This is a repository copy of *Textual flâneurie : writing management with Walter Benjamin*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/148457/

Version: Published Version

Article:
Kociatkiewicz, J. orcid.org/0000-0001-6449-1185 and Kostera, M. (2019) Textual flâneurie : writing management with Walter Benjamin. Ephemera : Theory and Politics in Organization, 19 (1). pp. 163-178. ISSN 2052-1499

Reuse
This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs (CC BY-NC-ND) licence. This licence only allows you to download this work and share it with others as long as you credit the authors, but you can't change the article in any way or use it commercially. More information and the full terms of the licence here: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/

Takedown
If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

ephemera
theory & politics in organization

© the author(s) 2019
ISSN 1473-2866 (Online)
ISSN 2052-1499 (Print)
www.ephemerajournal.org
volume 19(1): 163-178

Textual *flâneurie*: Writing management with Walter Benjamin

Jerzy Kociatkiewicz and Monika Kostera

Flâneur

The world's an untranslatable language
without words or parts of speech.
It's a language of objects
Our tongues can't master,
but which we are the ardent subjects of.
If tree is tree in English,
and albero in Italian,
That's as close as we can come
To divinity, the language that circles the earth
and which we'll never speak. (Wright, 2010)

Textual *flâneurie* and the Benjaminian *dérive*

To be a *flâneur* means following flows and unobvious pathways, finding doors where walkways close. Textual *flâneurie*, for us, centres on following the poetic, dream thrust of historical texts, rather than focusing on the rational, argument-building level, while still embracing their literal, face value meaning. It is attentive yet freely wandering, as can happen in texts just as much as in physical space.

Walter Benjamin (1940/1969) picked up the idea of the *flâneur* from Charles Baudelaire, 'the *prince*, who is everywhere in possession of his incognito' (Baudelaire, n.d., as quoted in Benjamin, 1940/69: 40), depicting him as a passionate spectator, moving around amongst movement, setting up house midway, following the infinite flow of the city. The *flâneur* is strolling freely but attentively, he is the philosopher and the chronicler of the city:

> The street becomes a dwelling for the *flâneur;* he is as much at home among the facades of houses as a citizen is in his four walls. To him the shiny, enamelled signs of businesses are as least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to a bourgeois in his salon. The walls are the desk against which he presses his notebooks; newsstands are his libraries and the terraces of the cafés are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done. (Benjamin, 1940/1969: 37)

The *flâneur* is intoxicated by the crowd, and driven by (or perhaps to) all-encompassing empathy: with the crowd, for sure, but also with the city, the organic and inorganic surroundings. It is an empathy entailing adaptation and in that, she (see Wolff, 1985 and, to a lesser extent, Elkin, 2015, for a discussion of some possible implications of adopting a female-gendered *flâneuse* perspective) resembles commodity: she is possessed by everyone and everything she comes in contact with, and possession is a relation of commerce as much as of spirituality.

And yet the *flâneur* is not a passive stroller; rather, the experience heightens her consciousness: the intoxication of the crowd is as enlightening as it is disempowering: it makes her aware of the intricacies of the social reality. She is walking against commoditization:

> The more conscious he becomes of his mode of existence, the more imposed upon him by the system of production, the more he proleterianizes himself, the more he will be gripped by the chill of the commodity economy and the less he will feel like empathizing with commodities. (Benjamin, 1940/1969: 58)

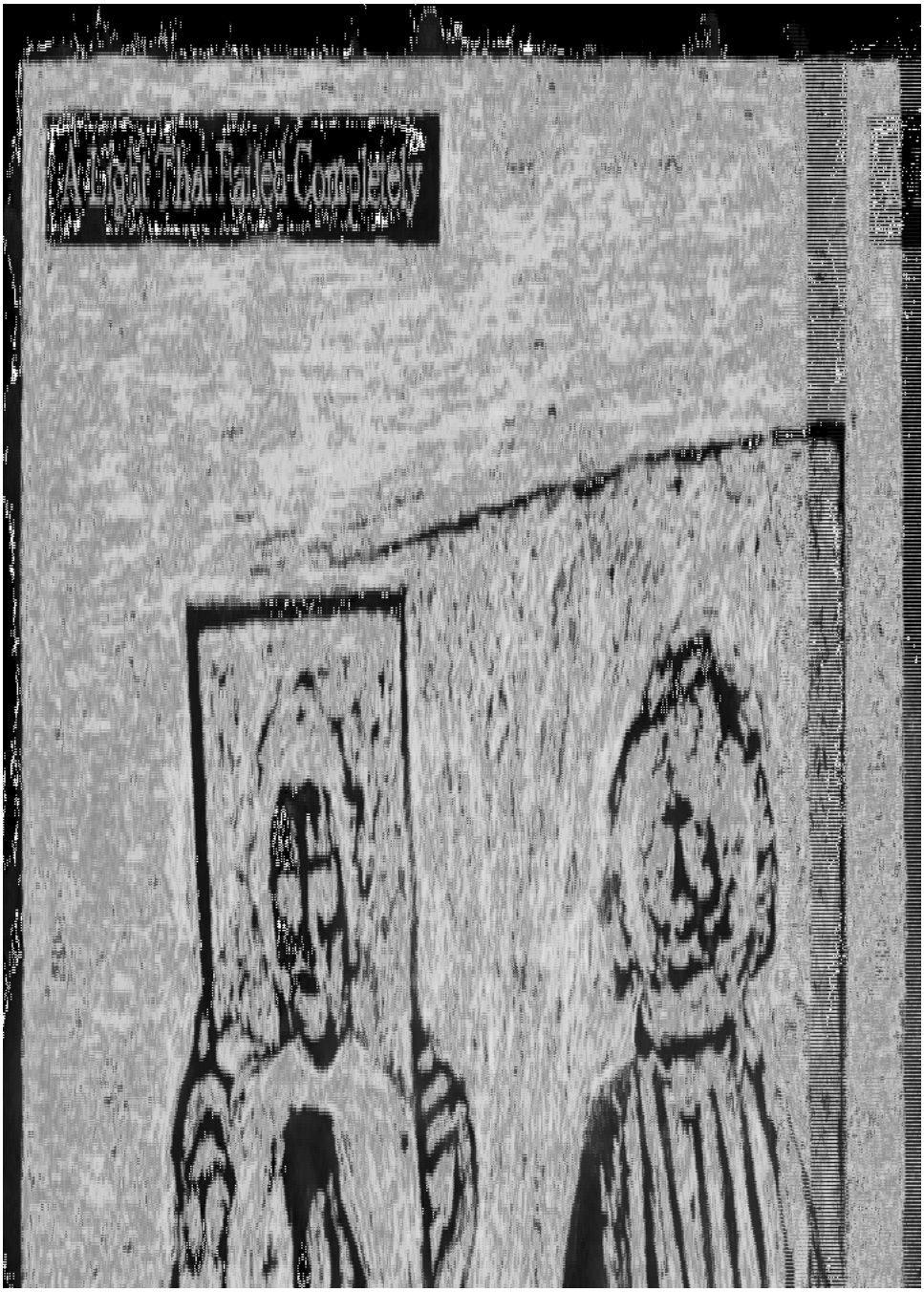
The *flâneur* relates to things and to experiences of city life, to the margins of modernity, and she becomes a bearer of resistance. However, she does not challenge or confront injustice. Instead, she walks towards awareness, an awakening: the moment when the past and the present connect. Wherever she walks, she keeps looking back, the past is present for her as she releases, by her movement, the city's memory, and provokes back to life what is seemingly lost (Benjamin, 1940/1999a).

In this text, we strive to become just such *flâneurs*, but instead of strolling around in the streets of a city, we embark on a journey through historical texts (Richter, 2002). Like Benjamin, we abandon ourselves in our wandering and we read what we encounter retrospectively, 'against the production process' (Benjamin, 1940/1999b: 472). Benjamin himself used the method of *flâneurie* to read and interpret texts. Reading historical texts, he saw history as written by victors and yet full of false closures (Benjamin, 1940/2005). He retained the possibility of its redemptive re-reading and re-conceptualization by the reader, one intent on seeing and understanding it against the main currents.

Also in management the narrative of the victors is known as the foundational texts, built on the ideological foundations of managerialism, used to justify injustice, inequality and to legitimize cruelty (Parker, 2002). It is a linear text, and a lethal one, as *linearity kills* (Burrell, 1997). Winner's tale discourse purges management of such aspects of organizing as beauty and creation, replacing them with artificial and sterile notions such as 'value' and 'creative enterprise' (Kostera, 2014). But we believe, with Walter Benjamin (1940/2005), that ideas can be redeemed, that nothing is completely lost and that the past can still be set alive again, through the force of attentive redemption.

In cities, as in texts, time is central for narratives, and the choice of time to follow can lead a *flâneur* to the superficial or to the free, marginal stream. Walter Benjamin (1940/2005) reveals how dead, linear time, as measured by calendars and clocks, external to human experience, is produced by capitalism. Such time is the inheritance of Scientific Management and its obsession with time measurement and planning, its time and motion studies, its conveyor belt organization of work. It is empty time, a managed construct. As a contrast, Benjamin presents messianic time: filled, immediate, experienced. It is here that meaning left behind in history can be retrieved and redeemed. Messianic moments are hidden underneath linear time, a potential revolution waiting to be seen and regained: in and through them empty time can be transformed into the experienced, living time. This is a revolutionary moment present in history, in all things, awaiting redemption. The revolutionary reader of history is sensitive to those moments, always ready to pick them up and give them a voice, instead of focusing on retelling the linear story, as the foundational texts does. This is a radically different use of ideas, time, and space, distinct from what is taken for granted or fashionable, the conformist truth. Ideas can be redeemed by disconnecting them from what seems to be the right way of telling their story.

Following messianic moments in texts, reading them against the stream of the winner's tale, but without deconstructing them or reading them against the authors, is what we call textual *flâneurie*. Instead of deconstruction, as method of focusing attention on the meanings in the text, we use the situationist approach to attentive walking. Situationist International used a special kind of *flâneurie* as an artistic and political methodology. The *flâneur* is driven by desire to wander planlessly, which can have a decadent or a radical expression. Thinking how to capture the latter, Debord proposed the method of the *dérive*, a walk directed by architecture and geography, typically in the margins of a city, which is an active forming of a relationship between the walker and the terrain (Wark, 2015). The *dérive* is the radical proposition: it is propelled not just by imagination and curiosity of other meanings, but it is undertaken in order to resist the mainstream, and in particular – capitalism. We now embark upon a journey in some of the


A Lost That Failed Completely

foundational texts of management, taking the *dérive* rather than the linear main drift that has been created by the forceful readings of the winning stream.

The *dérive*, or why walk against the winner's tale

Walking and reading against capitalism means, first of all, forceful re-appropriation of time. Guy Debord (1977: 143) warned that time has been appropriated by capital and separated from the collective organization of life and work:

> the bourgeoisie unveiled irreversible historical time and impose d it on society only to deprive society of its use. Once there was history, but 'there is no longer any history' because the class of owners of the economy, who cannot break with economic history, must repress any other use of irreversible time as representing an immediate threat to itself.

It means resisting capitalism which to fill up the narrative. Capitalism ostentatiously fills up everything, it claims the material as well as the immaterial reality; it claims the spirit, the conscience as well as the status of hope available for humanity (Benjamin, 1921/1996). And yet, Benjamin (1940/2005) posits, there still exists messianic time that lies outside capitalism, in a space the latter had left empty (Benjamin, 1940/2005). It is neglected and invisible, but retains the active potential of ungluing the present from the 'inevitable' future. By reclaiming and redeeming the past, we are thus able to release a new future, though not the one currently inevitable, or extrapolated, or contained within the present. A future outside of certainty. Benjamin's messianic future, instead, connects with histories underneath the surface, the underground of time and experience. The messianic moment is a radical alternative to ordinary, conformist sensemaking; it works simultaneously across temporal boundaries, in the present, the future and the past, giving new meanings to history and offering new possibilities for times to come. If it is a kind of progress, then it is a subversive one, the domain of poetics and not rhetoric, as Heather Höpfl (1994) explained: an openness to the empty spaces, the unlocking of horizons, the smashing of categorizations, which helps one see the unrealized possibilities hidden by the obscuring walls of historical inevitability.

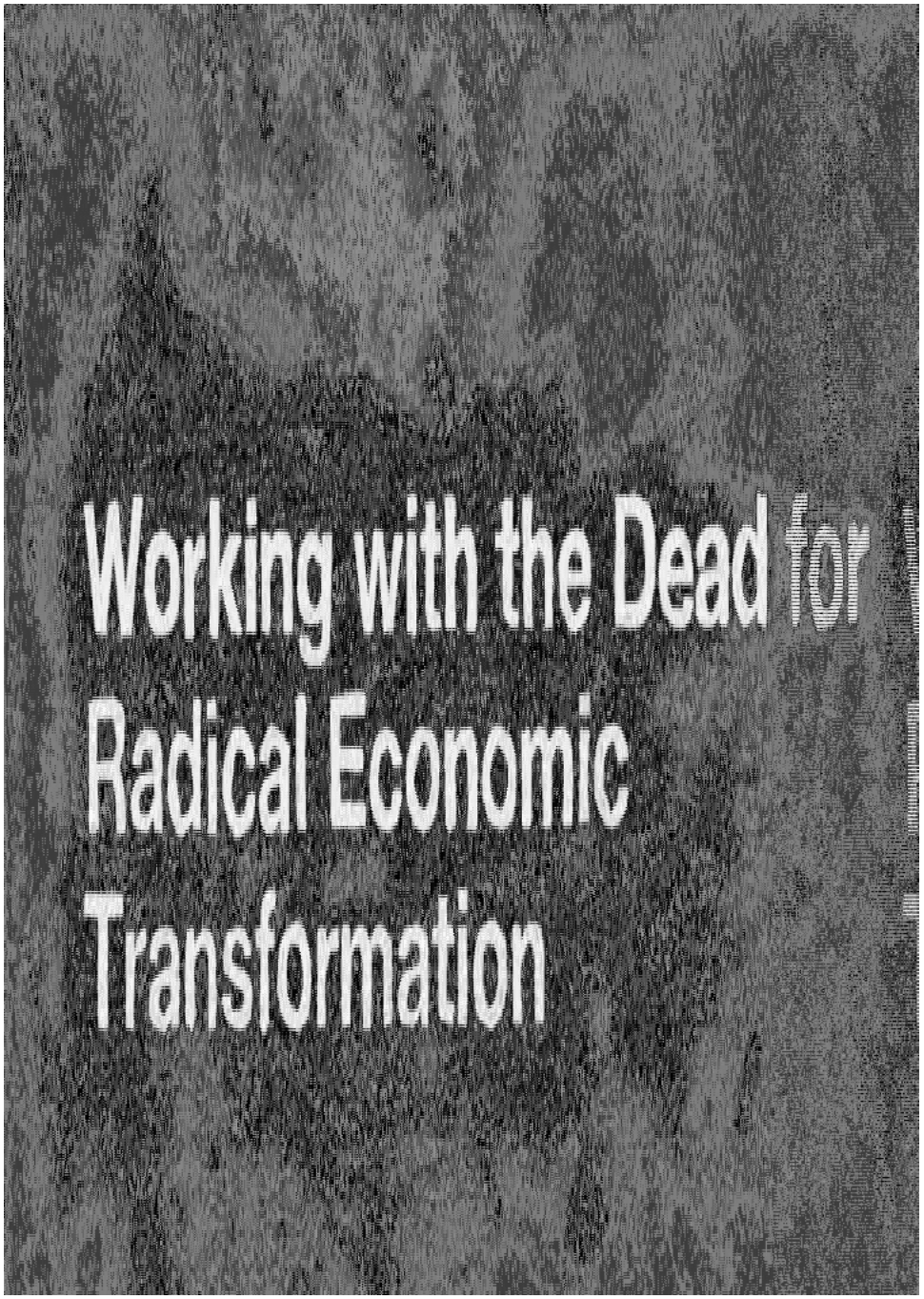
Walter Benjamin (1940/2005) believed that history has been rendered meaningless, but can be made comprehensible again from the point of view of redemption. Everything: the material, tradition, can be rescued by the radical historian. Disconnecting the story, so that what is regarded as obvious and taken for granted is pushed aside to liberate the messianic moment hidden underneath, makes it possible to reveal the sparks of hope concealed in history by an act of

retroactive realization of underground potentials. The revolution has already happened: it is hidden in the messianic moments of the past (Benjamin, 1940/2005), in the empty spaces of the poetic conventionally regarded as the background to black text of rhetoric (Höpfl, 1994). We should liberate tradition from the dead conformism of rightful memory, use it anew, in a distinctly new way, disconnecting it from the story that envelopes and controls time. Benjamin assures us that this can be done even in capitalist contexts. History can be read again, radically, bringing redemption through repetition or re-enactment of potentials betrayed by the narrative of the victors. We embark on this textual voyage to meet messianic moments of management and to release its ghosts.

This might require partaking in what Kevin Orr (2014) deems the morbid turn in organization studies: using the metaphor of death to shine light on organizational life. It is the point where Slavoj Zizek unleashes the undead, proposing that 'primordial immortality is that of evil: evil is something which threatens to return forever, a spectral dimension which magically survives its physical annihilation and continues to haunt us' (2008: 64). In Zizek's reading, Benjamin attempts to 'retroactively redeem the potentialities of past failed revolutions and to actualize the still insisting claims of the undead of history' (Khatib, 2010: 15). We, however, choose to take a different path and instead look for ghosts, or ideas that still can speak for themselves, which possess an agency and a truth that can be redeemed in messianic time. We follow the path in Benjamin's texts traced by Gerhard Richter (2002: 5) and take upon ourselves another task:

> The task of the reader who takes this ghostliness seriously is not to undo or exorcise these ghosts – by explaining away difficult textual passages, seen as a provocation or an embarrassment to the hermeneuticist – but rather to learn to think through what they have given us to consider, even when this task cannot find universal ground or metaphysical foundations manifested in transparent language, stable political programs, and factual certainty.

In doing so, we read Benjamin's texts themselves from the point of view of a textual *flâneur*, stepping out of readings subsequently construed as the main current, retaining our own radical perspective but without any deconstructive intent. Thus we encounter a ghostly dimension in Benjamin's writings, one that allows us to bypass common sense in facing the social, yet which does not distance us from the empirical, the immediately experienced. We retain our love for the text and respect for its authors, even is ours is a subversive reading. Sometimes, therefore, in order to resume the responsibility of the real, we may have to read its demands against the grain. As Benjamin teaches us, 'Only he who has made his dialectical peace with the world in the moment of deciding can comprehend what is concrete. But to him who wishes to make that decision "on the basis of the facts", these facts will


Working with the Dead for
Radical Economic
Transformation

refuse to offer themselves' [*werden diese Fakten ihre Hand nicht bieten*] (Benjamin, n.d., as quoted in Richter, 2000: 70).

It takes imagination to read a text in this way. This is a radical proposition, as it coincides with a revolutionary trail. The path of liberation from late capitalism necessarily leads through the liberation of imagination, as has been pointed by our numerous authors (to list just a few: Bauman, 2011; Fleming, 2015; Graeber, 2015; Kostera, 2014; Shukaitis, 2009). We are ghost busters, but travelling companions of the ghosts in the texts, setting them free as we walk, opening up for different routes for them in the greater text of thee management discourse.

Our main companion is the ghost of Walter Benjamin. Hand in hand with him we embark on a *dérive* in historical management texts, to give voice to the founding mothers and fathers of management, release their ghosts from the grip of the victors' history narration, set them free of the implications they are associated with in the plots dictated by the foundational texts. We wish to let them speak for themselves in the messianic time of an epoch that we now see dying or dead already, to seek redemption for their ideas, as well as, perhaps, point towards possible ways of learning management beyond capitalism. It is a side which may yet give us something we have long lost.

We choose to go back to the founders because we believe that they have something very valuable to give us in terms of learning, something that is as far away as possible from the main rational discourse: the dreams. As Walter Benjamin said, 'every epoch has such a side turned toward dreams, the child's side' (1940/1999b: 388). It is that side we now intend to visit, guided by the ghosts.

Meeting the ghosts

The *dérive* takes us back in time, as in Christina Vantzou's (2014) beautiful song, we are *going backwards to recover that which was left behind*. Here, management ceases to be something taken for granted. It is just about to become recognizable as a distinct profession as well as an academic discipline. This happens in the early years of the twentieth century (Jacques, 1996; Shenhav, 1999), with significant groundwork being laid already in the late nineteenth century. Consequently, both scholars and practitioners from that heroic era have been present in management textbooks and management imagination to the present day, imagined as the very giants on whose shoulders the present state of management scholarship rests (or, indeed, as the culprits responsible for the failures of managerial thought). It is not our aim to recount the platitudes of managerial fixity, available to the reader in any of the first five textbooks found upon entering an academic bookstore (a claim we

have empirically verified). But freed from the constraints of their historical role, the ghosts of the founding figures voice notions completely opposed to the idea of management as a dehumanizing system of rules designed solely for the maximization of shareholders' profit.

Frederick Taylor, originator of the notion of scientific management, emerges as a revolutionary advocate of cooperation between workers, managers, and enterprise owners:

> Scientific management does not exist and cannot exist until there has been a complete mental revolution on the part of the workmen working under it, as to their duties toward themselves and toward their employees, and a complete mental revolution in the outlook for employers, toward their duties, toward themselves and toward their workmen [consisting of substituting] friendly cooperation and mutual helpfulness for antagonism and strife. (Taylor, 2002: n.p.)

Taylor traced origins of worker unrest to unacceptable working conditions, deficiencies of care on part of management, and lack of trust between the workers and the managers. Only through eradicating the above could an organization hope to create a productive work environment:

> Each [employee] was made to feel that she was the object of especial care and interest on the part of the management, and that if anything went wrong with her she could always have a helper and teacher in the management to lean upon. [...] the most friendly relations existed between the management and the employees, which rendered labour troubles of any kind or a strike impossible. These good results were brought about by many changes which substituted favorable for unfavorable working conditions (*ibid*.).

The ghost of Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company and a pioneer in assembly line manufacturing, is particularly concerned with the value of human labour, proclaiming it the bedrock of not just the economic activity...

> The economic fundamental is labour. Labour is the human element which makes the fruitful seasons of the earth useful to men. It is men's labour that makes the harvest what it is. That is the economic fundamental: every one of us is working with material which we did not and could not create, but which was presented to us by Nature. (Ford, 1922/2003: n.p.)

...but also of society and social relations

> The moral fundamental is man's right in his labour. (*ibid*.)

It is the moral right to the fruit of one's labour that, for Ford, constitutes the basis of the right to property. Consequently, he is not particularly impressed by the notion of capital ownership divorced from actual labour, and sees capitalists as

valuable (or tolerable) only insofar as they can help others achieve better results from their labour:

> Capitalists who become such because they provide better means of production are of the foundation of society. They have really nothing of their own. They merely manage property for the benefit of others. (*ibid*.)

What we see as significant in these quotes is not just how at odds they appear with the way Fordism/scientific management appears in contemporary management imagination (and teaching materials): after all, other actions and statements of both Ford and Taylor can be interpreted to point to different interpretations less friendly to employee welfare. But the regime of justification is important: for Ford and Taylor, business activities do not exist in a purely financial setting devoid of externalities; rather, they see the need to spell out both the social and the moral case for business: without such underpinnings, management can appear successful and yet lead to the very social and ecological problems that plague our society today (Bauman, 2013).

Mary Parker Follett was, famously, not just a precursor of management science, but one who was particularly far sighted, often beyond the limits of her own time. Her ghosts speak up with much more authority than she ever managed to project in the mainstream discourse, as in her time she was far too radical (besides being a woman) to be as much cherished as her ideas deserved. Her teachings on conflict resolution and importance of groups in organizations are well known today. Less well known are her clear preferences for shared management responsibilities:

> The problem in business administration: how can a business be organized that the workers, managers, owners, feel a collective responsibility?. (Follett, 1940/2012: 7)
>
> [...]
>
> It would not be possible to carry on a business if the workers did not do some managing. (*ibid*.: 9)

She also did not believe in an alienating form of leadership, one that implies passive or restricted followership. Rather, she envisaged the leadership as a reciprocal relation, a partnership:

> If leadership does not mean coercion in any form, if it does not mean controlling, protecting or exploiting, what does it mean? It means I (think) freeing. (Follett, 1928/1970: 137)

The engineer Karol Adamiecki was one forerunners of management science in Poland and his pleas for a systematic approach to matters of organization and production are well known today. However, which is much less known, he was

also a firm believer in intuition and feeling and his ghost would like to emphasize precisely that dimension of his thought:

> The science of work organization should not only be understood but deeply felt, so it can be most constructively used in practice. (Adamiecki, 1924: 592; our own translation)

Its implementations are not always helpful, because management science is not a linear project: it contains dimensions which are not always appreciated by economics – harmony, an organic potential (*ibid*.). There is a special kind of harmony, spiritual harmony, which 'cannot be reduced to mathematical functions' (*ibid*.: 595), but which is governed by clear and compelling rules:

> If the rules of spiritual harmony are respected during the organization of human work with the aims of the highest good of the working man and the whole of humanity, if we strive at the highest ideals, and keep a healthy judgement by the higher mental faculties, and introduce a discipline derived from higher moral concerns, in other words, if we employ a moral compass of justice and keep all the rules of spiritual harmony, [...] then organization science will, without doubt, become one of the leading factors of culture and will help man to derive from his work not just material wealth, but also moral. (*ibid*.: 595)

Another believer in society, common good and management as a service in the interests of the working people is the much more recent ghost of Peter Drucker, currently remembered as a management and productivity guru. His views were as far removed from an instrumental notion of human work or management as a purely economic function as can be conceived. Instead, he thought businesses were necessarily subordinated to higher goals:

> Business enterprises – and public institutions as well – are organs of society. They do not exist for their own sake, but to fulfill a specific social purpose and to satisfy a specific need of a society, a community, or individuals. (Drucker, 1993: 39)

This role cannot and should not be confused with the achievement of profit, particularly in the short term.

> A management problem is not solved if immediate profits are purchased by endangering the long-range health, perhaps even the survival, of the company. A management decision is irresponsible if it risks disaster this year for the sake of a grandiose future. (Drucker, 1993: 43)

Management practice and theory cannot, then, be reduced to purely economic thinking. It is much more than a technocratic concern.

> [M]anagement [apart from, dealing with technology] also deals with people, their values, their growth and development – and this makes it a humanity. So does its concern with, and impact on, social structure and the community. [...]

> [M]anagement is deeply involved in spiritual concerns – the nature of man, good and evil. (Drucker, 1994: 223)

There is one more ghost waiting for us. For that final encounter, let us step back even further in time and give voice to the ghost most commonly invoked by the foundational texts to encapsulate the world order at the heart of the managerialist project: Adam Smith himself. Commonly associated with not just the invisible hand metaphor (a minor aside in the original text), but also with the conceptualization of human beings as driven by purely egoistic and calculating motives and their behaviour that can be regarded in terms of economically rational choices. On encountering the spirit and his writings, however, it soon becomes clear that far from being an advocate of Homo Oeconomicus, this ghost has come, instead, to speak of altruism and empathy:

> Sympathy, however, cannot, in any sense, be regarded as a selfish principle. When I sympathize with your sorrow or your indignation, it may be pretended, indeed, that my emotion is founded in self-love, because it arises from bringing your case home to myself, from putting myself in your situation, and thence conceiving what I should feel in the like circumstances. But though sympathy is very properly said to arise from an imaginary change of situations with the person principally concerned, yet this imaginary change is not supposed to happen to me in my own person and character, but in that of the person with whom I sympathize.
>
> When I condole with you for the loss of your only son, in order to enter into your grief I do not consider what I, a person of such a character and profession, should suffer, if I had a son, and if that son was unfortunately to die: but I consider what I should suffer if I was really you, and I not only change circumstances with you, but I change persons and characters. My grief, therefore, is entirely upon your account, and not in the least upon my own. It is not, therefore, in the least selfish. (Smith, 2002: 374)

This chimes well with the growing body of research concluding, unsurprisingly, that far from being the engine of wellbeing, greed causes a wealth of organizational and societal problems (Wang and Murnighan, 2011; Haynes, Hitt, and Campbell, 2015). But the moral philosopher Adam Smith did not just abhor selfishness, he did not believe in the rationally self-interested Homo Oeconomicus, either; in fact, he was quite against the construct:

> That whole account of human nature, however, which deduces all sentiments and affections from self-love, which has made so much noise in the world, but which, so far as I know, has never yet been fully and distinctly explained, seems to me to have arisen from some confused misapprehension of the system of sympathy. (Smith, 2002: 375)

Textual *flâneurie* for redemption from capitalism

We have met the ghosts of management and listened to them when they spoke, redeeming their altruistic and humane ideas of management theory and practice, the body of knowledge that they have assisted at its birth. But we think this encounter has a redeeming potential reaching beyond these particular times and authors. We are confident that by invoking these, and other ghosts, from the childhood of management, the textual *flâneur* is able to embark upon an endeavour of radical learning, to seek redemption from two victorious and overpowering ghosts: managerialism and capitalism. Finding messianic moments full of dreams and meaning and letting them out in the open, the *flâneur* becomes a revolutionary. This is where the *dérive* has taken us. Demanding to take back lived time, re-appropriating it, is a revolutionary endeavour and the radical *flâneur* does just that, in her marginal walking and by creating a *dérive*. It is, as Debord upholds, a fight against an ideology, one, which has colonized everything. Also management authors are well aware of this.

> Capitalism has become so powerful that is has colonised our imagination, leading to a monoculture where capitalism appears as the only realistic option [...], as if there were no alternatives (Parker et al., 2014: 14)

This is a particularly dark case of colonization.

> First, capitalism is a purely cultic religion, perhaps the most extreme there ever was. Within it everything only has immediately a meaning in direct relation to the cult: it knows no special dogma, no theology. From this standpoint, utilitarianism gains its religious coloring. The concretization of the cult connects with a second characteristic of capitalism: the permanent duration of the cult. Capitalism is the celebration of the cult sans *trêve et sans merci*. (Benjamin, 1921/1996: 259)

Walter Benjamin adds that the only spirit allowed by this religion to speak is the one on 'the ornamentation of banknotes' (*ibid.*: 260). It is not even an autonomous cult, it has:

> developed parasitically by attaching itself to Christianity. Firstly, it reduces all of existence to its own standards of value.
>
> Secondly, it colonises all of time with this regime of value, as if every day were a day of worship. Thirdly, it is a cult based on guilt and blame (not repentance). It declares everyone to be guilty. It is a 'cultic' religion, of ritual practices, without 'dogma' or religious doctrine. (Robinson, 2013: n.p.)

The lesson to be learned from the ghosts of management is, however, that textual *flâneurie* can take us into an entirely different moral space. Here ideas can be reclaimed, decolonized by a Benjaminian revolution which makes possible a kind of transubstantiation (Robinson, 2013). Messianic time lets us to go back in time

to rediscover the past in a way that alters it, and with it the future it is implying. The endeavour involves both imagination and rationality (Kociatkiewicz and Kostera, 2012) and is a possibility to learn anew. Management as such is not necessarily a capitalist dominant tool for colonization of reality. It can be reclaimed, re-learned in other ways, redeemed. Invoking the moral rationale in concord with the ideas rediscovered in the ghosts' of management narratives, to new, non-capitalist organizational forms of a desired future, can help us to embark upon a journey to learn management anew. It is not about control – control of the future remains an illusion, albeit a cherished one in times of interregnum, and we believe it is more honest to abandon it and, instead, embrace something more vague, less certain: a promise, an utopia (Bauman et al., 2015).

We can ask Walter Benjamin to accompany us there, following flows, invoking them in a wave of a situationist *dérive*. We can walk right into them and embrace the ghosts who, in receiving back their voice, authorship of dreams in the childhood of the management, can be redeemed and bring redemption to management in a new utopian tale. It is within reach, as much in the future as in the past, because:

> nothing that has ever happened should be regarded as lost for history. To be sure, only a redeemed mankind receives the fullness of its past – which is to say, only for a redeemed mankind has its past become citable in all its moments. (Benjamin, 1940/1999a: 254)

The utopian management tale would begin with humanity and responsibility, which are a common theme in the ghostly readings of foundational texts. Management is, at its ghostly heart, about care, ordering and creating harmony for the common good. It makes space and conditions for collective action, in the most congruous way possible, work towards a common end, where each and everyone's contribution is orchestrated and valued. Management is about seeing the whole and caring for it, deeply, defending it against erosion, dissipation and fragmentation, if needed, against the individual vectors and desires of the participants. Management sees the beauty in obligation, the goodness in concern; in the words of Polish management scholar Krzysztof Obłój (2010), it is ultimately about passion and discipline intertwined, braided and merged. The manager is someone, or a group of people, who passionately protect and nurture the common good of organizing, who is able to see a ghost called 'the organization' in the myriad complex and diffuse emerging processes, and is ready if not die for it, then certainly live by it and believe in it. The manager knows how to dance to the spiritual harmony of the organization of human work and the highest common good, and insists on the importance of duties and right working conditions while safeguarding space for striving towards the highest ideals. The manager respects labour profoundly, believing in the harvest that comes as its result. And this is how

we come back to the ghosts of management, who insist that management brings freedom: this is the redemptive promise of the world after the interregnum, after capitalism, where we can all work to free the common good, unblock the passage for goodness in our organizing work and tales, knowing that 'every second of time was the strait gate through which the Messiah might enter' (Benjamin 1940/1999a: 264).

references

Adamiecki, K.(1924) 'Harmonizacja jako jedna z gł ównych podstaw organizacji naukowej', *Przegląd Techniczny*, 49: 551-595.

Bauman, Z. (2011) *Collateral damage: Social inequalities in a global age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z. (2013) *Does the richness of the few benefit us all?* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bauman, Z., I. Bauman, J. Kociatkiewicz, and M. Kostera (2015) *Management in a liquid modern world*. Cambridge: Polity.

Benjamin, W. (1921/1996) 'Capitalism as religion', in M. Bollock and M.W. Jennings (eds.) *Selected writings, Vol. 1*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1940/1969) *Charles Baudelaire: A lyric poet in the era of high capitalism*. London: Verso.

Benjamin, W. (1940/1999a) 'Theses on the philosophy of history' in *Illuminations*. London: Pimlico.

Benjamin, W. (1940/1999b) *The arcades project*. Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

Benjamin, W. (1940/2005) *On the concept of history*. [https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm]

Burrell, G. (1997) *Pandemonium: Towards a retro-organization theory*. London: SAGE.

Debord, G. (1977) *Society of the spectacle*. Detroit: Black & Red.

Drucker, P .(1993) *Management: Tasks, responsibilities, practices*. New York: Harper Business.

Drucker, P. (1994) *New realities*. London: Routledge.

Elkin, L. (2015) *Flâneuse: Women walk the city in Paris, New York, Tokyo, Venice, and London*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Fleming, P. (2015) *The mythology of work: How capitalism persists despite itself*. London: Pluto Press.

Follett, M.P. (1928/1970) 'The teacher-student relation', *Administrative Science Quarterly,* 15(2): 137-48.

Follett, M.P. (1940/2012) 'Business and an integrative unity', in M. Godwin and J. Hoffer Gittell (eds.) *Sociology and organizations: Structures and relationships*. London: Sage.

Ford, H. (1922/2003) *My life and work*. Project Gutenberg. [http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/7213]

Graeber, D. (2015) *The utopia of rules: On technology, stupidity, and the secret joys of bureaucracy*. New York: Melville House.

Haynes, K.T., M.A. Hitt, and J.T. Campbell (2015) 'The dark side of leadership: Towards a mid-range theory of hubris and greed in entrepreneurial contexts', *Journal of Management Studies,* 52(4): 479-505.

Höpfl, H. (1994) 'Learning by heart: The rules of rhetoric and the poetics of experience', *Management Learning,* 25(3): 463-474.

Khatib, S. (2010) 'Walter Benjamin, Karl Marx, and the specter of the messianic: Is there a materialist politics in remembrance?', *Centro Cultural de la Memoria Haroldo Conti*. [http://conti.derhuman.jus.gov.ar/2010/10/mesa-17/khatib_mesa_17.pdf]

Kociatkiewicz, J. and M. Kostera (2012) 'Sherlock Holmes and the adventure of the rational manager: Organizational reason and its discontents', *Scandinavian Journal of Management,* 28(2): 162-172.

Kostera, M. (2014) *Occupy management! Inspirations and ideas for self-management and self-organization*. London: Routledge.

Oblój, K. (2010) *Pasja and dyscyplina strategii*. Warszawa: Poltext.

Orr, K. (2014) 'Local government chief executives' everyday hauntings: Towards a theory organizational ghosts', *Organization Studies,* 35(7): 1041-1061.

Parker, M. (2002) *Against management: Organization in the age of managerialism*. Cambridge: Polity.

Parker, M., G. Cheney, V. Fournier, and C. Land (2014) *The Routledge Companion to Alternative Organization*. Oxon: Routledge.

Richter, G. (2000) *Walter Benjamin and the corpus of autobiography*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.

Richter, G. (2002) *Benjamin's ghosts: Interventions in contemporary literary and cultural theory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Robinson, A. (2013) 'Walter Benjamin: Messianism and revolution – theses on history', Ceasefire, https://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/walter-benjamin-messianism-revolution-theses-history/]

Shenhav, Y. (1999) *Manufacturing rationality: The engineering foundations of the managerial revolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shukaitis, S. (2009) *Imaginal machines: Autonomy & self-organization in the revolutions of everyday life*. London: Autonomedia.

Smith, A. (2002) *The Theory of moral sentiments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Taylor, F.W. (2002) *The principles of scientific management*. Project Gutenberg. [http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/6435]

Vantzou, C. (2014) 'Going backwards to recover that which was left behind', *No.2*. Chicago: Kranky Records.

Wang, L. and J.K. Murnighan (2011) 'On greed', *The Academy of Management Annals,* 5(1): 279-316.

Wark, M. (2015) *The beach beneath the street: The everyday life and glorious times of the situationist international*. London: Verso.

Wolff, J. (1985) 'The invisible Flâneuse. Women and the literature of modernity', *Theory, Culture & Society,* 2(3): 37-46.

Wright, C. (2010) 'The ghost of Walter Benjamin walks at midnight: The writer's almanac'.
[http://writersalmanac.publicradio.org/index.php?date=2010/06/25]

Zizek, S. (2008) *Violence*. New York: Picador.

the authors

Jerzy Kociatkiewicz is senior lecturer in management at the University of Sheffield. His research interests revolve around the everyday experiences of organizing and organizational spaces, narrativity, and the interplay between popular culture and organizational and managerial realities. His work has been published in journals such as *Organization Studies, Organization*, and *Annals of Tourism Research*. With Zygmunt Bauman, Irena Bauman, and Monika Kostera, he wrote *Management in a liquid modern world*.
Email: kociak@kociak.org

Monika Kostera is Professor Ordinaria and Chair in Management at the Institute of Culture, Jagiellonian University, Poland, and at Linnaeus University, Sweden. She is the author, co-author and editor of over 40 books in Polish and English; and of numerous scientific articles. Her current research interests include organizational imagination, disalienated work and organizational ethnography. She has also published several collections of poetry and is a member of the Erbacce Poets' Cooperative.
Email: monika.kostera@uj.edu.pl