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Post-Weickian Organization Theory: Notes on The Aesthetics and Politics of Theorizing

> "[To] describe as comprehensively and realistically as possible the awfully complex processes of management's postmodernization" Emil Walter-Busch (1995)

Abstract

In light of Emil Walter-Busch´s (1996) seminal *From Weber to Weick*, we investigate how Weick´s dealing with the process, cause and style of theorizing transformed the coordinates of our academic discipline into a post-Weickian form of organization theory. We delineate how Weick´s theorizing artistically probed and shifted the existing limits of the mainstream way of theorizing by emphasizing the aesthetic side of theorizing. Furthermore, we connect Weick´s poetic understanding of theorizing with the controversial emergence of a postmodern view on organizational theory and its claim that theorizing cannot be stripped off its political implications. Claiming that organization theory today is still characterized by an illustrious, elitist group that enforces order by categorizing, structuring and coding our academic territory, we stage a plea for a minor organizational theorizing, which might be achieved by allowing for dissensus, so as to enable the expression and phrasing of the conflicts within and between discursive regimes. By making way for modes of enunciation that re-connect the aesthetical and the political, we might engender new epistemes and imaginative ways for representing the notoriously silent and silenced of organization theory.

1 Returning to Walter-Busch's *From Weber to Weick*

Book reviews and literary critiques play a crucial role in the reception of novels and fiction literature. The weeks after a novel is brought on the market form for many authors a period of nervous waiting, as critiques can break or make the success of a book and sometimes even the career of an author. In the publication of academic books, there is a similar yet slower practice of reviewing books, as it many times takes one or two years before these reviews or critiques are published in the book review section of journals. There is a small anecdote to be told to explain why Ian Colville published a review of Weick's book *The social psychology of organizing* fifteen years after the work's appearance. Initially published in 1969, in a very compromised and abstract form, the 1979 version bears the same title, but is otherwise a com-

pletely reworked edition. The apparent tardiness of Colville's review should not give the impression that the book remained unnoticed by the gaze of reviewers, demanding a number of years to come to light. The review is tied up with a small misunderstanding, as Colville had been asked to review a third edition. As it happened, no third edition was forthcoming.[1] Colville eventually decided to review the second edition. In practice the result was most fortunate, since we rarely have the chance to read how someone grows to appreciate a book and use it for research and teaching over a number of years. Reviews that immediately follow the appearance of a book tend to offer a principled and intellectualized reaction, rather than an idea of the particular form the book took for the reviewer or student as he or she over the years has appropriated it, i.e. how the book gets transformed by the reader into a kind of 'toolbox' he or she can use in his/her own area (Foucault, 1974).

With this as a backdrop, it is arguably useful to re-read and re-position with a similar delay the book by Walter-Busch *Organisationstheorien von Weber bis Weick*, published in 1996. As far as we know, there has never been a review of this book, which is many times the unfortunate faith of a book that is published as a *Studienbuch*. To return to this book more then 10 years after its publication seems at first sight probably even more counter-productive if one knows that Walter-Busch (2006) has published a newer, intriguing research-based book, entitled *Faktor Mensch*, also waiting to be reviewed. However, we see some good reasons to go back to the 1996-book. First of all, although it might be tempting to go for the more recent book, Walter-Busch, while always interested in newer developments (see Walter-Busch, 1995), never supported the fetish of the recent, the fashionable and the trendy and instigated organization theorists to take a historic perspective, to stay close with the text and to un-dust the archives (Walter-Busch, 1989; 2006). Furthermore, the 1996-book also seems to identify in its title a point in the history of organization theory, where it is suggested that with the processual theory of Weick a temporary "end"-point in theorizing has been reached. A retrospective on Walter-Busch's 1996-book thus brings to the foreground an interesting question – namely what comes after Weick? – which we would like to address in this essay, taking the book by Walter-Busch as an anchor point to assess consequent developments. Bringing Weick centre-stage forms in our view a rather clairvoyant assessment by Walter-Busch, since we believe that around the writings of Weick it becomes possible to discuss how organization theory has evolved subsequently and, especially, to point at understandings of what theorizing itself means, since Weick did not stop to reflect on his own process of theorizing while devel-

[1] However, this perhaps indicates the degree to which the revised edition was keenly anticipated by some. In 1995, Weick published a new book with the title *Sensemaking in organizations* (Weick, 1995b).

oping his organizational perspective on sensemaking.[2] When we speak of Post-Weickian theory, this is not because we would like to foreground the work of Weick as a single author. To point at the work of one author does not seem to us an apt way of discussing the "organizing" of a certain theoretical field and how the many partially interconnected, partially disparate lines between concepts, models and theories evolve. What we want to examine, on the basis of Walter-Busch's focus on Weick, is how Weick is "doing" organizational theory and whether it has and still does set the tone for future forms of theorizing organization. The notion of 'Post-Weickian theory' does thus not imply that Weick's influence has withered in organization theory or even that Weick is *passé* altogether. It is rather the case that Weick's spectres are still omnipresent, timely and relevant, and we believe that it is since Weick's book that the whole idea of theory has been heavily scrutinized and that it gave way to a whole series of novel movements and thinking about theory. However, rather than to give an overview of the various theoretical perspectives that work with and go beyond Weick's sensemaking perspective, we believe indeed that looking into the concept of theory itself is a key endeavour to answer the question what came after Weick and how and in which direction organization theory has moved on. Because one thing is sure: the field of organizational theory has not known a wind still; rather it arrived in wind streams from other fields and disciplines and lived such stormy weathers known as the "crisis of representation" and the "end of theory", importing a myriad of critical perspectives in the wake of what Eagleton called the "theory-boom" of the sixties (Eagleton, 2003).

2 Remembering stormy weathers in the organization theory landscape

Nineteen-seventy-nine seemed to be the wind still before the storm. It was not only the year of Weick's *The social psychology of organizing* but the year where a whole young generation of organizational scholars attempted a breakthrough, as in the case of Mintzberg's *The structuring of organizations*, Aldrich's *Environments and organizations* and Clegg's *The theory of power and organization*, respectively theorizing structural, evolutionary and political processes. It was the year where Burrell and Morgan published *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis*, a book in which they try to connect and order theories along conceptions of epistemology and society. Notwithstanding its shortcomings (Deetz, 1996;[3] Burrell,

[2] To a certain extent the choice for Weick is also one out of many options. Reading the book of Walter-Busch immediately makes clear that Weick's oeuvre is definitely not an endpoint and that, parallel, different other lines of development can be pointed at, such as postmodern, constructionist and neo-institutional theories.

[3] Deetz is mostly concerned with the epistemological dimension and the subjective-objective axis. In the wake of the linguistic turn, he speaks of discursive orientations and sees a communication between these discourses as possible since we constantly draw upon them. Critical to a reification of four unified frames, Deetz tries to start from research practices to

1996;[4] Jones & Munro, 2005[5]), this book prepared the ground for the pending theoretical pluralism in organization theory, even if this pluralization was effected in a neatly ordered way. In the same year, John Van Maanen (1979) edited a special issue on qualitative methods setting out the parameters that were to ground the rise of qualitative research in the coming decennia. What these publications appeared to indicate was a kind of order and robustness, a sense that there was maybe still a lot to be done, but one at least knew the direction. That apparent calm, self-content and conviction of "being on course" was without the consideration of a budding *Zeitgeist* of fin-de-siècle spleen and, more importantly, of a series of publications by Parisian philosophers in the ascent to the May-68 revolution that would afterwards take by storm the literary departments in the United States and that would land on the desk of organization scholars drawing them into heavy polemics, academic wars and ironic games; or an "unexpected turbulence", as Weick (1999: 797) would call it later in his reflections on ten years theorizing in the organizational landscape.

When Walter-Busch published his book from *Weber to Weick* in 1996, the discussion on postmodernism was already well on its way. While the book mentions postmodern theories next to and in connection to constructionist and neo-institutional theories, it is, however, quite clear that Walter-Busch conceived of the import of philosophy to organizational theory as the strategic attempt to adapt the field to the Zeitgeist of the 80s and 90s, and, most fundamentally, to instrumentalize philosophy for personal gains (e.g. academic careers). To get an additional idea of his assessment of postmodern theories, we might also return to a short but interesting intervention Walter-Busch wrote the year before on the postmodern turn of management theory and to see how he made sense of "its essential ambiguity [which] still withstands many of these sense-making endeavours" (Walter-Busch, 1995: 148). On the face of it, Walter-Busch is mostly concerned with managerial practice – and therefore the title might rather have focused on management practice instead of theory – and he shows a certain nostalgia for the historic founding fathers of modern management theory who stayed closer to the practice of managers (and how they saw themselves) and who "would never have thought of relating them [their works] to contemporary developments in philosophy" (p. 153). Walter-Busch, without making his zeal for realist epistemology explicit, prefers a science that would "describe as comprehensively and realistically as possible the awfully complex processes of

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re-formulate the different orientations. In effect, his four discursive orientations remain as susceptible to reification as Burrell and Morgan's four paradigms.

[4] Burrell does not so much criticize the use of paradigms as to sketch out how the organization of knowledge has been consecutively phrased as paradigms, metaphors, discourses and genealogies.

[5] Jones and Munro (2005) equally point out that there is no need to "think in terms of structural coherence or unity of theories" (p 2) or fixed perspectives.

management's postmodernization" and "produce (in Geertz's sense) thick descriptions of evolving management discourses […] contributing to a deeper understanding of the world *as it is*" (p. 154; our italics). Commenting in specific on a text by John Shotter (1995) and his idea of the manager as a practical author, Walter-Busch turns against this idea as "amazingly conservative" (p. 151), as he assesses the concept to form an uneasy alliance between Weick and Marx, and to contradict the postmodern claim of the author's death. More importantly still, Walter-Busch is not too fond of the philosophy imported into organizational and management theory (as Shotter and others are doing), respectively of how philosophy has been exploited in relation to organization research units and consulting firms (see 1996: 267), and argues "against founding organizational or management studies too immediately on philosophical considerations" (1995: 149). As a consequence of the dramatic increase of multiple and contradictory theoretical perspectives and the professionalization of management, postmodernism has effected, according to Walter-Busch, an oversophistication of management theory and a cognitive saturation, a kind of "[a]lmost anything goes, now, if not in management practice, then at least in management theory" (p. 151), and, most of all, he points out that its consequences can be equally "obtained by philosophically unassisted common sense" (p. 153). The implications of this claim are at least double. While Walter-Busch foregrounds the relationship between practice and theory (to assess how theory matters), his answer either privileges the historic stances as he eagerly returns to the writings of Barnard, pretending that nothing new has come after that, or that either conceives researching as a form of realistic, empirical, albeit thick, description. That Shotter brings an uneasy symbiosis between practice and authorship is rejected by Walter-Busch, but it is our impression that he mainly focuses on authorship while simultaneously neglecting the practical side of this concept.[6] Secondly, there is a latent, but clear overall rejectionism of the questions asked by poststructuralist thinkers, which seems to be instigated by their disturbance of realist worldviews. Walter-Busch's response is in that respect quite typical for how postmodern and poststructuralist thinking became snowed under explicit or (as in the aforementioned case of Walter-Busch) implicit forms of overall denunciation.

It seemed as if this poststructuralist thinking was disturbing something that justified even more hostile or polemic receptions, quickly eclipsing the initial more hopeful welcoming. The first signs of a sweeping, new thinking in organizational theory, i.e. the sort which would at once disturb it and re-introduce incoherence to the discipline, became manifest in a

[6] Notice also that the concept traveled well afterwards and became the point of departure for a subsequent book (Holman & Thorpe, 2002).

quartet of articles in *Organization Studies* by Gibson Burrell and Robert Cooper. In these articles the authors draw attention to the (new) relationship between postmodernism and organizational analysis and how the contributions by Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and – slightly surprising[7] – Jürgen Habermas (see Burrell, 1988; Burrell, 1994; Cooper, 1989; Cooper & Burrell, 1988) appeal to theorize the concept of organization and to prompt new ways of doing organizational analysis. Those articles thus gave primacy to the paradoxes and indeterminacies of the organizing process, as a result of which organization is no longer seen as the extension and the subject of human control and understanding but as a process (Cooper, 1989) and thus an affair of constant flux (Cooper & Burrell, 1988) being contingent of its context (Chia, 1995). However, consecutive articles connected organizational analysis with postmodernism in a rather general way (Clegg, 1990; Gergen, 1992; Hassard & Parker, 1993; Kilduff & Mehra, 1997; etc), plucking some concepts out of the work of such French philosophers as Lyotard, Baudrillard, Foucault, Derrida and Barthes and trying to integrate them in re-thinking organization.[8] Nevertheless, the application of such buzzwords as 'deconstruction', 'genealogy', 'paralogy', etc. seemed to suffice to 'cement' the belief that the time was ripe for "a new theory of organization" (Hassard & Parker, 1994), for "new thinking in Organizational Behavior" (Tsoukas, 1994) and for "rethinking organization" (Reed & Hughes, 1992). These grand announcements of new thinking were indeed flavoured and amplified by the sensation of new possibilities as it was assumed that Parisian thinking would bring both radicalism and renewal to the thinking of organization.

However, it was most striking, yet not too surprising, that these new directions were explored in very general, not to say casual, terms – i.e. in what Jones (2003) called cartoon-book introductions – and that, most of the times, the articles and book chapters were mostly *about* postmodernism and poststructuralist concepts while their own writing rarely changed and remained strangely enough without consequences. For instance, applying Foucault or Derrida was performed in the sense of "Foucault said this" and "Derrida said that" and seemed to be very concerned with whether they understood Foucault rightly and were thinking as Derrida would do.[9] It is a reading of Foucault or Derrida "at a distance" (Jones, 2003: 515) which does not form what we could call, according to Buchanan (2000), an applied Fou-

[7] Although Derrida and Foucault rejected such labels as postmodern or poststructuralist, the association of Habermas (including his own rejection of poststructuralism) is less evident.

[8] It seems it was too early for the work of Deleuze and Guattari that comes in a later wave and is done in a more generative way (see Fuglsang & Meier Sørensen, 2006).

[9] It is thus propably no conincidence that Deleuze and Guattari remained largely ignored during organizational theory's initial turn towards post-structuralist theorizing, since their writing, if for instance compared to that of Foucault, can hardly be subjected to a 'referential regime' (Meier Sørensen, 2005).

cauldism[10] or applied Derridism, that is a reading with Foucault or with Derrida, a reading at once rather suggestive and experimental, rejecting "all forms of slavishness in favour of (liberating) creativity" (p. 8).

We thus concede that the first wave of postmodern and poststructuralist theories in organization theory has been rather weak (i.e. of limited impact), since it has largely been rendered 'impotent' by a denotative game by means of which scholars tried to explain the 'precise' meaning of Derrida's, Foucault's, Deleuze's, etc. texts/theories. The lack of sparkling, creative use of these French philosophers as well as the loss of their concepts' transformative power can be related to several elements. Firstly, practices of scholarly writing and its related publishing apparatus are institutionalized and do not change overnight. While many academics are open for new thinking/writing, it might in everyday practice not be that easy to start to alter their own writing styles, to loosen the grip on the sort of formalism that favours neatly ordered grids and charts or to convince journal editors and reviewers to be open for different genres and forms of writing. Secondly, the reception of the books and articles was indirect since most organizational scholars are working with translated (English) manuscripts, and, it is probably less evident to be sensitive to the ever-changing style[11] in the writing of, for instance, Foucault (Adorno, 1998) and Derrida (Oger, 2005)[12] when working with a translated version as well as to the alterations and dis-intensifications which often take place therein (Grant, 1993). Thirdly, the atmosphere in which poststructuralist thinking had to be explored was quite antagonistic, to say the least. The military discourse that accompanied the introduction of this new thinking was striking[13] and illustrated by the recurring references to paradigm wars (Martin, 1996; Weick, 1999) and science wars (Ross, 1996; Parsons, 2003). There were the obvious scandals, such as the Sokal-hoax where the physicist Alan Sokal lured the journal *Social Text* into publishing a bogus article, followed by a book where he, together with Bricmont, takes direct issue with the work of such French philosophers as Deleuze, Derrida, Latour, Serres, and others in how they make reference to and use of science-notions, thus accusing them of intellectual impostures. Or there was the open letter by a group of Cambridge scholars heavily protesting the honorary doctorate Jacques Derrida would receive.[14] The crux

[10] Paraphrasing Buchanan's idea of „Applied Deleuzism" (Buchanan, 2000).

[11] Czarniawska (2003: 241) is quite explicit on this point: "[a] rhetorical analysis performed in English on a text written in another language borders on absurdity, and the same analysis applied to a translation from another language raises a host of doubts as to whose style is under description".

[12] With the book, *Éperons. Les styles de Nietzsche*, some striking changes in Derrida's writing style can be noticed (Oger, 2005).

[13] And then maybe not, at least if we are reminded of Czarniawska (2003: 257) who claims that the way interaction is conceived in academics is war-like, focused upon seeing "who bleeds first or who stays longer on his (yes) feet".

[14] Suffice it to say that Derrida finally received his honory title.

with the perfunctory appraisal, not to say mockery, of postmodernism by Sokal and others is that they substantially moulded the academic reception of postmodern and poststructuralist theories, meaning that organization scholars often prefer to rely their views on polemic secondary texts instead of investing time, patience and passion to understand the original.

In more general terms, there was this constant game of labelling and label-contestation. It was extremely important to point at someone as post-modern when this person showed interest for such thinking, which prompted someone else to put him or herself in the opposite camp. Though it is beyond the question that such labelling was notoriously misleading (since reducing the diverse works of people like Foucault and Derrida to univocal categories and thus to seemingly homological totalities), it is also clear that those labels served its use more to the user, and not the acclaimed members, of the respective categories. Taking the case of Foucault to illustrate matters, the irony falls in place in that he has been labelled both a structuralist and a post-structuralist. Foucault thus convincingly argued that structuralism to him was a category that existed entirely for others, since it is only from the outside that one can say that so and so are structuralists. However, what all this indicates, among other things, is that there was literally no time and space for a kind of calmness where one read, and read closely, a text by, for instance, Foucault or Derrida. Any attempt at precise and detailed scholarship and at experimenting with thinking was mostly interrupted by latent hostility, killed by yet another discussion as to whether what you did transformed you into "a postmodernist" and re-channelled all your energy in dealing with yet another wave of generalized rejectionism.

Even before the century and the millennium would close, Calás and Smircich (1999) announced a "past-postmodernism" and measured up the legacy of postmodernism. While the idea was to bring to light the opportunities postmodern scholarship has "offered for reflecting upon the production of theory as a genre and as an institutional and cultural activity" (p. 649), it became obvious that what they rightly pointed out as continuing tendencies (e.g. the narrative, post-feminist, postcolonial and ANT-perspectives) formed only a very indirect legacy where each perspective, at the time of Calás and Smircich's publication, was, not yet "sufficiently materialized" (p. 649).

However, the good news in our view is that a new generation of organizational scholars is not following the shortcut to focus on "past post-perspectives" that Calás and Smircich partly suggested and reinvigorated the effort to explore consequences of the Parisian thinking/thinkers. After the start of the millennium it is clear that a whole range of publications has emerged that explore the relationship between representation and organization (Lilley, Lightfoot & Amaral, 2004; Linstead, 2005; Rhodes & Westwood, 2007). Even more so, there

is a group of organizational scholars that returns to and stresses the variety of ideas that came with and follow the theory-boom from the sixties and the consecutive decennia and take time to explore their complexity and consequences for researching and writing organizational theory (Rhodes, 2001; Linstead, 2004; Styhre, 2005). There is thus plenty of material to explore theorizing and inheriting after Paris (Jones, 2002; 2003).

The ultimate question which derives from this short sketch – alluding to the quite euphoric and hopeful introduction of new thinking, the consecutive fear and loathing of postmodernism in the form of unproductive and trivializing polemics, reserved welcomes and quick rejections, the somehow overhasty expulsion, and the more calm and precise return to the works and its possible readings – is whether any of this can somehow be connected to the figure of Weick. That is, has his work been concerned with and predictive of this (first and second wave) intervention in the thinking of theory and the theorizing of thinking? Or is Weick's work rather a theoretical unicum and thus not quite indicative of what was yet to come?

3 Reflecting theorizing: Weick's style

For Colville, Weick's *The social psychology of organizing* has remained a must, so 'seminal' that he names it as the only book for his desert island library. The book, that at the time of its appearance had already been seen by Wicker as a brilliant example of generative theory, thus retained its generative power in theory and practice fifteen years later. The resonance of Weick's book emanates from his ability to describe an organizational process with a rarely equalled profundity, sometimes bordering on the jargonistic, while nonetheless maintaining vivid imagery and a lively tone, and remaining in direct dialogue with readers. If Weick's book and later oeuvre is considered a seminal contribution (Czarniawska, 2005), this is not only for the theoretical perspective of organizing as sensemaking (Weick, 1995) he elaborated and for the many imaginative concepts he brought to organization theory, but also, and maybe even more so, for his reflexivity about theorizing (Weick, 1989; 1992; 1999; 2004) and for launching "a new style in organizational theorizing by combining a sophisticated use of systems theory with insights from the world of music and literature" (Czarniawska, 2005: 268).

To assess this style and to show how it relates to the emergence of poststructuralism and postmodernism and its questioning of the concept of theory, we might find an indication in how Czarniawska (2005: 275) phrases Weick as a "constructive deviant" who never went mainstream or into school building, but who also did not turn revolutionary or radical neither. While Weick always subtly and sharply questions existing practices of writing, conceiving

and thinking, he simultaneously remains purposeful and constructive in pragmatically trying to make a contribution in the journals that are read by the mainstream scholars. Weick has thus never been at the forefront of any debate on postmodernism, did not get entrapped in paradigm wars nor actively engaged with core representatives of poststructuralist thinking. At the same time, he has neither been intimidated by it and he "[i]s tempted to say of the "paradigm wars", "Give war a chance"" (Weick, 1999: 797). While acknowledging "the larger context of an ascendant postmodernism" (p. 787), he also seems happy to get this context, which is apparently not "for the weak of heart" (p. 798), over and done with. Weick prefers "reflective reconciliation" (p. 804), as long as this is not at the price of loosing out on bold and risky theorizing, which he willingly credits to those organizational scholars who have tried to reconceive organizational theorizing through poststructuralist concepts. Indeed, his writing is based on a nuanced eclecticism where any (re)source is in principle attractive to be explored when it can suit the ongoing theorizing process. Weick makes indeed many connections between what many times is considered incommensurable, such as between the biological and the cultural, the systemic and the literary, thus performing a contamination of fields of inquiry and practice or what Serres has called a kind of praxis of the in-between or the third (Serres, 2000). To get an idea of the multiple – also philosophical – sources Weick draws upon and connects, we might look into how Tsoukas (2005: 7) sees the influence of Weick on his work: "And if you find Karl Weick popping up on nearly every other page of this book, that is because I regard Weick's work as the epitome of thoughtful scholarship in organization studies, an enviable pursuit of creative explorations into organizations broad-mindedly informed by American pragmatists, European phenomenologists, social and cognitive psychologists, sociological constructivists, and systemic and evolutionary thinkers. It is the ecological, interpretive, process-driven orientation to organizations and organizational research that I find so stimulating in Weick's work". Tsoukas' appraisal, first of all, is illustrative for the high esteem and outspoken admiration the work of Weick has gotten over the years. While Weick has not been eager to build a "school of his own", it is clear that his influence on the advancement and establishment of the interpretive school in organization theory is considerable, a school which would not have looked the same without Weick (Hatch & Yanow, 2003). While Weick was always reflective about his process of theorizing, he did not examine his own meta-theoretical stance neither did he reflect upon his intellectual sources such as pragmatism and phenomenology. Rather than writing in general on interpretivism (or any other meta-theoretical stance upon which he based his work), Weick performs thinking and, without making philosophy posh or basking in Big Names, draws upon Dewey or Rorty, on Kierke-

gaard or Heidegger, but for the simple reason of sharpening his thinking. Finally, Tsoukas' review makes clear that on a meta-theoretical level, Weick never joined the academic circles where poststructuralist thinkers tend to be read or discussed. In a peculiar sense, Weick's practice of theorizing reveals a subversive touch, though 'subversive' here does not allude to some academic guerrilla tactic, but rather to Weick's artful circumvention of the often destructive paradigm discussions. However, this does not exclude that to a certain extent certain (poststructuralist) interests concerning writing and theorizing could be more easily pursued as Weick's work opened up for exploring new possibilities or for others to be "allowed" to explore alternative routes.

In pointing at those characteristics in Weick's writing that can be connected to subsequent foci on and developments in writing and theorizing in the realm of organization theory, we will discuss the process, cause and style of theorizing and writing.

If Weick urged organizational scholars to stamp out nouns in favour of verbs and to think of organization as organizing, he similarly instigates us to focus less on theories as outcomes, but to pay attention to the process of theorizing. Weick's adagio is "what theory is not, theorizing is" (Weick, 1995). His interest for improving theory urges him to look at and improve the theorizing process, "and we cannot improve the theorizing process until we describe it more explicitly, operate it more self-consciously, and decouple it from validation more deliberately" (Weick, 1989: 516). What Weick does is to undercut many of the holy cows of methodology, not in the least the whole idea of validity, and to set out for more playful and imaginative theorizing, a form of theorizing that engages in widening what can be considered the tools of thinking, representing and selecting. In quintessence, Weick approaches theorizing as a form of sensemaking following his evolutionary model of organizing, seeing organizing as "an allegory for writing" and, equally pointing out that "writing is organizing" (Czarniawska, 2003: 245). He captures the paradoxical character of theorizing in the by now renowned idea of disciplined imagination, giving form to a view that conceives theory construction as involving imagination disciplined by the processes of artificial selection. Theorizing, according to Weick, requires a deliberate diversion into how we state problems, how we carry out thought trials and what selection criteria are comprised in that thinking. His plea for imagination brings him to counter "obvious", mostly analytical principles of classical theory building and to underline the emotional side of theorizing. For instance, as a theorist one should be "pleased" when assumptions are disconfirmed, as "a disconfirmed assumption is an opportunity for a theorist to learn something new, to discover something unexpected, to generate renewed interest in an old question, to mystify something that had previously seemed

settled, to heighten intellectual stimulation, to get recognition, and to alleviate boredom" (p. 525). Weick, probably more than any other organizational scholar, is prepared to counter established views on what is scientific and what determines science as "proper". In a reply to a text by Sutton and Staw, who tried to neatly define theory by stating what theory is not and by arguing in favour of what is called "strong" theories, Weick takes a second look at what is expelled and gives it a second chance as he believes that all of these "negatives" might be crucial in the process of theorizing and "all five can serve as means to theory construction" (Weick, 1995: 387). As a consequence, Weick reconsiders references, data, lists, diagrams, and hypotheses with respect to their role in the process of theory construction and in what he calls the interim struggles that bring about theoretical approximations.

While focusing on the process of theorizing, Weick comes to highlight imagination as crucial for theory construction, broadening up the tools and tactics of theoretical practice. After all, Weick opens up the cause of theorizing beyond the usual focus on validity and values so as to stress the significance of such causes of theorizing as plausibility and beauty. In a following essay, entitled *That's moving*, Weick plays with the double meaning of moving, not only to point at his continued interest in processual theories, but to emphasize and further elaborate on the role of emotions in theorizing as these can guide us in conceiving theories that matter: "the theories that matter most are those theories that have emotional resonance" (Weick, 1999b: 134). What matters for Weick are theorists that relate understanding and living, and more roughly stated, theory and practice. Drawing on Kierkegaard and Heidegger, Weick (1999b: 135) points out that theorists should aim at narrowing "the gap between understanding and living, or between the present-to-hand stance of the spectator and the ready-to-hand stance of the agent [since they] are more likely to generate work that is judged to be moving". Weick, while translating his understanding of sensemaking processes onto theorizing, is aware of how theorizing as a process of making things explicit might distract from the experiences of a ready-to-hand engagement and alienate from the world of involved actors. Therefore, he prefers implicit theories which are not "stripped of context, situation, configuration, relational meaning, and particulars" (p. 136), which quite obviously brings him in close proximity with Lyotard's (1984) plea for little narratives. Yet, while theorizing is always closer to understanding in retrospect, his attempt is to try to close the gap with how we live forward. This requires from a theorist or researcher also listening to how those that participate in the experiences (under study) might counter our initial ideas so that "[W]hen theorists have second thoughts that affirm our original intuitions, we are moved" (p. 138). As a consequence, tactics of theorizing follow the living format of a narrative mode, focus on interrup-

tions, projects and unfolding events, and give attention to people who are oblivious to self rather than self-absorbed and "who keep showing up everyday" (p. 140).

While Weick's writing style has many times been commented as "vivid, persuasive and attractive" (Czarniawska, 2005: 268) or as "persuasive and eloquent" (Oswick, 2006: 457), his texts have also been analyzed and commented in the tradition of literary criticism (Van Maanen, 1995; Czarniawska, 2003; 2005). Van Maanen (1995) brings to the foreground the idea that theorizing is a matter of writing, and writing a matter of style, hence the title of his article: "style as theory". Ironically enough, Van Maanen launched this idea during a speech, which later became an interview (see Elsbach, 1994) and ended up as a paper in Organisation Science (Van Maanen, 1995), not without facing trouble while transforming his speech-rhetorics onto paper format. Van Maanen (1995:134) tries to break open the dull writing in organizational theory, arguing that "we cultivate and teach a writing style of nonstyle that values limited metaphor, simplicity and a formal, if not mathematical precision", in short, a writing that has become "a secondary or mop-up activity in our professional pursuits". Exploring the question "[W]hat might we learn if we were to explore *the terra incognita* of our literary practices?", Van Maanen discusses Weick's style as a form of allegorical breaching. As said, it is through breaching that Weick is questioning conventional writing practices in the forming of allegories which convey an abstract message through narrating a series of events. Van Maanen explains that such a style is enacted through writing texts in essay-form, indecisive and open-ended writing, dialectical reconstructing and using a literary tactic of presence. In that way Van Maanen pinpoints how Weick's work relies on a rather indeterminate, inexact language which is apt for accommodating the ambivalence and ambiguity of meaning and which hence is able to insert contradictory views and statements so as to sidestep definitive, closed significations.[15] Czarniawska (2005) adds to this that the use of allegories allows Weick to explore certain ideas or concepts in a, both politically and psychologically, safer way.

Czarniawska (2003) took Van Maanen's idea serious and examined more closely the styles of organization theories and theorists to understand what it means to write well in the field of organization theory. All in all, she distinguishes between six different styles, and identifies, with Weick, the poetic style which she juxtaposes with the scientistic, revolutionary, philosophical, educational, and ethnographic style. According to Czarniawska (2003: 244), Weick combines rhetoric with poetics, a combination of "a high narrative rationality and an

aesthetical satisfaction." Weick on the other hand took the liberty to take up Czarniawska's assessment and to relate his poetic style by pointing at its mundane character and by emphasizing the need for wisdom in organization studies. What makes Weick's style poetic is his belief in ideas, imagination and creation; what makes it a mundane poetics is that it is not the creation of a Grand Poet but enacted by the principle that ideas and assumptions generate their own contexts for development. The consecutive unfolding of ideas is based on the collective and connective conceptual affinities in which a writer is placed. Weick, at the occasion of an interview (Mezias, 2003), vividly described this practice, i.e. style, of theorizing by saying "I read. I imagine. I write. I edit. Whatever I read becomes a frame, a 'discipline', a gestalt, within which I start associating and connecting. Those are moves of the imagination within soft constraints" (see also Weick, 2004: 654). What also renders Weick's poetic style mundane is that he performs it in the "here and now" of Organization Studies' essay-series *Vita Contemplativa*; where he is not talking about mundane poetics but doing it, while reflecting upon how his biography is a reverberation of unfolding ideas and simultaneously effecting a beautifully and elegantly crafted essay. Furthermore, Weick is, for once, inquiring his assumptions that have come along in his evolving style of mundane poetics, such as the assumption of continuity (which includes all lived experience for reflection), the assumption of an evolutionary epistemology (which favours variation and requisite variety), the assumption of ambivalence (which exhibits the ambivalence of wisdom and the wisdom of ambivalence), the assumption of complexity (which prefers profound simplicity through moving from superficial simplicity to confused complexity), and the assumption that levels impede inquiry (and thus disregards the boundaries of levels of analysis). This sense for inclusive continuity and connectivity, this openness for variation, ambivalence and complexity is what Weick deems "responsible for producing what looks like a poetic style" (p. 665).

4 Reconnecting the aesthetics and politics of theorizing

While the following estimate might be considered an overstatement, we nevertheless tend to think of Weick's work on theorizing equally, if not more, influential to the enrichment of the organizational field if (it makes sense to be) compared to his theory of sensemaking.[16] The way we see it is that Weick initiated a focus on the process and practice of theorizing, opening up for its emotional, aesthetic and literary side. Simultaneously, we believe that a post-

[15] Weick (1999: 800) actually makes a plea against the simplicity or simplification of theory, saying, with the words of Thorngate, that "we shall never see a general, simple, accurate theory of social behaviour [...] to increase both generality and accuracy" while adding that "the complexity of our theories must necessarily be increased."

Weickian form of theorizing[17] might bring other much needed arguments – which Weick marginally or seldom explored – such as the performativity and ephemerality of language, and the politics of theorizing and writing, which form the "typical" omissions from a too close association of theorizing with sensemaking. In some way, we have to re-echo Walter-Busch's argument of apparent conservatism, and explain why the kind of theorizing practices Weick describes are never neutral. As Weick, using Rorty, leads us away from understanding theorizing as representing to theorizing as coping, theories remain forms of representation[18] (or coping for that matter) and hence of reduction (Lyotard, 1993), which do not serve everyone's interests in an equal way. Rather than to see theorizing as sensemaking, we think that post-Weickian theorizing needs to be seen as an ambivalent and resisting inscription, which requires stressing that the literary aspect of writing might and should question and shock the lifeworld of actors and which in its re-presentative aspect might miss out on democratic theorizing.

What makes the difference between Weickian and post-Weickian is a matter of inheriting Weick's legacy imaginatively. Reading how Weick theorizes about theorizing, he never mentions his own life-world, context or connectedness. Theorizing, however, cannot be done outside the respective context, and independent of the given contingencies and connections of everyday life (at universities as elsewhere). Writing the history of theory and remembering the past of theorizing requires both a sensitivity towards the changing preferences and priority-setting of the day and the many accidental and deliberate omissions which have the effect rendering certain theories and texts fashionable while engendering that others are forgotten. What has changed in this respect over the last two decennia is an inquiry into the (everyday) processes of science production that makes one at once aware of the material and political processes involved. In the wake of "the avalanche of social constructionist explorations of different sciences as themselves local, contingent organization of knowledge" (Roberts & Mackenzie, 2006: 157) and its variation of social and cultural explanations of science production, scientific activity is considered to be meshed with political, financial, commercial and popular cultural processes wherefore it has lost both its neutral and elitist stance of knowledge production. Although Weick contributed to demystify science and to bring it back to an eve-

[16] Without diminishing the importance of how the interpretive perspective has set the tone in organizational theory in the 80's and 90's, it is clear that many alternative perspectives have come about.

[17] Note that the notion of ‚post', though pointing at a historical period after the seminal work of Weick, is not to be read as the sort of 'after' which speaks of the "fashionable newness, a keeping up with fashion" (Jones & Surman, 2002).

[18] "Theorizing […] is nothing less, nothing more, and nothing other than its practices of representation" (Clegg & Hardy, 2006:432).

ryday practice, we might learn from those studies that scientific activity is to be seen as local, particular and contingent, and, for that reason, try to study everyday processes of science in action, depending on "the local and practical interactions in which we are presently engaging" (Latour, 1994: 50).

While Weick, due to his focus on practices, clearly questions the objective and superior stance through which scientific activity is installing its power, his focus on lived experience is insufficiently sensitive towards the fact that not all lived experience is equally represented. In this way, it seems to leave that decision dependent on the discretion of the researcher rather than to inquire into the political, commercial and institutional pressures that favour certain themes, theories and outcomes of researching. While it remains refreshing to have someone like Weick in the field who so strongly believes in the power of idea generation and acts almost immune to the centripetal forces surrounding him, it is increasingly difficult to neglect how universities and business schools, as the contexts in which we spend a large part of our lives, tend to disfavour theorizing of the poetic kind. Being trapped by the performativity modus, built in the ever-increasing importance of rankings, ratings and evaluation systems, all too many things, and not just the imaginative and new, are being disqualified as useless. Even if Weick makes allusions to the "disciplined" dimension of theorizing, we claim that giving it a Foucauldian power-knowledge "twist" might be inspirational to the extent that it pinpoints how academic subjectivity is probably less based on sensemaking than on appropriating, resisting and re-imagining discursive knowledge systems and thus on inquiring our relation to truth and how we are subjectivated (i.e. rendered objects of discourse) by those truths. We will therefore suggest looking more closely in the resistant side of theorizing (see also Dey & Steyaert, 2007) as we highlight its literary and representative dimension.

While it has been mentioned that Weick's style clearly breaks with the given code of academic enunciation, it must not be forgotten that style rather than content has often been the cause of severe, hostile reactions. For instance, both Lyotard and Derrida convincingly argued that their critics have been agitated more by their styles of writing than by the actual topics or claims they have been dealing with. To give an example: Derrida (2003: 17) mentions that "[t]hey are angry at my texts more than anything else, and I think it is because of the way I write – not the content, or the thesis. They say that I do not obey the usual rules of rhetoric, grammar, demonstration, and argumentation. […] As it is, they start to get involved but feel that it's not that easy, that to read my texts they have to change the rules, to read differently, if only at another rhythm." It would, however, be a fallacy to believe Derrida's and others' texts could be transformed into a more conservative form of representation without any loss of sub-

stance, since how a text is written and what it says or, better, what it does invariably go together. More importantly though is the observation that style is key for enabling something new. Weick's plea for imaginative theorizing, so it seems, cannot get along with an extended consideration of style, since "[t]o displace what is given can only be the result of a shock: we must shake up the balanced mass of words, pierce the layer, disturb the linked order of the sentences, break the structures of the language" (Barthes, 1986: 213). If we take this to heart, it is Deleuze's (1997) notion of 'stuttering' which illuminates how language, by being pushed to its limit, becomes more subtle, experimental and thus is no longer "defined by what is says, even by what makes it a signifying thing, but by what causes it to move, to flow and to explode – desire" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983: 133). Deleuze and Guattari (1987) could literally have been reflecting Weick's writing style as they convincingly argue that all textual performances require a certain inexactness, or better, anexactness, since "in order to designate something exactly, anexact expressions are utterly unavoidable. Not at all because it is a necessary step, or because one can only advance by approximations: anexactitude is in no way an approximation; on the contrary, it is the exact passage of that which is under way" (p. 20). Arguably, such a demand might appear farfetched and too philosophical for being considered in organizational theory. In the spirit of a brief retrospective, we would like to render evident that Deleuze and Guattari's gospel has actually already been spread in the realm of organizational theory by Van Maanen (1995: 139) who mentions that "it seems to me that the more we try to be precise and exact, the less we are able to say and that the harder we try to follow a rigorous […] system, the more we are tempted to fill it out with uninspired observation […] This state of affairs recommends that we put our theories forward with an awareness of a haunting irony: To be determinate, we must be indeterminate."

Concurring with Deleuze and Guattari as well as with Van Maanen, we thus contend that it is this openness for the i/anexact that makes writing risky and dangerous. In line with Derrida's statement that writing can be considered a pharmakon, at once a poison and a remedy, writing always brings along an ambiguity that cannot be controlled. Writing is indeterminous as textuality "is by nature absolutely heterogeneous and is constantly composing with the forces that then annihilate it" (Derrida, 1981: 81). Writing has in our view to be acclaimed not only in a literary but also in a political sense, since "the future can only be anticipated in the form of an absolute danger" (Derrida, 1976: 4). While style can be said to be a literary concept, its aesthetic basis cannot be disconnected from an inherently political orientation. While this might appear as a truism, and therefore not worth of further consideration, it has to be repeated that several scholars have pleaded for a "return to the political" in the field of or-

ganization theory (De Cock & Jeanes, 2006) since there is always an eagerness for depoliticization. As Jones (2003: 514) observed that "[d]espite the continuing importance of ethics, justice and politics to Derrida and Lyotard, these are generally *not* the things that they been known for when they have been imported into organization studies" (italics in original). Especially with regard to the aesthetical turn in organization theory, Warren and Rehn (2006) have indicated how the oppressive potential of art has been neglected, driven by an uncritical acceptance of art and aesthetics. The hallelujah chorus is so overwhelmingly loud that "the critical voice that started the whole aesthetic movement in management and organization studies in the first place" can hardly be heard (Warren & Rehn, 2006: 82). For instance, in reviewing the relationship between theatre and organization, Beyes and Steyaert (2006) made clear that in the use of the ever more popular "organization as theatre" metaphor, the sting is many times removed and the dangerous quality of the theatric aesthetic is domesticated.

That theorizing is also and invariably a form of re-presenting (and repressing) has been rendered intelligible in Deleuze's concept of the minor (literature). Connecting to both what has been said before about artistic invention and in relation to Deleuze's notion of stuttering, we would like to add that this implies not only an argument about the imaginative force of style but also about its political implications. That is to say that in artistic experimentation it is impossible to separate the formal aspect from the political in any strict sense. The political aspect of novel ways of language use becomes obvious not least against the background of Rose's (1990: 80) telling assertion that all "government depends on a particular mode of 're-presentation': the elaboration of a language for depicting the domain in question that claims both to grasp the nature of that reality represented, and literally to represent it in a form amenable to political deliberation, argument and scheming." Where it is obvious that imaginative styles necessarily violate given conventions, it further needs to be borne in mind that those conventions have a social rooting in power/knowledge and ideology, and are thus brought about and protected by certain interest groups, not to say classes. This brings us back to Deleuze and Guattari (1986) who have come to talk of minor literature to emphasize experiments with language that ignore canonical models, and thus enable modes of expression for minorities as "defined by their position of subordination in power relations" (Bogue, 2005: 119). What is implied in this work is that the representation of minorities requires textual practices which involve the subversion of dominant, i.e. politically enforced, discourses and worldviews, though not through downright opposition but by the deterriorialization of major language. While blending the aesthetic and the political, minor literature is chiefly about giv-

ing voice to minorities, hence re-presenting, as well as about using the variations of language to enable "possibilities for collective self-invention" (Bogue, 2005: 119).

What follows from this is the question of who is respectively represented or ignored (i.e. deliberately made present or absent; see Law, 2004) within particular forms of (organizational) theorizing. The idea of minor literature, in other words, hints at the fact that organizational theory is not only built on and dominated by certain towering figures, but is also written from a particular cultural, political and ideological position. What is conjured up here is the question of whether the authorities of organizational theory can legitimately speak for the other, for the subaltern (see Spivak, 1988)[19], or for the silent mass of minority groups at large. To be sure, notions of 'minorities' and 'the other' should not lead to the conclusion that we are speaking of a small number of people or groups here, since majorities and minorities are not determined by sheer number but by their relative positions in power relations. By implication, it must be borne in mind that the users and producers of major Organization Theory thus make up an illustrious, elitist group of mainly Caucasian, male, English-native scholars that set the tone, i.e. enforce order by categorizing, structuring and coding this academic territory. What follows from this is a political immediacy which chiefly entails the postcolonial critique that academic forms of representation figure an undeniable ethnocentric, i.e. Euro-American, bias (see f.i. Said, 1978). Hence, where representation goes hand in hand with processes of marginalization and silencing, the question that becomes pressing is what (i.e. what voices, interests, etc.) lies behind the seemingly calm and even language game of organizational theory. What is at stake, then, is to bear witness to differends (Lyotard, 1988), i.e. those players being silenced in the language game of organizational theory. Hence, instead of disciplining the field by limiting its (paradigmatic) scope, as Pfeffer (1993) suggested elsewhere, it might be much wiser to proliferate the language games and thus enable the expression and phrasing of the conflicts within and between discursive regimes and thus to maintain the unresolved or, better, unresolvable status of organizational theory. Having said this, we would like to refer to the potential of paralogy, a term borrowed from Lyotard (1984), which conceives the multiplication of language games as an antidote to totalitarian discourse (i.e. metanarratives), since it can be seen as a principle that "refines our sensitivity to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable" (Lyotard, 1984: xxv). Where it is evident that paralogy entails both a political and an ethical argument, we would like to particularly emphasize that

[19] The danger of speaking in the name of the other has been discussed by Czarniawska (1999) with regard to the concept of polyphony. Calás and Smircich (2003) try to deal with these inequalities by discussing the postcolonial-technology-feminist nexus. Some authors have indeed pointed out how colonized organisation studies is, how it inhabits national(istic) tendencies and is far away from a kind of transnational theorizing.

paralogy calls for a cultivation of dissensus and thus of the abandonment of the "obsession with consensus and convergence that characterizes much of the work carried out by the Academy of Management" (Hardy, 2002; quoted in De Cock & Jeanes, 2006: 20). Importantly, dissensus here is not conceived as the expression of "everything goes", which Walter-Busch categorically rejected, but of the belief that representational practices are not merely a "rational debate between multiple interests but, simultaneously, the struggle for one's voice to be heard and recognized as that of a legitimate partner in the mainstream of the field" (De Cock & Jeanes, 2006: 26). Our emphasis on dissensus should not be interpreted as a return to a war-like conception of "practicing" academics but as an invitation to learn the art of conversation and (Bakhtinian) dialogue that actively deals with the centripetal and centrifugal forces in speaking, i.e with the forces which either try to dominate, fix and freeze meaning or give way to plurivocality and hence resist the "ossification and stagnation of thought" (De Cock & Jeanes, 2006: 23).

Moreover, to aim for dissensus might require a form of academic activism that works either through direct provocation, as Clegg (2006) demonstrates in a very convincing way by calling organization theory "ignorant", through social engagement as Bohm (2006) does in switching academic conferences for social summits, or through aesthetic engagement as Steyaert and Hjorth (2002) do by performatively refocusing the narrow scope of the academic conference back to its public "essence". Especially the reconnection to a wider audience by altering one's style, form and arena of writing and (re)presenting conveys a promise that has been tried out too little, even though this might entail the danger of becoming a-theoretical (see Parker, 2002). However, the accusation of a-theoretical epistemes seems to lurk around the corner only if we subscribe to a view of theorizing that tries to put forward the truth (singular) in a seemingly objective, neutral fashion. If one on the other hand embraces the possibility of multiple truths, and thus sees theorizing as a process that gives way to a set of dilemmas to be lived with, then the door stands wide open to a plethora of stylistic choices, each carrying value in its own right. As implied in the principle of dissensus, the aim would no longer be to subscribe to preordained views of what theory is and hence to simply accept the prescribed paradigms within a given discipline, but to broaden the range of our inquiries and speculations and cultivate a kind of affirmative activism through which we can "play truant – no more school at all" (Serres & Latour, 1995: 100). What comes into sight once we leave our school, organization theory that is, behind is for instance everything which falls into the range of art (though we don't want to establish a another premature territorialization here).

Mentioning art it needs to be added right away that it is Foucault (1984b) who once wondered why we turn everything into a work of art while habitually ignoring that our own lives could equally be made the object of artistic (re)invention. We argue, by the same token, for the extension of Foucault's generic principle to the stubbornly over-codified language use (i.e. degree zero style; see Barthes, 1967) of organizational theory. That is to say that one has to gain a fair understanding of the historical conditions and the specified rules of a given practice, in order then to "make harder those acts which are now too easy" so that when "people begin to no longer be able to think things the way they have been thinking them, transformation becomes at the same time very urgent, very difficult and entirely possible" (Foucault, 2000b: 456). It becomes obvious, then, that Weick was quite advanced and knowing in this regard, since he was well aware about the existing limits (of the mainstream) and how he could shift existing boundaries while at the same time sidestepping the traps and pitfalls within the academic apparatus which could have brought his verve and imagination to a halt. Though Weick can hardly be labelled a political activist, or even a rebel, it may not be exaggerated to say that he pursued a progressive politics (Foucault, 1996b) in that he recognized the historical conditions and the specified rules of practice of his 'habitat', i.e. organizational theory, while nonetheless impressing his seal on the field, as it were.

Summarizing the above, we tend to conceive theorizing as being able to connect the imaginative and the deconstructive, the creative and the resistant, the aesthetic and the political. Theorizing is as much inheriting as heresy, and though we exclude the necessity of an absolute break with tradition, theorizing 'to come' clearly requires that we "embark on a project of persistently reconsidering (picking over) its past" (Jones & Surman, 2002: 188). Theorizing, by implication, is a matter of creating concepts but also of bringing them into contexts in a generative way so that they are heard, discussed and, most fundamentally, experimented with. Thus creating concepts and engendering paralogy (see Czarniawska, 2001; Jones, 2003) appears to us as a promising endeavor for making and allowing for new connections to be made in organizational theory. But once again, the aim here is not to impose onto the field some fixed semiotic coordinates, of the kind we have alluded to in Walter-Busch's book, but to establish theory as something (not *some thing*) which we should live with and by, i.e. which affects people's lives (and not only their cultural capital, read status).

5 Re-editing Walter-Busch's *Organisationstheorien*

If Walter-Busch were to write his book on *Organisationstheorien* today or to produce a re-edited version, it might be called *from Whitehead to Wilson*. If organization theory has opened

up for the philosophical, the literary and the aesthetical, it is clear that its "traditional" sociological (e.g. Weber) or social psychological (e.g. Weick) basis, not to say bias, has been broadened by many different disciplines. Bringing in Whitehead (rather than Weber) might indicate how Weick's influence has been used in conceiving organizing processes through process-philosophy and how he has moved the concept of organizing towards the idea of organizational becoming (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002). To put Wilson on the other side is to acknowledge the aesthetic turn in organization studies (which Weick equally stimulated) and to make reference to one of its main instigators, Guillet de Monthoux's (2004) book ranging from Wagner to Wilson. Maybe Walter-Busch can save himself the trouble and consider a recent book, entitled Contemporary Organization Theory (Jones & Munro, 2005). There one finds a couple of striking similarities, which makes Walter-Busch's book exemplary for such contemporary attempts that "organize" organization theory as the one Jones and Munro present. First of all, Walter-Busch focuses on theory and on the history of theorizing, connecting organization theory with social theory. While the book of Walter-Busch is maybe still an epigone in the history of organization theory which "flows from a series of over-reactions to the initial attempts of Marx, Weber and Durkheim to set up organization in a particular way" (Jones & Munro, 2005: 3), Jones and Munro broaden the scope considerably. They distinguish between scholars who (might) consider themselves organization theorists (such as Clegg or Weick), those who have written directly on organization (such as Bauman or Negri) and those whose writings have implications for organization (such as Butler or Serres). Even if this scope is maybe too philosophically inclined for Walter-Busch's taste, Jones and Munro's idea of making a strong connection between organization and social theory is strikingly similar. Secondly, Walter-Busch, in the tradition of sociology, organizes his overview through authors. Notorious, in our assessment, are the kind of overloaded overview schemes of theorists (for an example, see pages 55 and 60 in Walter-Busch, 1996) where apparent completeness and downright authority (as revealed through unaccounted selections and omissions) form an important virtue, and which give the (false) impression that names represent a concise and coherent body of theory. In a similar vein, Jones and Munro focus on authors, producing a series from Agamben to Zizek, to counter the fact that organization theory does not know the tradition "in which advances in theory take place in relation to the work of contemporary writers" (p. 10) as one knows this in many other disciplines in the social sciences. There is, however, also a crucial distinction between the two books in that Jones and Munro are not interested in the author as such, but draw upon what they call "the fiction of the author" as a convenient symbol that allows them to re-appropriate the authors, respectively their

concepts, in novel territories and thus inquire "how much further we can move and think with them; even also beyond them" (p. 10). Obviously then, Jones and Munro see no direct linearity, and even less causality, between the author and his/her concept and therefore do not see these authors as the originators of the concepts[20] but as conceptual personae, thus drawing upon Deleuze and Guattari's idea of formulating a code of personal style and sensibility so as to express the core of apt theorizing. A final aspect worth pointing at refers to Walter-Busch's (1996: v) eagerness to force readers to go to the original text (i.e. "Originaltextprinzip"). While Jones and Munro would not subscribe to the idea of the original (and thus of the origin; see Foucault, 1984), they are equally sensitive not to develop theories through secondary readings and to counter a common tendency in organization studies to engage with "lazy ways of theorizing" (p. 9). Our honest guess is that what Walter-Busch mostly abhorred is lazy scholarship, used as he was himself to read, to think, to make notes, to reflect, to write, to read, book after book, again and again.

Though we appreciate the virtue of reading, we would at the same time, and in line with Foucault's (1996) *The masked philosopher*, call for a year, a decade or even a century without authors, thus giving primacy to concepts, to the curiosity and desire they set in motion and to the question of how our relationship to them enables transformative experiences. In this way, we seek to put the question (and not the author) centre stage, since "the question is the desire for thought" (Blanchot, 1993: 12) and reading, less than being a way to acquire and, consequently, possess a certain body of knowledge, becomes a process of continual questioning and re-thinking given certitudes. Despite the truism that all questions await an answer (Blanchot, 1993) and though Deleuze (1994:158) reminds us that '(w)e are led to believe that the activity of thinking […] begins only with the search for solutions', we are called upon to suspense the immediate demand for solutions and to conceive reading as a practice which keeps thought open, which retains the liberty of the question (Derrida, 2005) and which, most fundamentally, acknowledges that all answers remain in force only as long as they are "rooted in questioning" (Heidegger, 1971: 71). It remains to say that in our double task to keep the aesthetics and the politics of theorizing 'in force', we would like to finish by giving over to Derrida's (1995: 239) eloquent claim that "[t]he only attitude […] I would absolutely condemn is one which, directly or indirectly, cuts off the possibility of an essentially interminable questioning, that is, an effective and thus transforming questioning."

[20] In addition, they do not hold the view that a given author takes only "one position, unchanged and fixed" (p. 2). This further opens up the possibility that an author changes his/her mind over time and, consequently, that author and concept reveal aparallel evolutions. To illustrate this dynamic through Foucault (2000): "I never think quite the same thing, because

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for me my books are experiences [...] Each book transforms what I was thinking when I finished the previous book" (pp. 239-240). Foucault, so it seems, claimed dissensus the right, if not duty, of someone who writes.

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