert mind and creativity: on knowing just how much you can accomplish with ethnographic methods; accepting that you can't win them all; and having the ability to move on to the next exercise when an idea doesn't succeed. The talk now is of 'reputation management'. RRE is the ultimate in pragmatism. If an idea works, you sell it. If it doesn't work, you move on. Give it maximum exposure but ensure that you employ support staff to vet and cope with the subsequent e-mail!"

RRE is a TOTAL approach; not just a technique. It is a framework that ensures consistency and maintains transparency, not a means to hide uncomfortable or unwanted facts. The welcome growth in consumer sovereignty, student charters, research ratings, quality assurance procedures and so forth, means that individual and departmental reputations are firmly and persistently on the line. These challenging times require a new kind of simplicity, clarity and, above all, rapidity; things never before dreamt of in the cloistered corridors of academia. RRE is here to enhance your reputation, wherever you are in the knowledge market place and whatever your budget. Never forget that, as of yesterday, you are on an international stage and need the research technology to support you in your global endeavours. The stakes are undoubtedly high. Can you honestly say you're ready for the challenge?

## References

Case, P., Lilley, S., Munro, R. and Sinclair, J. (1995) *Successful Rapid Results Ethnography*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Lilley, S. and Case, P. (1996) *The Quickest Ethnography Ever, II*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Munro, R. (1996) *The Essence of Ethnography: Another 100 Hot Tips*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Munro, R., Case, P., Lilley, S. and Sinclair, J. (1996) *Ethnography and the Enterprise Culture: Satisfaction and Synergy*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Sinclair, J., Case, P., Lilley, S. and Munro, R. (1996) *Perfect RRE*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Sinclair, J. and Munro, R. (1996) *The One Minute Ethnographer*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

## **But don't just take our word for it. Read these notes from our satisfied customers:**

"RRE changed my life. I was trading water at best and tenure had ceased to be even a dream. With the aid of this technology I can produce more papers, faster. And at lower cost. Thanks RRE - I don't know what I would have done without you!" Professor E, Pilkington, UK.

"It's amazing how one's life can be so transformed by a few simple home truths and sophisticated information technology. Work will never be the same again. My productivity has gone up, my fixed costs are reduced and even the administrative staff in the department now take me seriously. RRE has been nothing short of revolutionary." Professor L, Fowles University, USA.

"Words fail me. And that was always the problem in the ethnographic game. But now I can go there without leaving here, freeing up time for improving customer satisfaction. The papers just write themselves and the citations ... I can't even keep track. Thanks RRE, you've made ethnography worthwhile" Professor Dr Q, European Institute of Advanced Business Ethnography.

"Simply breathtaking. I recouped my initial investment in less than three months. Now I am a rising academic who is popular with everyone. I couldn't have done it without RRE. You have transformed my life!" Professor J, Pacific Institute of Serious Study.

# Seminal Papers Section

## In Defence of Ethnographic Knowledge: The Production, Consumption and Disposal of 'Being There'

### Dr Rolland Munro, Head of Innovation, RRE Products International

#### INTRODUCTION

Let me begin with the problem. Being There takes time. A time often of great boredom and listlessness. A time for amassing endless notes which may lead nowhere and a time for experiencing no better companionship than a diary written at dusk.

Here's Levi-Strauss, often criticised for his lack of diligence in making visits to the field.

For three months I had wandered across the Plateau, camping with the Indians while my animals had a rest, or pushing on interminably from one point to the next, asking myself the while what it would all add up to in the end. (Levi-Strauss, 1976, p.419).

In contrast to Levi-Strauss, Evans-Pritchard (1940, p.63) recommends about two years in the field. Imagine it, two years pumping iron with a photocopier, or two years in the Boredroom; or two years dealing among the street traders. Two years in which all manner of privation and danger may accompany you.

In fact, interrupted by sickness and war, Evans-Pritchard's total residence among the Nuer was only about a year (1940, p.14). He does not consider a year an adequate time to make a sociological study of a people. And all this could take longer. If two, why not five? Or twenty?

For time alone can never be enough. To see the world as the other sees it, surely requires more; and Being There forces the ethnographer to get up and out from the veranda.<sup>2</sup> Whether 'there' is taken to be an industrial sub-culture, or Mobo-Mobo land, the cultural mores of grunge, or the half-lighted rooms of the 'old fools', the essence of ethnographic knowledge involves an initiation into local knowledge.

#### THE WRITE OF PASSAGE

So why do it? Why is Being There so important? Well, first, and most obviously, ethnographies need to be produced. Over time this simple fact has hardened into a demand that 'webs of signification' be understood from the inside. Yes, but for how long? How long does it take become an insider, to go native *and* be accepted as such? Hanging around for ever on street corners doesn't let you in on what's going on under your nose; and no amount of shadowing senior managers ever gets you 'inside' the new managerialism.

---

<sup>2</sup> In the case of the Nuer, Evans-Pritchard had no choice on the face of it but to 'be there'. Not only was his preferred method of using and training informants, developed with the Azande, a 'failure' (1940, p.15), but the view from the veranda of his tent was also displaced. According to his report, 'hardly a moment of the day passed without men, women or boys in my tent' (p.14). He had to become 'hardened to performing the most intimate operations before an audience' (p.15) for the Nuer are 'persistent and tireless visitors' (p.14).

Access alone, it seems, is as empty as it is endless.<sup>3</sup> The next step is to step into the world of the Other. This involves 'mimicry' (Taussig, 1993), a literal 'embodiment' of the conduct of the Other. By copying-in the way others do things ('around here') into one's own 'moves', the production of ethnography becomes, simultaneously, a consumption of the field.

Being There means joining in. Noting that it is 'good for the ethnographer to put aside camera, notebook and pencil, and join in himself in what is going on', Malinowski continues:

Out of such plunges into the life of the natives ... I have carried away a distinct feeling that ... their manner of being became more transparent and easily understandable than it had been before. (Malinowski, 1922, pp.21-22; quoted in Geertz, 1988, pp.76-77)

Direct observation has become direct participation. Deftly, Geertz (1988) calls this shift towards personal involvement and away from the visual realm conjured up by a detached observer's eye 'I-witnessing'.

Here's the catch. Being There might seem to be the beginning, but it's not even the end of the beginning. The beginning means back home. Back home, giving one more turn to Geertz's (p.76) ironical rendition of Malinowski's feelings of "Exterminate the Brutes", the brutal question on everyone's lips is *Did you join the Brutes?*

As much as ethnographers thump the table over Being There, ethnography is all about when you come back.

However far from the groves of academe anthropologists seek out their subjects - a shelved beach in Polynesia, a charred plateau in Amazonia ... they write their accounts with the world of lecterns, libraries, blackboards and seminars all about them. This is the world that produces anthropologists, that licences them to do the kind of work they do ... (Geertz, 1988, p.129)

So it's about Being Here. And let's not be too literal about the 'here'. Just because you can 'hear' me banging on the blackboard - this doesn't mean that you're *with* me now.

Consumption, as Danny Millar reminds us, is the 'vanguard of history', so let me now turn to a second part of the problem, consumption. Within the work that they do, if it is to count as worthy of attention, each ethnographer, and the ethnographies that they produce, must find what Geertz (p. 130) calls a 'place':

In itself, Being There is a postcard experience ("I've been to Kathmandu - have you?"). It is Being Here, a scholar among scholars, that gets your anthropology read ... published, reviewed, cited, taught. (Geertz, 1988, p.130)

This is to emphasise then that the production and reproduction of your ethnography depends on *our* consumption. In order to find its 'place', in order to become consumed, an ethnography has to be 'included' as part of *our* ethnographic knowledge.

I-(wit)nessing, however important in itself, needs to bend to We-nessing. Indeed, it is only as an artefact of *our* 'belonging' that your ethnography can be produced and reproduced in the 'here and now'.

---

<sup>3</sup> Even when entering the field as an employee, like Dalton, who knows where you might end up? You could be posted next week to help oversee a franchise in the Pacific Rim, or loaned out to a government bureau for two years.

Ethnographers need to convince us ... not merely that they have truly “been there”, but ... that had we been there we would have seen what they saw, felt what they felt, concluded what they concluded. (Geertz, 1988, p.16)

For your study to become part of *our* ‘ethnographic present’ - at least in Mary Douglas and Baron Isherwood’s world of goods - an ethnography has to become exchanged as part of *our* order. It is only under such conditions of consumption that your ethnography can live in *our* industrial subculture.

This elimination of ethnographies that don’t fit, the ‘theres’ that don’t make it ‘here’, leads me to a third thread in this paper: disposal. To make *our* consumption possible, much deletion of the ethnographic material is necessary. Here’s a traditional statement about how to accomplish this:

The ethnographer, while in no way abdicating his own humanity, strives to know and estimate his fellow man from a lofty and distant point of vantage: only thus can he abstract them from the contingencies particular to this or that civilisation. (Levi-Strauss, 1976, p.66).

But, as we have seen, this emphasis on distance has been long questioned:

... in most anthropological studies of death, analysts simply *eliminate* the emotions by assuming the position of the most detached observer ... The general rule ... seems to be that one should tidy things up as much as possible by wiping away the tears and ignoring the tantrums. (Rosaldo, 1984, p.189, emphasis added)

In the need to produce I-witnessing, the telescope has been exchanged for the microscope. ‘Experience-far’ is about to become ‘experience-near’. Over a humanistic worry about being insufficiently engaged, ‘rhetorical expansiveness’ has given way to ‘rhetorical earnestness’. Tears and tantrums have become part of the artefacts to be carried back from the field.

And it’s in this travelling ‘between’ the tears of being of Being Here and the tantrums of being of Being There that Geertz (1988, p.130) finds a ‘gap’:

The gap between engaging others where they are and representing them where they aren’t, always immense but not much noticed, has suddenly become extremely visible.

Being Here - one’s display of Being There in the acid test of the being here and now - requires more than a production of the exotic through scholarly distance. Being Here requires an ‘evocation’ (Tyler, 1986) of a micro-world of emotions. And, in that they travel more convincingly, tears and tantrums now appear to have more to say than neat notes.

Traversing this gap - shifting from the participation of Being There to the representation demands of Being Here - requires, it seems, a new rite of passage:

What once seemed only technically difficult, getting “their” lives into “our” works, has turned morally, politically, even epistemologically, delicate.

Or, since it’s Geertz again, perhaps we should say a *write* of passage. For it is through writing - what Geertz takes to be ‘narrative’ - that a disposal of ‘their’ webs of signification into ‘our’ webs of signification is accomplished.

In a moment we will open up Geertz’s unquestioned conflation of narration with writing and, indeed, his rather singular idea of what it is to be an ‘author’. But first we should address the crisis of representation that has accompanied the narrative turn in ethnography. For, between the consumption entailed in the production process of Being There - sometimes lasting several years - and the reproduction involved in its consumption of Being There - into which whole lifetimes can

disappear - it is not only each ethnography that seems hard to swallow. In dismissing the possibilities for knowledge, ethnography, once the province of the most credible forms of research, appears hell-bent on engineering its own disposal.

## AFTER THE FACT

The fact of the matter can be expressed quite bluntly. At the centre of the so-called crisis of representation is an emptying out of truth claims. The fact is that truth can no longer claim the fact. Or so it seems. Truth has no greater claim over the fact than does, say, beauty, or even satisfaction. Hereafter (and the 'after' here - *suppa* Clifford Geertz - is to be understood as 'after the fact') we must read everything in scare quotes: 'truth', 'beauty'; even 'the facts'.

Facts, we are being told, were always symbolic artefacts. Yes, *arte-facts*. In a word, art is subtly portrayed as always ahead of science. This confronts science with an undecidability that reaches well beyond Heisenberg's meagre form of indeterminacy, in which things move when one measures them. The new Luddites of science maintain, in the very making of categories, that one has to move something in order to measure it. Operating on things is held to require its own tables.<sup>4</sup>

It follows, we are urged, that there is no alternative but to reframe science as narrative.<sup>5</sup> This influential view, one that stretches back well before Foucault, suggests that science is no more than a form of social construction. To this audience, such a fact must, of itself, be unsurprising. What perhaps continues to astonish those who work in the humanities is that science can remain blind to its own nature. The problem is not so much that Science reduces the world to facts, as it is that Science 'forgets' their very framing as facts.

There are two critical points in this argument. First, the very possibilities for conflating science with knowledge, it is asserted, borrow from the trope of progress - a trope whereby knowledge is always 'on its way' to truth. Thus, in a show of difference, truth is decoupled from knowledge and then, in a mode of deferral, simultaneously juxtaposed as a utopian 'certainty' to which scientific knowledge can be the only path. Made secure from contradiction, knowledge becomes its own arbiter.

In this way, knowledge, or rather Science, is seen as more than an obligatory passage for moving stuff from *there* to *here*. Its very own passage is one of a right - a right to know that is established *dexto* by this device of self-sealing truth within its own future. The concern is less with questions of 'being right' (true) and more with upholding the 'rights' of its own legitimation (correctness).

Second, a narrative form that concerns itself with the production of 'facts' is held to proceed in ways that forget their consumption as facts. Or, indeed, as we will go on to discuss later, their disposal. Thus, as facts fail, opening up a breach in knowledge, the consequence is a need for more facts. Only more facts can step in to heal the breach, etc..

Within these arguments there can be little dispute. The danger lies more in what follows, if these orientations harden into a 'postmodern' dogma that vilifies any knowledge claims as *meta-narratives*. Postmodernism's own meta-ambitions over truth work by reversing previous dogma. Riding on the back of a relativism much misunderstood, for example, the exposure of science as

---

<sup>4</sup> In another way of stating the reflexive turn in twentieth-century philosophy, it can also be argued that, before they can be owned, the very tables have to be owned up.

<sup>5</sup> Not that, of course, we are to be allowed to see science as any old narrative. Instead, it has been variously argued that the narrative structure of science takes a particularly powerful and pernicious form: that of meta-narrative. One whose colonial ambitions supposedly annexe all provinces into a disciplining process; and whose ravenous hunger for information also beggars all previous forms of knowledge, turning for example everyday understandings into probabilistic calculations for its theories.

'meta-narrative' is seen to send *all* knowledge claims packing. In what we have begun to call a nega-narrative, this deletion of knowledge claims cunningly hollows out the vacuums in which the new dogma of relativism can, unchallenged, find its own 'place'.

The fashionable idea is that everything is a 'story'. This nega-narrative, however, overlooks the nature of writing, a concern to which we will return in the next section. However, it also seriously misunderstands the nature of postmodernism. Against many loose interpretations of Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition*, his depiction of postmodernism is far from suggesting that 'anything goes'. Quite the opposite. Each person acts as a 'post', with no one post being more central or free and with direct access to other posts always being mediated. The vision is a world in which there is no 'up' or 'down' in knowledge, but merely a Chinese whisper transmission of information *along* each criss-cross of 'posts'. In what might be aptly termed the 'cybernet', no-one begins the iteration of 'knowledge' and no-one determines which paths the construction of knowledge takes in its formation of 'posts'.<sup>6</sup>

Although we are not precisely determined in any way, we need to rethink ourselves as heavily *positioned*. We need to think of ourselves less as experts - we are all students of culture today - and, to adopt Pierre Bourdieu's term, think of ourselves acting more as 'cultural intermediaries'.<sup>7</sup>

## SEEING AND SAYING

Let's go back to the problem of ethnography. Geertz's analysis of ethnography is a frottage of masterly one liners.<sup>8</sup> Most famously, in his view, the ethnographer's business is to work out 'what the devil he *thinks* he's up to'. This maxim has served as more than a critique of traditional ethnography. Yes, out the window go all the bland generalizations, the visual rendition of a descriptive approach to culture. . No more sweeping statements of the form 'Bantu do this, Zande do that'. Or 'In a strict sense Nuer have no law' (Evans-Pritchard, 1940, p.162).<sup>9</sup> This is not to suggest that Geertz thinks he is merely exposing Evans-Pritchard, and all the others with

---

<sup>6</sup> In society today, we need no longer organize ourselves *in the name* of science. We can, instead, see science as already taking place, as *already* organized in an everyday system of market prices and audit trails. Our world is not only socially constructed; its multiple systems are made up of a dense tissue of checks and balances. Our business today must be to get things moving from post to post along the cybernet as quickly as possible. Society cannot afford to wait while we delay matters; indeed while we mistakenly presume to *change* matters.

<sup>7</sup> Thus, instead of thinking of scientists as standing outside society, as being in the business of permanent, unchanging knowledge, of fixing things forever, we can imagine everyone as knowledge workers in an information society. Adopting the image of the cybernet, it is no longer necessary to secure knowledge in the way of old science, which typically overlooked, indeed misunderstood, mimesis. Seeking to procure itself as knowledge, it ended up attempting a mimesis of mimesis.

<sup>8</sup> Indicatively, 'nutshell' is a key word in Geertz (1988, see, for example p.37 and p.51)

<sup>9</sup> It is of more than passing interest to find this passage misquoted by Geertz (1988, p.63) as 'In a strict sense, the Nuer have no law'. Given Evans-Pritchard's precision in shifting between references to 'the Nuer', particularly prominent in his introduction, and his generalizations about 'Nuer', it is the addition of the definite article, rather than the comma, that is an odd mistake. In summarizing his work, Evans-Pritchard (1940, p.261) is certainly clear enough in the matter:

We have also tried to describe Nuer social organization on a more abstract plane of analysis than is usual, for usually abstract terms are mistaken for abstractions. Presumably Evans-Pritchard would find Geertz guilty of the fallacy of confusing abstractions ('Nuer ... ' statements) with abstract terms (references to 'the Nuer').

him, as little more than good raconteurs, telling a good story about what the devil it is that natives 'do'.<sup>10</sup>

But, like all famous remarks, it is as false as it is true. The ethnographer's business is neither to show what the devil the natives do, nor to work out what it is that she thinks she's up to. It is rather to report what she says she thinks she's up to. In labouring a division between thinking and doing, Geertz is deploying a chimera. His mind-body dualism of thinking and doing forgets the visibility of 'saying'. This, of course, at the very moment that Geertz asserts by his championing of narrative that there is only 'saying'.

We can now understand why Geertz sticks to his idea of narrative, rather than writing. For Geertz, being an author is being an individual first and foremost. While he discusses differences between being an author and a writer, he picks up on differences that preserve the distinction for *individuals*, without ever recognising their communality. His arguments are rooted in the very logic of presence: I write, therefore I exist. What Geertz misses, therefore, is not so much Derrida's inversion of presence by placing writing before speaking. This alone would not upset Geertz's conceit of the individual as author. It is more important to recognise that his arguments are rooted in the very 'logic of presence' - I write, therefore I exist - that recent scholarship on writing has contested.

In his valorization of the ethnographer as author, Geertz (p. 144) has an significant point to make. But rubbing our noses in the detail of 'what the managers said' or 'shop floor talk' not only is an abdication of authorial duties, it muddies the water. We are all slowed down by what psychologists call 'dustbowl empiricism'. Nevertheless, in deriding what he calls 'text positivism',<sup>11</sup> Geertz also seems to throw out the baby with the bathwater.

In his gibes about the ethnographer as ventriloquist, all the time mimesis is under his nose. What Geertz misses is the post-structural insistence on language's proximity. The point is that we are near to language, writing, before we are near to 'others'. Strangely for an anthropologist, he shows no notion of writing always travelling ahead of itself. Indeed, Foucault's arguments over discourse evade him at every turn. Long before the tears and the tantrums are shared by ethnographer and native alike, the 'occasions' for tears have already been written.

Let's go back to see what can be re-covered from Evans-Pritchard. Evans-Pritchard's strategy is to stick to what is reportable. Rather than privilege his text, as an author, he deploys some of the features of text. For example:

Linguistic profusion in certain departments of life is one of the signs by which one quickly judges the direction and strength of a people's interests. It is for that reason, rather than for its intrinsic importance, that we draw the reader's attention to the volume and variety of the Nuer cattle vocabulary ... (Evans-Pritchard, 1940, p.41)<sup>12</sup>

---

<sup>10</sup> Geertz (1988, p.62) is particularly concerned to point out the absence today of the 'discerning readers' for whom he supposes that Evans-Pritchard's 'as-you-will-see' contract was in force.

<sup>11</sup> Geertz's (1988, p. 145) example is that of Emawayish, an Ethiopian woman. He derides the attempt 'to represent a depiction of how things look from "an Ethiopian (woman poet's) point of view" as itself an Ethiopian (woman poet's) depiction of how they look from such a view.' But text abound in which ethnographers attribute authorship to their subject, such as Marjorie Shostak's *Nisa: The Life and Work of a !Kung Woman*, or the 'edited and introduced' *I ... Rigoberta Menchu: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. In passing it should be added that a clear advantage for this last tract is that the 'data collection' appeared to take only a week and was conducted entirely in Paris.

<sup>12</sup> Note again the use of the definite article to signal use of an *abstract* term, indicating when Evans-Pritchard is discussing 'the Nuer', or in this case 'the Nuer cattle vocabulary', as an object

Without in any way reducing his ethnography to 'text positivism', Evans-Pritchard draws the reader's attention to an objective aspect of narrative skills: the 'volume and variety of Nuer cattle vocabulary'. For Evans-Pritchard, who can hardly be accused of lacking narrative skills himself, the object of his study is first and foremost the skills of the people he is studying.

In reducing Evans-Pritchard to the caricature of a Victorian figure bending over the 'slides' of his lantern lecture, Geertz misses the discipline that comes from sticking to 'accounts'. Consider, for example:

A good example of how Nuer feel in such matters is furnished by their reactions at Muot Dit cattle camp when the Government seized hostages to compel them to hand over two prophets. Their main complaint to me was that the hostages did not belong to the same lineages as the prophets and were not directly concerned with the issue [sic]. The government was looking at the affair in territorial terms, they in kinship terms in an analogy with the conventions of a feud.

Straight and matter of fact the tone may be but, on picking up on the different ways of seeing the world, this remains good reportage. The main point is that these different ways of seeing the world are not the narrative invention of the author. They are *already made explicit* as part of the material form of their complaints.

Importantly, it is by sticking to what they say that Evans-Pritchard helps to elucidate what the Nuer 'feel'. To invent meanings for 'them' is surely a last gasp of imperialism. As Evans-Pritchard says about Nuer:

All who have lived with Nuer would, I believe, agree that although they are very poor in goods they are very proud in spirit (1940, p. 90).

As in all good ethnography, Evans-Pritchard conveys, convincingly, that *the Nuer's* work is heavily invested with meaning, rather than *him* inventing meanings for them.

Sticking to what people say certainly seems preferable to inventing meanings for them. And it avoids us falling into the morass of a fabulous distinction between what they think and what they do - whoever 'they' are!

## REWORKING ETHNOGRAPHY

In prising loose ethnography from the 'occult' cult of meaning-diviners to which it has descended, certain difficulties remain for the would-be ethnographer of an industrial sub-culture. It is to be hoped that the busy reader will forgive the reduction of complex problems to a few bullet points:

### 1. *Lack of interest*

Once the grant is given, it is difficult to sustain the interest in the study, far less actually spend time in the field. As Malinowski (quoted in Geertz, 1988, p.73) comments: 'Nothing whatever draws me to ethnographic studies.'

---

of study. As noted earlier, this can be contrasted to occasions when *abstractions* are being made about 'Nuer' in terms of their conduct as subjects:

These terms are more than a linguistic technique which enables Nuer to speak about cattle with precision in situations of practical husbandry ... (Evans-Pritchard, 1940, p.41)

## 2. *Nothing to show for one's efforts*

Citations will come purely and simply from the need for other ethnographers to show that they have knowledge of previous studies. All too typically, the study will have nothing to show for itself in terms of results. The subsequent, and unfortunate, tendency for authors to justify the fruits of their labour on an input basis is one that even Evans-Pritchard (1940, p.9) falls victim to: 'A man must judge his labours by the obstacles that he has overcome and the hardships he has endured'.

## 3. *Out of date even before publication*

It is not just the fieldwork which takes several years. Analysis may take even longer! Remembering that this was said long before Tony Cohen invented the extra hurdle of completing 'post-field fieldwork', the difficulties are well captured by Raymond Firth's apology, in *We, the Tikopia*: 'this account represents not the field-work of yesterday but that of seven years ago'.

## 4. *Going native is a one-way ticket*

Most anthropologists make much of learning the language, but this is just the starting point. What the ethnographer has to be learn too are the amazing complexity of 'moves'. Quoting an everyday conversation with a Nuer who visits him, Evans Pritchard (1940, p.13) remarks: 'I defy the most patient ethnologist to make headway against this kind of opposition. One is driven just crazy by it. Indeed, after a few weeks of associating solely with Nuer one displays, if the pun may be allowed, the most evident symptoms of "Nuerosis"'.

Boring, out of date, nothings, by the 'nuerotic'; this analysis of ethnography today not only offers little comfort for the would-be reader. The iconography of divining meanings in I-witnessing of Being There has truly slowed down ethnography to a virtual stop. Furthermore, the so-called narrative turn has overlooked the importance of Being Here that goes well past the narrow concerns of anthropologists perpetuating their own industrial subculture. And it is this insight that ethnography belongs to all of us - that within the cybernet of writing we are all cultural intermediaries - that suggests a way forward.

In our view, progress will come from evolving a methodology that assists the ethnographer in getting past the more insular rituals of academic membership - so that they can get back to the unimpeded facts. This requires a new approach:

For the facts recorded by a monograph or an inquiry only achieve their valid signification within the context of a comprehensive vision which knows how to approach them and extract the human content that they reveal. (Goldman, 1969, p.47)

The sentiment here is similar to that of Evans-Pritchard (1940, p.261), for whom facts 'can only be selected and arranged in the light of theory':

It is almost impossible for a person who knows what he is looking for and how to look for it, to be mistaken about the facts if he spends two years among a small and culturally homogenous people doing nothing else but studying their way of life. (Evans-Pritchard, 1957, p.63).

As he continues (p.261): 'Once one has a theoretical point of view it is fairly simple to decide what facts are significant'.

But we need not go back that far. No-one is arguing that we should throw in the towel and join the positivists, with all their paraphernalia of theories and the like. We need only uncouple the idea of writing - writ large - from the demands of narration - writ small. In an unusually perspicuous passage, Geertz (1988, p.1) also recognises this:

What a proper ethnographer ought properly to be doing is going out to places, coming back with information about how people live there, and making that information available to the professional community in practical form, not lounging about in libraries reflecting on literary questions. Excessive concern, which in practice usually means any concern at all, with how ethnographic texts are constructed seems like an unhealthy self-absorption - time-wasting at best, hypochondriacal at worst.

Speed is of the essence. But of course the ethnographer's time is not everything. As we have shown, a delicate balance must be struck between an avoidance of time-wasting by the ethnographer in Being There and the even greater danger of wasting the busy reader's time in Being Here. Further research is certainly needed into the issue of how the ethnographer can best balance these demands. Looking ahead there is certainly considerable need to investigate, as quickly as possible, other 'rites' of passage, especially the writerly transition between Being and Nothing and Being and Nothingness.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Evans-Pritchard, Edward E. (1940) *The Nuer*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Evans-Pritchard, Edward E. (1957) *Social Anthropology*, London: Cohen and West

Geertz, Clifford (1988) *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author*, Cambridge: Polity Press

Goldmann, Lucien (1969) *The Human Sciences and Philosophy*, trans. H.V. White and R. Anchor, London: Jonathan Cape

Levi-Strauss, Claude (1976) *Tristes Tropiques*, trans. J. and D. Weightman, Harmondsworth: Penguin

Rosaldo, Renato (1984) "Grief and the headhunter's rage: on the cultural force of emotions", in E. Bruner (ed.) *Text, Play and Story, 1983 Proceedings of the American Ethnological Society*, Washington, D.C., pp.178-195

Tyler, Stephen (1986) "From document of the occult to occult document", in J. Clifford and G. Marcus (eds) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press

# Current Empirical Studies Section

## Hierarchy and the Mind/ Body Dualism in Management<sup>13</sup>

**Simon Lilley, Peter Case, John Sinclair and Rolland Munro**

### ABSTRACT

The paper explores hierarchy and the mind/ body dualism in management. Using an instrument developed by the authors, an ethnographic event was captured by an audience comprised of normal academic observers. Subsequent analyses of their responses revealed a significant and persistent presence of both hierarchy and mind/ body dualism. The paper concludes by considering the implications of these findings for both the subjects and objects of ethnographic studies.

**Key words:** ethnography, hierarchy, mind/ body dualism.

### INTRODUCTION

Much has been written in some of the slower areas of social science research on the subjects of hierarchy and mind/ body dualism. Both notions have seemed to prove slippery customers, particularly for those wasting a great deal of effort on time consuming ethnographic research for which there seems to be no obvious customer. This paper explores hierarchy and the mind/ body dualism in the field of management, utilising a much faster and more informative method than that generally deployed elsewhere. We contend that such a method provides significant benefits over the other rather outmoded methods that social scientists have traditionally used to approach these important and valuable issues.

We are witnessing a revolution in the way in which ethnographic research is done. The advent of excellent products, such as RRE International's *Ethnofast 15.2*, has done much to enable the weary academic to increase her dynamism and keep up with the dynamic flow of ideas and concepts that the customer is demanding. Since the publication in 1995 of the excellent and seminal work of Case, Lilley, Munro and Sinclair, the value of research to the customer has increased significantly, whilst its cost has dropped dramatically. The requirement to publish and the demands of consumers have at last been brought into alignment. As others in this issue of IJRRE attest (Munro, 2000), Being There has never been so easy or cost-effective. In this study we continue to push the barriers that stand between the customer and value by ensuring that 'There' is 'Here', and, perhaps more importantly, Here Now. In the process, we shed some much needed clarifying light upon two key themes that have run like sores through more pedestrian social science research: hierarchy and the mind/ body dualism. But our old writing traditions are starting to lead us to wander here. Let us cut to the chase.

---

<sup>13</sup> The authors would like to thank Peter Case, Simon Lilley, John Sinclair and Rolland Munro for their helpful comments upon this paper. We are particularly grateful for the technological support provided by RRE International's *Ethnofast 15.2*. No inadequacies remain.

## THE COST-EFFECTIVE STUDY OF HIERARCHY AND MIND/ BODY DUALISM IN MANAGEMENT

It is only in recent times that debate has arisen as to whether research into hierarchy and the mind/ body dualism in management was effective or providing value for money. As Case (2000: 4) suggests of the field of ethnography more generally elsewhere in this issue:

A loose and ubiquitous communitarian ethos deflected such concerns. Added to that, direct, time consuming experience in the field was the name of the game. Expensive ethnographic studies, of highly questionable relevance to the customer yet involving ponderous data collection and analysis, were an accepted feature of certain academic traditions. In short, over the course of the twentieth century, ethnography gradually mushroomed into an uncontrolled, idea-mongering, wasteful, paper-producing industry. Ethnographers became part of the university furniture and having a few eccentrics in the department lent a certain air of credibility to proceedings. But just as ethnography increased, so, in proportion did the cost and waste.

Mind/ body dualism and hierarchy are, to be sure, important issues. As Case (2000: 5) also notes, "The present proliferation of publications [dealing with them] is obviously a response to an equivalent rise in demand for research findings and articles". But is this demand being satisfied by the wasteful practices of conventional social scientists? We would suggest that it is NOT. However, rather than joining in the ceaseless academic whine, we have decided to do something practical to change the situation. We have designed a succinct and portable study that adds value for the customer at minimum cost, rising to the challenges of simplicity, clarity and above all rapidity. And we have done so at a cost that every institutional budget can accommodate!

Our approach is clear about meeting the objectives that lie behind research. What are you looking for when you conduct a study into hierarchy and the mind/ body dualism in management? The question seems so simple that so-called sophisticated academics from the old traditions have had to complexify it, needlessly. They have introduced endless provisos and caveats, often in the name of diligence and sensitivity. These were perhaps laudable aims for comfortable pastimes. But these distractions will simply not do in the academy of today. The situation has changed, as Martha Denzil (see Case, 2000: 3) notes so eloquently.

So how do we ensure 'reliability' and 'predictability'? Not through elaborate games and rules of academic integrity and respect for 'the Other', that much is clear from the outset. It has been tried and it has failed. And failed at spectacularly high cost. No, what is required is a simple solution that meets the demands of the customers that Denzil alludes to, at the same time as ensuring that we hit the nub of the problem. Old style social science and the ethnography it spawned is not going to help us here. We need something new and faster. Something robust, like the kernels of truth that are protected by the methodological tenets of Rapid Results Ethnography. We need to grasp these academic tools of the future to make sure that the past doesn't continue to sully the present with its distracting concerns. And that, as you'll see, is just what we've done.

When researching hierarchy and the mind/ body dualism in management, what one needs are *instances* of hierarchy and the mind/ body dualism in management. Instances upon which one can base ideas and generate facts. Instances that enable you to tell your customers something of value. Just hanging around waiting for such instances to occur is, as the past has shown us, about as efficient as a chocolate tea pot. Time is wasted and opportunities are missed in a chimerical search for a pure and untarnished event.

However, we all know that our presence in the field inevitably biases results. In the past we have tended to run scared from this situation, taking ever more ponderous and convoluted steps in a futile attempt to dodge its ramifications. Where RRE differs is in its welcoming of the way things are. In its refusal to run and hide, RRE *represents* situations, turning threats into opportunities and weaknesses into strengths.

The instances we study are selected *in advance*. Ideally, as in the current case, we bring the field to the research team. In circumstances where this is impossible the field can be suitably primed to ensure a similar outcome. In short, research can be short and we can ensure results. To the busy ethnographer this is the only approach that is viable, guaranteeing customer satisfaction at an affordable price.

It is no good, however, studying instances in isolation. For ethnography to be of value to the customer it must be generalisable to her/ his work situation. As we all know, but seem to have forgotten, generalisability comes from repeatability. But repeatability can take time, a scarce resource in today's academy as we have already seen (Case, 2000: 3). So we simultaneously engineer repeatability to give us generalisability. To show you how, we offer the following example:

We selected the following instance of 'everyday' managerial talk to represent to an audience of normal academic observers. It is typical of many organisations:

*Frank Cannetto, Senior Vice President, Marketing, of Lila Logistics has been attempting to introduce a new package of performance measures with the help of his mentor and assistant Clifford Huxley. It is Monday morning.*

*Frank: We've gotta define our goods and services from the point of view of what the customer wants, not from the point of view of what the company can do!*

*Clifford: That's all very well, Frank. But performance measurements inevitably get bent - sometimes out of recognition - to support the internal status quo. But I agree that the ultimate measure is customer satisfaction.*

*Frank: Okay, okay. So that's number 1, customer satisfaction. Some times it's good to let the heart rule the head. Number 2, I think peer review is another essential part of our re-engineering strategy. What we need to do is ... 1, we grade team development; 2, applied learning; 3, safety; 4, quality; and 5, customer satisfaction.*

*Cliff: You're the boss, Frank. What about if we use a rating scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest?*

*Frank: Okay, okay. But remember, peer review is threatening to many people. I speak from experience. We've got to tread lightly. And above all, I want to stand as a model. I always insist on a review of my own personal performance, taking in all three hundred and sixty degrees.*

*Cliff: If you show that kind of commitment, Frank, I'm confident we should all be able to climb aboard.*

Eighty normal academic observers viewed this instance simultaneously. Their findings with regard to hierarchy and the mind/ body dualism in management provide us with all the generalisability we need to ensure value to the paying customer. As we are all aware, customers want facts and they want them now. And, importantly, they don't want surprises. Our methodology for data collection enables us to guarantee that no surprises will occur.

We asked our audience to answer the following questions (using a 1 to 5 scale to ease data handling):

**How much hierarchy did you see?**

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

### How much mind/ body dualism was there?

1-----2-----3-----4-----5

### Are you female?

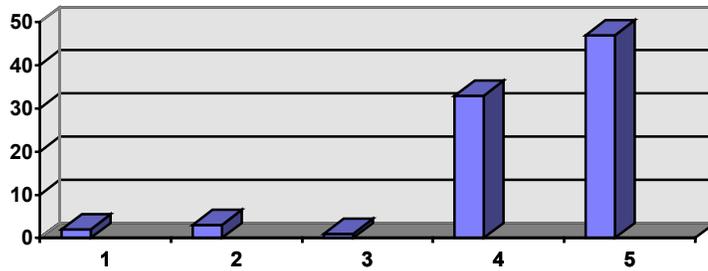
1-----2-----3-----4-----5

The last question was included in order to allow us to take a reflexive turn and account for any effects that may have been attributable to the subjectivity of our ethnographic team. The results were not surprising.

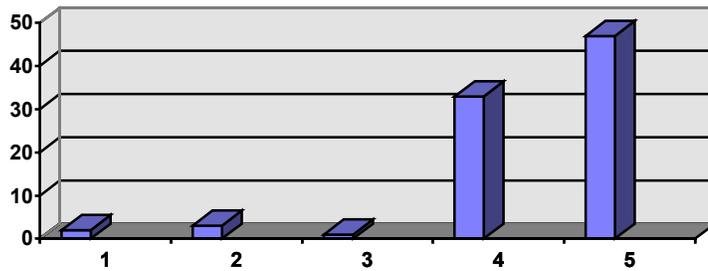
### THE FINDINGS

Initially we represent our findings graphically, in raw form, to allow the inquisitive and ill informed researcher with time on their hands to delve more deeply. We present summary findings for our more sophisticated readers in our subsequent discussion section.

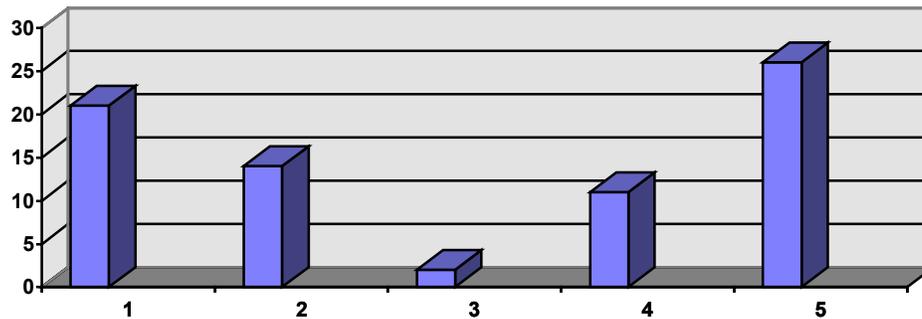
1. How much hierarchy did you see?



2. How much mind/ body dualism was there?



### 3. Are you female?



### DISCUSSION

Assuming 3 as the cut off point for maleness/ femaleness, the following matrices were generated in order to establish whether or not there is hierarchy and mind/ body dualism in management. The effects of gender upon ethnographic subjectivity and their implications for further research are discussed in the conclusion.

|         | Hierarchy | No hierarchy |
|---------|-----------|--------------|
| Males   | 67%       | 34%          |
| Females | 50%       | 50%          |

|         | Mind/ body dualism | No mind/ body dualism |
|---------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Males   | 24%                | 72%                   |
| Females | 54%                | 47%                   |

### CONCLUSION

The results verify the existence and persistence of hierarchy and mind/ body dualism in management. However, it is important to note that male and female academic observers may see these phenomena differently. More research is required if we are to fully understand the implications of the gender of researchers for ethnographies of management that seek to apprehend hierarchy and the mind/ body dualism.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Case, P. (2000) 'Editor's notes: Why Rapid Results Ethnography? Why now?', *International Journal of Rapid Results Ethnography*, vol. 17, no. 12, pp. 3-6.

Case, P., Lilley, S., Munro, R. and Sinclair, J. (1995) *Successful Rapid Results Ethnography*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Lilley, S. and Case, P. (1996) *The Quickest Ethnography Ever, II*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Munro, R. (1996) *The Essence of Ethnography: Another 100 Hot Tips*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Munro, R. (2000) 'In defence of ethnographic knowledge: the production, consumption and disposal of "Being There"', *International Journal of Rapid Results Ethnography*, vol. 17, no. 12, pp. 7-15.

Munro, R., Case, P., Lilley, S. and Sinclair, J. (1996) *Ethnography and the Enterprise Culture: Satisfaction and Synergy*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Sinclair, J., Case, P., Lilley, S. and Munro, R. (1996) *Perfect RRE*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

Sinclair, J. and Munro, R. (1996) *The One Minute Ethnographer*, Virtuville: RRE Products International

## **NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS/SUBSCRIBERS**

Articles published by *The International Journal of Rapid Results Ethnography* are refereed. No articles from non-subscribers will be accepted. However, *if you do subscribe you are guaranteed acceptance of one article per subscription*. The language of publication is English. Submitted articles are refereed and considered for publication on the understanding that they are not under consideration elsewhere.

Articles should generally contain some words. However, articles containing only graphs and matrices are also invited. Remember, if you want a rapid response, the shorter it is, the better.

### **Preparation of manuscripts**

Subscribers should submit three identical copies of their manuscript, each clearly bearing their name and subscription number. Articles not supplied on disk will not be considered. Matrices and tables, or at least data for them, must be included. Footnotes are not acceptable.

### **Format for references in the text**

No references should be provided in the text other than to articles that have previously or will subsequently appear in the *International Journal of Rapid Results Ethnography*. For a small additional fee you can leave out references altogether and we will supply your contribution with an appropriate set before publication.

Happy ethnographing!

**Lacking data?  
Or a suitable argument in which to  
place data you do have?**

*Call our 24 hour results and arguments hotline!*

*0898 557 4296*

Calls terminate in Paraguay and will discreetly appear on your bill as 'international calls'. Please make sure that you ask the person who pays the bill after making your call.

**SCOS membership form ...  
remember, it's free to join!**

**Please note:** *Everyone* who wishes to be a member of SCOS, and has not yet (re)joined either online or via the following form, whether they have attended past conferences or not (up to and including Edinburgh 1999), still needs to join. This will allow us, for instance, to identify those entitled to vote in forthcoming Chair or Board elections. The form below is intended for use by those who do not have Internet access. If you do have access, please join online at <http://www.scos.org>. Please also note that you have the right to be removed from the membership list at any time. To remove your name, please mail David Richards at [david.richards@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:david.richards@sunderland.ac.uk), or write to him at the address given for Marion Little below.

**The form should be returned to:** Marion Little - SCOS  
Sunderland Business School  
University of Sunderland  
St. Peter's Campus  
St. Peter's Way  
Sunderland  
Tyne and Wear SR6 0DD  
UK  
Fax.: +44 191 515 3131

Please also feel free to copy the form and pass it on to interested colleagues.

|  |                    |   |
|--|--------------------|---|
| <b>NAME INCLUDING TITLE:</b>   |                    | <b>WHICH E-MAIL DISTRIBUTION LISTS DO YOU BELONG TO? (EG, SCOS, ORGCULT, CRITICAL-MANAGEMENT ETC.)</b>  |
| <b>INSTITUTIONAL ADDRESS (IF APPLICABLE):</b>  | <b>ADDRESS (IF</b> | <b>PLEASE SEND ME DETAILS OF HOW SUBSCRIBE TO <i>STUDIES IN CULTURES, ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIETIES</i>: YES/ NO</b>  |
| <b>HOME ADDRESS (OPTIONAL):</b>  |                    | <b>PLEASE ENROL ME AS A MEMBER OF SCOS AND SEND ME REGULAR INFORMATION ABOUT SCOS ACTIVITIES. I UNDERSTAND I WILL HAVE TO PAY NO CHARGE.</b>  |
| <b>FAX NUMBER/ S:</b>  |                    | <b>WE MAY OCCASIONALLY USE THESE DETAILS TO SEND YOU INFORMATION ABOUT OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS, PUBLICATIONS, EVENTS OR SERVICES THAT WE THINK YOU MAY BE INTERESTED IN. IF YOU <i>DO NOT</i> WISH TO RECEIVE THIS INFORMATION PLEASE CHECK ( √ ) THE BOX BELOW.</b> |
| <b>E-MAIL ADDRESS/ ES:</b>   |                    |   |
| <b>ARE YOU A MEMBER OF:<br/>THE AMERICAN ACADEMY<br/>MANAGEMENT? YES/ NO<br/>THE BRITISH ACADEMY<br/>MANAGEMENT? YES/ NO<br/>EGOS? YES/ NO</b> | <b>OF<br/>OF</b>   |   |

# Consonance lost: management lives or management lies?

## David Richards

I've been reading David Knights and Hugh Willmott's latest book, *Management Lives* (London, Sage, 1999), which provides an introduction to management as if it mattered, through the use of extracts from four recent novels, interwoven with theory and other examples. So, here I am, writing this in the Clayhanger Bar of the North Staffordshire Hotel in Stoke-on-Trent, in the English Midlands. I thought it might make it easier "to explore the experience of managing and organising" and "place it within the broader context of human life and society" (Knights and Willmott, 1999, 5). Certainly there is a tension evident here, perhaps, like the many tensions identified in the opening paragraph of the book, between "the intellectual pursuit of theory and its marginalisation in the immediacy of practice" (*ibid.*, 1).

Around the next table, in one of those alcoves that the British love, are a group of managers from a major travel and holiday company. From brief bits of talk that I overhear, they seem to be doing what managers, indeed people, often do when together in a bar – moaning about the problems of work and the other people *at* work: how impossible the task and others are and how work is so difficult and unrewarding. "Well, when I got back I had 600 e-mails ... Can you believe it? ... Big cock-up - you can imagine ... Loads of stuff to keep everyone informed of but I just don't have the chance ... I've got the laptop but I've not got the right connections ... When Sally was here we were a fantastic team ... Yes, but who takes the rap? ... Of course, it's all about managing". Every so often they go quiet, when they are (perhaps) saying things that are more private.

Thinks: shall I go over and say that I teach management and I couldn't help overhearing them and would they be interested in a book I'm reading about "managing as a lived experience"? It has a very useful "theoretical framework that comprises the central concepts of power, inequality, identity and insecurity" (*ibid.*, 1-2)? Errm ... well, maybe not. Apart from the cultural barriers and inhibitions of British life there is the real problem of context. You just don't do that in a hotel bar, do you? Yet wouldn't that be a vindication of Knight and Willmott's project – to make management theory and ideas relevant to real people's lives? Well, no, actually it wouldn't, because it turns out that that's not their project at all. They are engaged in a much more limited undertaking, worthwhile in its way but not the leap of imagination that the authors claim.

There's work going on all around me in the bar, including my own. There's conversational work, chatting-up work, defining culture work, observational work. There's more specific occupational work by the barman: "Two pints of Stella, one with lime please". "Yes, madam". Do K & W help me, or students of behaviour in management, to understand these processes, working away as life is lived? Weeeelll, to an extent, yes they do. Don't get me wrong, there's lots of good stuff here for the management educator keen to enliven their classes with less conventional material. Particularly if they have been searching for a means to use David Lodge's novel, *Nice Work*, which, by the way, was made into an excellent TV series by the BBC. It is interesting that, although K & W claim to be using *novels* to illuminate management theory, it is no coincidence that all four of their novels have been made into films or TV series. Nothing like a video clip to liven up a class, eh? Well known principle, innit?

Meanwhile, back in the bar, I've had a couple of pints of Boddington's bitter. The travel manager group has been augmented, dissolved, reformed, and is obviously on a management course<sup>1</sup>, focused now around the arrival of what looks like a facilitator. I learn his e-mail address from his loud mobile phone conversation. Speaking to Canada from a bar in Stoke. Cosmopolitan or what? Perhaps he too is puzzling about how to bridge the gap, the gulf between the theoretician and the practitioner. Would he say, with K & W, "Ah yes, use novels, that's the way"? Don't think so.

In some ways he would be missing a lot. K & W really do justice to some ideas and to some parts of their chosen texts, in particular *Nice Work*. Lodge's is an excellent book that is explicitly focused on K & W's concerns; that wants, indeed, to examine tensions between practice and theory; that addresses postmodernism and work life. But what of a book that does not intentionally or unintentionally address their concerns? K & W do the usual academic thing – they make it fit. There's the rub and the fatal flaw in the project. They don't seem to practise what they preach. They *use* the novels all right, but to demonstrate what they want to have demonstrated, not to learn from them. It's a one-way relationship. An example illustrates this.

Look in the (poor) index for the book for "culture" and you won't find it, nor will you find "cross-cultural", although one book they consider is *The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro, which is discussed mainly in the context of power and inequality at work. Yet this book was written by someone born in Nagasaki, both of whose parents were Japanese, who came to Britain in 1960 when he was six and was raised in a London suburb. In the forty years since he left Japan he has returned, briefly, only once (Mackenzie, 2000, 10). We would not know any of this from *Management Lives*, which is little concerned with authors' lives. However, nor would we know anything of the metaphorically and literally cross-cultural nature of this book, written around a very English aristocratic house, in a

---

<sup>1</sup>. Next day a notice by reception confirmed this, announcing the " \_\_\_\_\_Holidays Management Skills/ Team Leader Course".

class-dominated milieu, by a British Japanese Englishman. Even though there is little *explicit* focus on this, it glides beneath many of the best scenes in the book, such as the inability of the narrator, the butler Stevens, to understand his new American employer, and to understand what is expected of him in return (Ishiguro, 1989, 13-17).

A significant theme of the book is individual and cultural identity, particularly what it is to be British and/ or English. Here Ishiguro's Japaneseness has particular relevance since the culture described in the book has many similarities and resonance with that of Japan. Stevens speculates on the nature of Britain, comparing it to other places, which he has only seen in encyclopaedias and magazines:

... if I were forced to hazard a guess, I would say that it is the *lack* of obvious drama or spectacle that sets the beauty of our land apart. What is pertinent is the calmness of that beauty, its sense of restraint. It as though the land knows of its own beauty, of its own greatness, and feels no need to shout it. In comparison, the sorts of sights offered in such places as Africa and America, though undoubtedly very exciting, would I am sure, strike the objective viewer as inferior on account of their unseemly demonstrativeness" (Ishiguro, 1989, 28-29).

Stevens extends these observations to his own profession, saying that only the English can be butlers. This is because other cultures are "incapable of the emotional restraint" which is required and "are as a rule unable to control themselves in moments of strong emotion, and are thus unable to maintain a professional demeanour other than in the least challenging situations" (Ishiguro, 1989, 43).

One critic says that she cannot read *The Remains of the Day* without thinking, figuratively, about Japan and, by inference, of Ishiguro's relationship to it (Mackenzie, 2000, 13); about the

... closed, private world of the aristocratic house, so perfectly comprehended by the butler Stevens ... The defining of Stevens' identity by his absurd attachment to this old order. Stevens' naivety, his unpreparedness for the world outside. The impossibility of making the new world conform to his image, or of being able to address the moral issues out there. The disproportion between the individual and world history." (*ibid.*)

None of this fits with the way that K & W want to use Ishiguro's book, nor with their preordained conceptual framework. So these aspects of the novel are not explored at all.

Even the use of *Nice Work* misses some of the richness of the novel. The title, for example, refers ironically to working in a university (where work is nice) and to

working in a factory (where the work may not be nice, but having it is). The unsaid “if you can get it” is in both cases bracketed behind the title. The novel examines the relationship between the university and “real life” and worries about it quite a lot. Robyn, the poststructuralist feminist academic, for example, muses with her fellow academic lover, Charles:

Charles: “You were saying they don’t go in much for poststructuralism at the factory. Hardly surprising, is it?”

Robyn: “But doesn’t it worry you at all? That most people don’t give a ... damn about the things that matter most to us?”

Charles: “No, why should it?” (Lodge, 1989, 217).

K & W make little of this theme in the novel, yet it could be a resource for a reflexive treatment of their own enterprise. We later learn that Charles is not as unmoved by this debate as it appears, and that he wishes so strongly to deny what Robyn says partly because he believes it to be true. So much so that he gives up being an academic and becomes a financial trader. It’s this ability of the novel to capture ambiguity and uncertainty that seems to be missing from *Management Lives*: that and its complexity.

On retiring to bed from the bar I pick up the novel I’m currently reading, Julian Barnes’ marvellous *Flaubert’s Parrot*. Here, Barnes examines Flaubert in a book that is part novel, part literary criticism. The narrator of the book is not Barnes, but a character, Geoffrey Braithwaite, who tells us much about Flaubert, and, initially incidentally, about himself. For instance Braithwaite is suspicious of claims that Flaubert translated *Candide* into English: “he couldn’t even copy English place names accurately: in 1866, making notes on ‘the coloured Minton tiles’ at the South Kensington Museum, he turns Stoke-upon-Trent into ‘Stroke-upon-Trend’” (Barnes, 1985, 137).

Now there’s a coincidence, but does it mean anything? Could it be a metaphor? How should it be read? Braithwaite undermines the notion that we can read books, life or people with any clarity: “It’s not just the life that we know. It is not just the life that has been successfully hidden. It is not just the lies about the life, some of which cannot now be disbelieved. It is also the life that was not led”. (Barnes, 1985, 141). What seems to be missing from *Management Lives*, surprisingly in view of K & W’s other work, is this complex, ambiguous and reflexive aspect of novels, both in their relationship to life and in the possibility of multiple interpretations and standpoints. It is the somewhat *literal* and *linear* approach of the book, more than the readings of particular novels, which ultimately renders it less satisfactory for me. That this may not be a deficiency for the main intended readership is a possibility but one that, if so, undermines the non-traditional and innovative claims made for the book. It seems too didactic and certain of itself for postmodern tastes. Anyway, read it for yourselves, but read the novels first, especially *Flaubert’s Parrot*.

## REFERENCES

Barnes, J. (1985) *Flaubert's Parrot*, London, Picador

Knights, D. and Willmott, H. (1999) *Management Lives*, London, Sage

Ishiguro, K. (1989) *The Remains of the Day*, London, Faber and Faber

Lodge, D. (1989) *Nice Work*, London, Penguin

MacKenzie, S. (2000) "Between two worlds", *The Guardian Weekend*, London, March 25<sup>th</sup>, 10-17.

David works at the University of Sunderland, UK



## Call for Papers

# The Second International Conference on Critical Management Studies

is to be held at:

Hulme Hall, UMIST/ University of Manchester, England

**July 11 - 13 2001**

The aim of this conference is to encourage the development of critical management theory, research and teaching. There are twenty-two separate streams, each run by specialist convenors drawn from a number of different countries and we hope that this diversity will be reflected in the conference participants.

Papers on any aspect of management studies are strongly encouraged. Prospective contributors should send a 1,000 word abstract *direct to the stream convenors* to arrive no later than: **31<sup>st</sup> October 2000**

There will be a separate poster session for doctoral students and young researchers. Anyone interested in participating should send a 250 word abstract *direct to the stream convenors*.

Conference Organisers:

Dr Irena Grugulis, Professor John Hassard and Professor Hugh Willmott

Conference Secretary:

Mrs Helen Dean

Manchester School of Management, UMIST, PO Box 88, Manchester M60 1QD

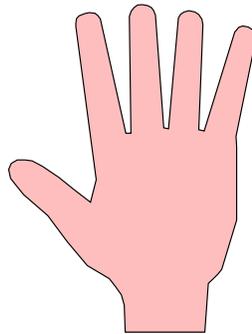
e-mail: [Helen.Dean@umist.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.Dean@umist.ac.uk) Tel: (UK) 0161- 200 3472

Full details of streams follow, or can be obtained from the conference website at:

<http://dialspace.dial.pipex.com/town/close/hr22/cms2001>

|  |
|--|
| <b>art and aesthetics in management and organisation studies</b> Philip Hancock, Glasgow Caledonian University ( <a href="mailto:p.hancock@gcal.ac.uk">p.hancock@gcal.ac.uk</a> ) Adrian Carr, University of Western Sydney ( <a href="mailto:a.carr@uws.edu.au">a.carr@uws.edu.au</a> )   |
| <b>change and organisations</b> Andy Sturdy, University of Bath ( <a href="mailto:mnsajs@management.bath.ac.uk">mnsajs@management.bath.ac.uk</a> ) Chris Grey, Judge Institute, University of Cambridge ( <a href="mailto:cig38@cam.ac.uk">cig38@cam.ac.uk</a> )   |
| <b>constructing knowledge: alternative modes of investigation in organisation studies</b> Cynthia Hardy, University of Melbourne ( <a href="mailto:c.hardy@ecomfac.unimelb.edu.au">c.hardy@ecomfac.unimelb.edu.au</a> ), Bill Harley, University of Melbourne ( <a href="mailto:b.harley@ecomfac.unimelb.edu.au">b.harley@ecomfac.unimelb.edu.au</a> ), Graham Sewell, University of Melbourne ( <a href="mailto:g.sewell@ecomfac.unimelb.edu.au">g.sewell@ecomfac.unimelb.edu.au</a> ), Steve Maguire, McGill University ( <a href="mailto:smaguire@management.mcgill.ca">smaguire@management.mcgill.ca</a> ), Dora Scholarios, Strathclyde University ( <a href="mailto:d.scholarios@strath.ac.uk">d.scholarios@strath.ac.uk</a> ) |
| <b>customers and providers</b> Marek Korczynski, University of Loughborough ( <a href="mailto:m.korczynski@lboro.ac.uk">m.korczynski@lboro.ac.uk</a> ) Ran Lachman, College of Management, Tel-Aviv ( <a href="mailto:rlachman@colman.ac.il">rlachman@colman.ac.il</a> )   |
| <b>countries, organisations and individuals in transition</b> Mihaela Kelemen, Keele University ( <a href="mailto:mna05@mnqt.keele.ac.uk">mna05@mnqt.keele.ac.uk</a> ) Eduardo Ibarra, Mexico State University ( <a href="mailto:eic@xanum.uam.mx">eic@xanum.uam.mx</a> )  |
| <b>creation and dissemination of management knowledge</b> Thomas Armbruster, University of Mannheim ( <a href="mailto:t.armbruster@uni-mannheim.de">t.armbruster@uni-mannheim.de</a> ) Mike Chumer, Rutgers University, ( <a href="mailto:chumer@scils.rutgers.edu">chumer@scils.rutgers.edu</a> )   |
| <b>economics and institutions</b> Mick Rowlinson, University of North London ( <a href="mailto:m.rowlinson@unl.ac.uk">m.rowlinson@unl.ac.uk</a> )  |
| <b>education</b> Jeanie Forray, Western New England College ( <a href="mailto:jforray@wnec.edu">jforray@wnec.edu</a> ), Ann Cunliffe, University of New Hampshire ( <a href="mailto:annc@christa.unh.edu">annc@christa.unh.edu</a> ), David Knights, University of Keele ( <a href="mailto:d.knights@keele.ac.uk">d.knights@keele.ac.uk</a> )  |
| <b>future of work</b> Mike Rose, University of Bath ( <a href="mailto:hssmjr@bath.ac.uk">hssmjr@bath.ac.uk</a> )   |
| <b>gender</b> Albert Mills, Saint Mary's University ( <a href="mailto:amills@husky1.stmarys.ca">amills@husky1.stmarys.ca</a> )   |
| <b>humour and irony</b> Ulla Johansson, Lund University ( <a href="mailto:ulla.johansson@fek.lu.se">ulla.johansson@fek.lu.se</a> ), Jill Woodilla, Central Connecticut State University ( <a href="mailto:jillwoodilla@snet.net">jillwoodilla@snet.net</a> ), Deborah R. Litvin, Simmons College, Boston ( <a href="mailto:litvin@simmons.edu">litvin@simmons.edu</a> ), David Collinson, University of Warwick ( <a href="mailto:irobdc@wbs.warwick.ac.uk">irobdc@wbs.warwick.ac.uk</a> )   |
| <b>language of the new capitalism</b> Pete Thomas, University of Central Lancashire ( <a href="mailto:p.thomas@uclan.ac.uk">p.thomas@uclan.ac.uk</a> ) Norman Fairclough, University of Lancaster, Nelson Phillips, McGill University ( <a href="mailto:phillips@management.mcgill.ca">phillips@management.mcgill.ca</a> ) Phil Graham, University of Queensland ( <a href="mailto:phil.graham@mailbox.uq.edu.au">phil.graham@mailbox.uq.edu.au</a> )  |
| <b>management and goodness</b> Heather Höpfl, University of Northumbria ( <a href="mailto:h.hopfl@unn.ac.uk">h.hopfl@unn.ac.uk</a> ) Ronnie Beadle, University of Northumbria ( <a href="mailto:ron.beadle@unn.ac.uk">ron.beadle@unn.ac.uk</a> )   |
| <b>manufacturing futures</b> Rick Delbridge, University of Cardiff ( <a href="mailto:delbridger@cardiff.ac.uk">delbridger@cardiff.ac.uk</a> ) Jonathon Morris, University of Cardiff ( <a href="mailto:morrisil@Cardiff.ac.uk">morrisil@Cardiff.ac.uk</a> )  |
| <b>marketing</b> Michael Saren, Strathclyde University ( <a href="mailto:michael.saren@strath.ac.uk">michael.saren@strath.ac.uk</a> )  |

|   |
|---|
| <b>narratives of oppressors and narratives of oppressed</b> Yiannis Gabriel, University of Bath ( <a href="mailto:mnsyg@management.bath.ac.uk">mnsyg@management.bath.ac.uk</a> ) Ato Quayson, University of Cambridge ( <a href="mailto:laq10@cus.cam.ac.uk">laq10@cus.cam.ac.uk</a> )  |
| <b>operations management and production</b> Steve New, Hertford College Oxford ( <a href="mailto:steve.new@hertford.oxford.ac.uk">steve.new@hertford.oxford.ac.uk</a> ) Roy Westbrook, St Hugh's College Oxford ( <a href="mailto:roy.westbrook@sbs.ox.ac.uk">roy.westbrook@sbs.ox.ac.uk</a> )  |
| <b>organisational misbehaviour</b> Stephen Ackroyd, University of Lancaster ( <a href="mailto:s.ackroyd@lancaster.ac.uk">s.ackroyd@lancaster.ac.uk</a> ) Paul Thompson, University of Strathclyde ( <a href="mailto:p.thompson@strath.ac.uk">p.thompson@strath.ac.uk</a> )  |
| <b>postcolonialism</b> Anshuman Prasad, University of Newhaven ( <a href="mailto:aprasad@charger.newhaven.edu">aprasad@charger.newhaven.edu</a> )   |
| <b>strategy</b> Glenn Morgan, University of Warwick ( <a href="mailto:irobgm@rapier.wbs.warwick.ac.uk">irobgm@rapier.wbs.warwick.ac.uk</a> )  |
| <b>the management of creativity and creative industries</b> Paul Jeffcutt, University of Queens at Belfast ( <a href="mailto:p.jeffcutt@queens-belfast.ac.uk">p.jeffcutt@queens-belfast.ac.uk</a> )   |
| <b>the passion of organising</b> Jo Brewis, University of Essex ( <a href="mailto:jbrewis@essex.ac.uk">jbrewis@essex.ac.uk</a> ), Stephen Linstead, University of Sunderland ( <a href="mailto:stephen.linstead@sunderland.ac.uk">stephen.linstead@sunderland.ac.uk</a> ), Tony O'Shea, University of Sunderland ( <a href="mailto:tony.oshea@sunderland.ac.uk">tony.oshea@sunderland.ac.uk</a> ), Burkard Sievers, University of Wuppertal ( <a href="mailto:sievers@uni-wuppertal.de">sievers@uni-wuppertal.de</a> ) David Boje, New Mexico State University ( <a href="mailto:dboje@nmsu.edu">dboje@nmsu.edu</a> ) |



**That's all folks ...**