

# Creativity out of Chaos: Anarchy and organizing

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## Abstract

Creativity is said to be highly desired in post-modern and post-industrial organizations. Creativity and anarchy on the one hand, and managerialism, on the other, can be seen as different forms of knowledge, two opposed ideals. In many organizational as well as societal reforms we currently observe it is the managerialist ideal that wins over the anarchic. In this paper, we wonder if people fear anarchy? We reflect on the possible reasons for the fear, and we also try to explain why we believe that anarchic organizing should not be avoided or feared.

## Keywords

creativity, anarchy, chaos, sensemaking

## Creativity versus managerialism

Creativity is said to be highly desired in post-modern and post-industrial organizations (for a presentation of the new creative organizing, see e.g. Letiche, 1998). It ensures the development of ideas and people, and is crucial for innovativeness, knowledge and learning, perhaps the most preeminent traits of postmodern organizing (Hatch, 1997). Ola Alexandersson and Per Trossmark (1997) write about creativity and anarchy as opposed to managerialism.

If creativity is understood as anarchy, then the management ideal means perhaps an ordering antithesis. They are depicted as two different forms of knowledge (cf. Björkegren, 1993). Some do not use the word anarchy to signify the spontaneous and unplanned creative expression. Instead, creativity is connected with freedom. To create what one feels

for, to express one's ideas — that is what creativity is about (p. 124).

A managerialist is, according to the *New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* (1993) „one who believes that government, business, etc. should be run by professional managers” (p. 605). Heather Höpfl (1994) does not use the term explicitly, but her description of the managerial prerogative represents very well our notion of managerialism. It is, according to her, an ideology, based on an elaborate system of education and a code of practice, emphasizing rules over roles. Jacques (1996), as quoted in Alexandersson and Trossmark (1997), is critical towards the notion that managerialism is a coherent ideology — it is, rather, a standardized form for language and action. We think that it sometimes can work as an ideology and sometimes ”just” as a set of standards. However,

the trait most important for our point of view is the assumption about the universality of rules, economic rationality and order. Introducing managerialism means imposing order: structured descriptions and rules about decisions and control (Alexandersson and Trossmark, 1997). Traditionally, this way of organizing is rather associated with private sector enterprises (cf. Law, 1994). However, managerialism seems to be introduced in many new places: what used to be considered „professional organizations” (Höpfl, 1994), public service organizations, Eastern Europe. In the reform of the public radio that Ola Alexandersson and Per Trossmark describe, as in many other reforms, managerialism, and not anarchy, seems to be the dominant trend. When managerialism is introduced, the employees feel that creativity (and the anarchy they see as having existed until now) is threatened (Alexandersson and Trossmark, 1997). They also quote numerous examples of managerialist restructuring programs carried out in the US and the UK since the mid 70-ties. Another example, more familiar to us — in Poland, the country we live in, a new „faith” is being disseminated by Western consultants, along with a rhetoric we would label managerialist (Kostera, 1995). Western mainstream management textbooks abound in the bookstores, and the Polish ones are perhaps even more managerialist than the imported (Kociatkiewicz, 1997). The Polish anarchic creativity, once perhaps the characteristic trait of Polish intellectual life, seems to vanish even from the university (Glinka and Kostera, 1998).

Of the writings that take up the positive and creative aspects of anarchy and organizing in their writings, we would like to point to two books that inspired us to the writing of this text. The first is Pierre Guillet de Monthoux’s excellent book on what anarchism has to offer to the field of business administration (1983), and the second — the already quoted ethnography of organizational change by Ola Alexandersson and Per Trossmark (1997). In both these books the word „anarchy” is used in a positive way, and it is said that organizing may benefit from anarchy.

However, after a dictionary research we took up we feel that anarchy is feared (and we believe that this is a more typical attitude), that it is seen as an antonym to organization, and thus the expression „anarchic organizing” may be perceived as oxymoronic. We do people fear anarchy? Why do they, in our opinion, often sacrifice the desired creativity for the dull

ordering? This paper addresses this question: we think of „anarchic organizing” as a potentially interesting inspiration, and we also try to explain why we believe it should not be avoided or feared.

## Narrating chaos

We decided to explore how the ideas that we relate with creativity, of anarchy and of chaos are related to each other and to organization, in chosen linguistic media, and we aimed at opening up the subject by examining various mental connections rather than at finding the Truth about Reality. We believe that science cannot „mirror reality” (Rorty, 1994), and we are not interested in any attempts of „mirroring” the field that we explore. To us, there is no Truth to be found out there — after Rorty (1989) we assume that even if one believes in a reality outside of oneself, the claim that there is some truth to be found external to language is pretentious and unjustified. Truth is a characteristic of our statements, it is internal to language. Therefore we concentrate on what we experience, and make no claims to the objectivity or absoluteness of our reflections. Quite the opposite: we wish to share what we see as the boundary between our subjectivities, the abstract line where our stories meet. Our method is not strictly constructivist, although it credits — we are adopting contextual narrative methods of sensemaking through looking at terms-in-use and their (contextual) definitions. The aim is thus to gain a more intersubjective understanding. Such a method is used, among others, by Heather Höpfl (forthcoming), and is, epistemologically, based on the radical humanist paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

While not attempting to define anarchy or chaos once and for all, we were nevertheless explicitly interested in texts that ostensibly define words “for others,” i.e. we chose among media currently used for explanations, and interpretation. We thus did not go out in the field with a tape recorder this time — that would perhaps be an interesting idea for another study, one that would be directed, for example, at the understanding of the terms by practitioners such as managers, management consultants, professionals, etc. In our study we aimed at a selection of “authoritative” texts. We treat these definitions as performative ones, i.e. enabling people to act, and not pointing out “how it really is.” (Latour, 1986, Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993). Even

though we thus do not look for ostensive definitions (or definitions based on the assumption that it is in principle possible to detect the qualities characteristic of the phenomenon, see e.g. Czarniawska-Joerges, 1993). We deliberately chose media with a social role of ostensive defining. The reason why we chose to do that is a consequence of our paradigmatic stance — we would like to present principal voices and then propose an alternative reading.

Our intention in this paper is to offer up these collected definitions, together with our own impressions about anarchy and chaos we gained from that to serve as an inspiration for rethinking organizations. Obviously, the result is not a united worldview or a coherent metaphor to use in researching and depicting organizations, but rather a collage of associations to hold against the more widespread ideas about organizing and see what it does to our thinking. In that, we do not follow the line of thinking tied to the „normal organizational science,” but a field of imagining, more at home within the syntagmatic way of doing science — one that is not based on formal logic, but associates „facts” according to a chronological or narrative mode of thinking, and thus a science being closer to humanities (Latour, 1992; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1995). Barbara Czarniawska-Joerges writes about narrative knowledge again gaining the status of being „scientific.” If scientific ethos (”good scientific writing is true writing”) is to be abandoned, then we are left with questions of beauty and use. Representation from relational truth comes to mean political representation: ”Theories do not 'represent' reality; theoreticians take upon themselves to represent other people and even nature” (1995, p. 27). In other words, academic writers do not „look for” truth, they do not „discover” it and turn it into theories that represent them. Instead, they *speak for* other people in their writings, as well as for nature, technology, symbols. Radical humanist writers do that in order to question, subvert orders that limit and disempower people, to challenge oppressive orders that are perceived as obvious.

Within this mode of participating in science, the links to art become more prominent. Jerzy Kociatkiewicz, Monika Kostera and Piotr Kurczak (1995), argue that science is art:

One important aspect of our view on science is its creativity. We do not see it as exploring and discovering the immutable laws governing the

world, but rather forming these laws as one goes along. The personal realities of the followers of a given scientific idea start to conform to these laws only after the idea implementing the laws gets incorporated into the recipient's reality. Such an approach challenges the usual distinction between the realms of art and science, showing them both to consist of creation and of influencing other people's perceptions (defining their realities) (p. 9).

Similarly, Nelson Philips (1995) claims that „the barriers between fiction and fact, and art and science, have become increasingly difficult to defend” (p. 626). In fact, „social scientists often do what writers do: they create rather than discover, they focus on the unique and individual, they use illustration and rhetoric in an effort to make their case” (p. 626). Writers, on the other hand, often do what scientists are supposed to do. They investigate reality, take field notes and write realist prose that can often serve as well as ethnographic material to understand various social phenomena — as, for example, Zola's books do. The boundaries between academic and non-academic writing are fuzzy and this fuzziness creates interesting space for organization studies.

What we see ourselves as doing in this paper, is attempting at such a borderline storytelling, without the ambitions of defining the reality, however with the aspiration of provoking imagination and discussion. We have carried out a textual exploration of the terms we considered related to some ideas about alternative organizing we were interested in, i.e. „anarchy” and „chaos.” We looked for current definitions in dictionaries and via the Internet (a chaotic and anarchic medium itself). The questions we were asking ourselves during the whole enterprise were: *why is order such a highly valued criterion of defining phenomena? what is the relationship between anarchy/ chaos and organization — what is the role of the normative principle of order? and finally, can we do without the principle, and, if so, what are the consequences of such a perspective?* We are not providing answers to all of them, but what we see us as having accomplished is the construction of a phenomenological frame on which it is possible to build further explorations.

This is but a modest attempt to explore the boundaries of our own imagination, in the quest of associations and symbols beyond the mainstream mode of sensemaking. We are not basing our explorations on mathematics, political science or history of anarchism,

but on the reflections about the more semantic uses of the words that interest us. Finally, we were wondering about possibilities to translate the ideas of anarchy and organization *minus* order, where the apparent paradoxes would cease being disturbing without losing their quality of being creative. Some writers, especially postmodern writers, have explored the ideas of living without order in a positive way.

According to Zygmunt Bauman (1993), we have in our times accepted ambiguity, irrationality, and the inevitability of chaos. Modern science has been vainly struggling to free society from disorder, impose a meaning on chaos, through an obsessive classification of reality (Bauman, 1995). Ambivalence was, according to Bauman, a scandal, something to be avoided at any price. Science's task was generally that of searching for order. This almost (and sometimes explicitly) divine order (the United Theory of Everything preferably) was always not beyond the reach of the hand, or so it seemed from the perpetual declarations made, yet such a final coherent and single system never materialized (Feyerabend, 1975/ 1994). Reality never ceased to provide phenomena that fell outside of the neat categories, spoiling the admirable efforts of the modern project (Bauman, 1995). Finally, there came an epoch of growing distrust in the legitimizing grand narratives of modernist science (Lyotard 1979/ 1987), one we label „postmodernity,” which not only accepts diversity and ambivalence but relishes them (Welsch, 1997).

Do the dictionaries share the optimism of postmodernist writers about indeterminacy?

## Anarchy and chaos: Into the void

In order to explore the understandings of the terms we are interested in, we undertook a search in various dictionaries, looking at how the words are defined and how they are linked to each other. Below, we quote some of the definitions, ones that we see as typical and show their mode of cross-referencing.

According to the *New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* (1993) anarchy means: „the absence of law and order / a general state of disorder and confusion” (p. 33). *The New Penguin Dictionary* (1986) defines anarchy as follows:

- 1a absence of government b lawlessness; (political) disorder c a utopian society with complete freedom and no government 2 anarchism (p. 30).

The same source has anarchism defined as

- 1 a political theory holding all forms of governmental authority to be undesirable 2 the attacking of the established social order or laws; rebellion (p. 30).

An anarchist is

- 1 one who attacks the established social order or laws; a rebel.
- 2 a believer in or (violent) promoter of anarchism or anarchy (p. 30).

The etymology of the word "anarchy" is, according to the same source, *anarchia* from Gr. *anarchos* meaning "having no ruler."

When we checked "organization," we found further references to order. „Organization” is, according to the *New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus*, „an organizing or being organized,” while „organize” is about to „give an orderly or organic structure to, arrange the parts of (something) so that it works as a whole [...], to become organic or systematized” (p. 707). Similar understandings of the term are offered by *The New Penguin Dictionary*.

What, then is order? The *New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus* explains:

- [...] 4a(1) a rank or level
- (2) a category or kind
- b arrangement of objects or events according to sequence in space, time, value, importance, etc. [...]
- 5a (a sphere of) a sociopolitical system <the present economic [order]>
- b regular or harmonious arrangement [...]
- 7a the rule of law or proper authority <law and [order]>
- b a specific rule, regulation, or authoritative decision [...]

The verb, to order, means, according to the same source, "to arrange," and orderly is "arranged in order, neat, tidy" or "well behaved, peaceful." Disorder, according to the *New Webster's Dictionary and Thesaurus*, is:

- 1 lack of order; confusion
- 2 breach of the peace or public order [...]
- 3 an abnormal physical or mental condition; an ailment (p. 272).

All the dictionary entries tend to define chaos and anarchy in a negative way ("lack of order"), while order is positively tainted (something that "is," related to harmony, peacefulness, etc.). *The New Penguin Dictionary* depicts chaos as:

- 1 the confused unorganized state of primordial matter before the creation of distinct forms
- 2a the state of utter confusion b a confused mass [...]

Religions tend to view chaos similarly to the first of the Penguin definitions quoted above, as a primitive state of all things, that was changed by the act of divine creation. The Bible says:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters (Genesis: 1:1-2).

According to many old mythologies, in the beginning there was chaos, imagined as infinite emptiness, as a void. Chaos is pictured as the opposite to Cosmos, the lack of form and order, „the lack of everything.” In Kempniński's *Dictionary of mythologies of Indo-European peoples* (1993) it is said that „[t]hese mythologies held that „in the beginning” there existed „chaos” depicted originally as endless void”. This void was (in Scandinavian mythologies) called Ginnungagap, Ginnunga Gap (i.e. magical abyss) – the original nothingness, concretized as immeasurable emptiness. The dictionary explains:

In a broader sense (also outside of Greek mythology) the term chaos was used to describe the opposite of cosmos (gr. *kósmos* “order, form, character, the world, cosmos,” sometimes „heaven” and „this world”). Originally, according to the etymology, chaos was conceived of as an endless void [...] chaos was identified with water, underground, cosmic egg, various monsters.

Our quest for definitions and religious understandings of the interesting terms led us to believe that the associations to chaos and anarchy are not complimentary; the relation to creativity does not seem to be protruding. Especially, the terms „organization” and „anarchy,” appear to be antonyms. The expression "chaotic organizing" looks, in this light, oxymoronic. Yet, such as we see it, it is an inspiring idea worth further explorations.

## Anarchy on the Internet

Attempting to delve a little deeper into this subject, we decided to look for definitions more kindly disposed towards the theme of our explorations and more likely not to take the subject at face value – those of anarchists who would obviously tend to see anarchy (and, as we suspected, chaos) in a more positive light. Furthermore, to look for the ideas of anarchy and anarchism and their meaning as of today, we have

decided not to delve into what the classic authors of the philosophy, like Proudhon or Bakunin, had to say about it, but rather to see how it floats and resurfaces in the very chaotic space of the Internet.

Authors of the anarchist WWW pages seem to agree that “anarchists oppose rulers” (*Anarchy*), although who these rulers are remains open to dispute. While most would agree that “anarchism is the belief that people can voluntarily cooperate to meet everyone's needs, without bosses or rulers, and without sacrificing individual liberties,” (*Consent*), there is considerable divergence of ideas as to whether one should oppose just the state (a standpoint called anarchocapitalism), or whether the whole social order is based on hierarchical power relations that need to be abolished. Anarcha-feminists link these issues to the gender oppression, while panarchists believe that all kinds of social orders could exist alongside each other as long as participation in any of them was purely voluntary. All are strongly appalled by the current state of affairs, although some point to the examples of the past such as the pirate society of 17th and 18th century (*Pirates*) or the ideals of the French Revolution as espousing the principles of anarchism, and as proofs that the concept is far from sheer utopia.

This is not to say that the picture emerging from the Internet presence of the anarchists is an entirely coherent one, as the tensions between various factions rise. Anarchistically oriented members of various youth subcultures, for example,

are typically more concerned with applying the principles of anti-authoritarianism and self-determination in a practical way to their resistance activities and their daily lives. Some contemporary anarchists, however, eschew such "lifestylism," and instead focus on building more formalized groups and networks that can organize for broader social change. (*Intro-@*)

Sometimes the groups disagree as to what standpoint can actually deserve the label “anarchy,” and what is too mild and too uncritical of the existing social order. Thus, anarchocapitalists can be labeled “false anarchists” by their more radical colleagues.

All these definitions bring out the aspects of anarchy deemed positive by their authors, even if their authors differ wildly in their opinions as to which aspects and in which way are commendable. One common thread appears to be the (aim of) dissolution of the existing power structure, regarded as a source of oppression and

opposed to the voluntariness offered by anarchy. Such a view provides a positive contrast to the dictionary definitions, which award anarchy a utopian status at best.

## The will to order

While the variety of the Internet definitions prevents us from narrowing their common theme much more, we believe one other aspect invites closer examination. It seems that the one word usually coming to one's mind the moment chaos and/or anarchy are mentioned is "disorder." Actually, it appears that it does so both to the enthusiasts and critics of these concepts, and all of them tend to look at disorder with equal scorn. Most of the anarchists on the Internet, therefore, proceed to proclaim that (*Anan 1*)

Anarchy is not the absence of order.

Anarchy is the absence of government, maintain that believing in anarchy is "equivalent to chaos is an unfortunate misconception" (*Intro-@*), or insist that the anarchists "don't seek chaos, but order," (*Anarchy*) thus filing chaos away together with disorder among the ideas opposed to anarchism, and rightly to be feared.

The struggle for the safe place to stash disorder away, as far away as possible from one's own agenda, seems even more desperate when we consult the dictionaries — according to Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary, for example, the synonyms

ANARCHY, CHAOS mean absence, suspension, or breakdown of government, law, and order.

ANARCHY stresses the absence of government;

CHAOS implies the utter absence of order.

Sometimes both terms are used derogatorily alongside each other, once again in connection with the dreaded disorder, as in Dirk Spennemann's (1996) WWW page entitled, simply, "Anarchy and Chaos on the WWW," and criticizing the lack of structure in the Internet limiting its possible educational use, as "[a]narchy (...) has no place in an educational teaching environment." (*ibid.*, emphasis original). Here, the terms are not defined, but their understanding is implied.

The extent to which WWW authors define the terms explicitly, varies. Unlike anarchy where "if you ask 10 anarchists for their description of anarchism, you are likely to get 10 different answers" (*Intro-@*), chaos or more strictly chaos theory is well defined as the study of the complex nonlinear systems. „The most

commonly held misconception about chaos theory is that chaos theory is about disorder. Nothing could be further from the truth! Chaos theory is not about disorder!" (*Chaos*).

It is true that chaos theory dictates that minor changes can cause huge fluctuations. But one of the central concepts of chaos theory is that while it is impossible to exactly predict the state of a system, it is generally quite possible, even easy, to model the overall behavior of a system. Thus, the author claims that chaos theory lays emphasis not on the disorder of the system — the inherent unpredictability of a system — but on the order inherent in the system — the universal behavior of similar systems (*Chaos*).

Seen this way, chaos theory and its various interpretations depict chaos as definable, as in some way even predictable — and, finally, suggest that order can spontaneously emerge from chaos. Such chaos theory appears to concern itself more with order than disorder.

We are thus left with both anarchy and chaos as concepts quite capable of being viewed in a positive light yet marred by their connection with the abominable notion of disorder — anarchy can be seen as the abolition of the power structures, and chaos — as a way of appreciating and coming to terms with the complexity of the surrounding reality. Now we would like to follow this incriminating link and explore the idea of disorder a little bit further, questioning its seemingly obvious negative connotations. Even at this stage, though, we prefer not to commit ourselves to any one of the presented views of either chaos or anarchy, but rather to play up the ambiguity stemming from their variety. Let us start this exploration from taking a peek at the reality itself.

## Towards anarchic organizing?

Reality is intransparent, or not obvious, it is in itself meaningless (Schütz, 1967; 1982). According to Schütz (1982), meaning is the tension between what is and what is passing. Meaning emerges through symbolization: symbols are „frozen” layers of human experience, of a person's biography. Through symbolization, ambivalent reality is made coherent, so that it can at all be perceived and experienced. Seen phenomenologically, people are experiencing (the chaotic) reality in a process of active creation and annihilation: what is beyond the typifications that define meaning, „does not exist”. Through choosing

one interpretation, people flatten out, sift out complexity, resign from all alternative interpretations. This process of interpreting and re-interpreting of reality we here define as creativity — the more alternative interpretations are allowed for, the more the process is intensified. The more alternatives are suppressed and interpretations limited to one line of reasoning, the less intensive the creative process.

In *A rumor of angels* Peter Berger (1969/ 1990) speaks of the propensity for order as a fundamental trait of crucial importance to understanding the religious needs of people.

Any historical society is an order, a protective structure of meaning, erected in the face of chaos. Within this order the life of the group as well as the life of the individual makes sense. Deprived of such order, both group and individual are threatened with the most fundamental terror, the terror of chaos that Emile Durkheim called anomie (literally, a state of being „order-less“) (p. 60).

Peter Berger explains that people tended to believe that the fundamental order, supporting and justifying the societal one, is of divine origin. He goes further to claim that above this faith in order as justification, there is „the human faith in order as such, a faith closely related to man's fundamental trust in reality“ (p. 60). People need to experience that „reality is in order“ and in this sense, acts of ordering are signals of transcendence. Peter Berger does not maintain that indeed, reality is objective and is in order. On the contrary, it is socially constructed, and the construction is fragile and set up on chaos. In his view religion is about fundamental ordering. Given the emphasis on the belief of a division between the divine and profane, this view corresponds well with religion in pre-modernity. However, mystical spirituality, be it Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, or other, can be seen as much as ordering as the opposite – the giving up of attempts at understanding, at control, at categorization and „riding the wave“ of the transcendental experience: the grace of God, Nirvana (cf. Welsch, 1998). Religion in postmodernity moves from ordering towards a privatized experience of self-fulfillment, „democratized“ transcendence available not only for an elite of organized religion but for each and everyone who seeks it (Bauman, 1997), and thus reminds more of mystical spirituality than the ordering kind that Peter Berger describes.

The need for sensemaking, according to Karl Weick

(1995), can stem from either uncertainty, i.e. the lack of information, or ambiguity, i.e. the inability to distinguish between too many conflicting interpretations. The lack of order we encounter when trying to take stock of the universe around us is clearly an example of the latter, and the sensemaking process is a construction of a “thin film of order, forcibly stretched over Chaos, but incessantly torn, ruffled, pierced, and shredded by it“ Bauman (1994: 46). The impossibility of ever permanently accomplishing such a task leads to the fear of losing grip on the fragile order, apparent in the way people try to distance their field of interest, like chaos or anarchy, from the accusations of disorder. It is the fear of not being able to cope with the amount of information that cannot be filtered away to leave a simple pattern. Thus, we are actually talking of a “tension between control and chaos” (Kunda 1992: 48), where acknowledging the existence of disorder means admitting one's inability to mold the reality to one's vision; it means allowing the uncertainty and confusion creep into the sterile view of a predictable world. There is a reverse side of it too, as our loss of total control is balanced by the loss of control by everybody around us, so it shouldn't be regarded in terms of power relations — rather, it undermines these very relations. As Karl Weick (1991) demonstrates, tightly coupled systems can lead to disasters, and such systems are not so much better, or tighter, ordered, but based on the belief in such an ordering, or in the need of it. Abandoning this idea does not necessarily leave us despairing of our incidentally and impotence in the face of a disordered world, but it brings to our mind the advice of how to survive in an avalanche — one should “ride the wave,” and not try to stay in total control of the situation, which is impossible anyway.

Creativity requires both a method (intention) and contingency, the acknowledgment of coincidence (intuition), in the quest for artistic expression (Welsch, 1998). It is our conviction, that all kinds of human expression call for both these elements. Such organizations, where creativity is an obvious and necessary constituent, as media (Alexandersson and Trossmark, 1997), universities (Glinka and Kostera, 1998), theatres (Magala, 1988), and perhaps also advertising agencies, innovative enterprises, and others, benefit from an atmosphere of professional anarchy and freedom. Furthermore, organizations postmodern in content are said to be in need of creative

performance, and no longer in need of strict ordering, which is due, among others, to the implementation of new technologies, such as computers (Morgan, 1990). The introduction of more anarchy and allowance for more chaos in these organizations would, in our opinion, improve the conditions for the intensification of creativity, such as we defined it. We believe that the compulsive classification, characteristic of the Modern Project, suppressing ambivalence and ambiguity (Bauman, 1995), results in a streamlining of experience, flattening out of expression, and limits the processes of creativity. Creativity can exist within ordering, but as long as it is modestly acknowledged by the people engaged in organizing that ordering is a process never to be completed or perfected, and thus the idea of hideous purity of order (Law, 1994) is given up. This awareness allows for creative anarchy within organizing. An example from our recent interview material — a non public Polish gymnasium, founded and financed collectively by parents after 1989 in Warsaw. The school, located in Warsaw, has very good teaching results, as measured in the standard way in Poland, i.e. by the amount of students who pursue their education (over 80%, some years as high as 90%). The students are taught all „usual” subjects, but additionally, they can (but are not obliged to) participate in theatrical education. The school is organized in a way that is very uncommon in Poland: the hierarchy is minimal, teachers and students call each others by name, they meet outside of school, and engage in various theatrical activities together. During the lessons, the students may ask questions, they may discuss matters with the teachers, and according to the interviewees (ex-students), they felt they were free to express their doubts, opinions, and ideas. The discussions were more important than the realization of the teaching programs (crucial in public schools). The interviewed ex-students said that teachers were respected and liked — for their knowledge and attitude — but not feared. The students knew that they could come to school but were not forced to do so. Nonetheless, most students are present and there is no problem with „absenteeism,” what more, it is exceptional that students have school phobia or psychosomatic illnesses, a widely spread phenomenon in other Polish schools. The school’s most important aim is to teach and to assist the students in developing their creativity. The interview material collected this far, makes up a picture of a way of organizing that

we here call anarchic: formal rules kept down to a minimum, very little hierarchy, a great emphasis on individual development and creation, other values than the managerial and ordering being central, etc. Another example of organization we would call anarchic is a software producing and consultancy firm (case study in progress), where the rules are compiled ad hoc to fit a specific project, and dropped after it is finished, where there is no hierarchy in the relations between people, even though there are owners (who work for the company) and managers (who make part of various teams or lead a team, depending on the current project’s professional content). In this firm creativity comes first, before profits. It is perhaps important to note at this point that anarchy does not exclude profit — however, in organizations we would label anarchic, financial objectives and measures are not regarded as the ultimate priority.

The typical modern organization is devoid of spirituality of the private, experience-oriented kind, offering a scant substitute for meaning through „motivation” (Sievers, 1994). Allowance for active meaningmaking, through the admission of ambivalence, would, like in mystical spirituality, make people responsible for and free to look for their own individuality and ways of expression. According to Carl Gustav Jung (1989), such spirituality is essential for creative power and individual development. For the postmodern organization, the spiritual dimension may be seen as a possible option for a quest for meaning and identity (see e.g. the discussion in Bauman, 1997). In the gymnasium we referred to above, the students are encouraged to develop their spirituality through a deep engagement in theatre. Managerialism does not encompass the postmodern version of spirituality, because it is incompatible with the ideals of order and emotion-free rationality. „Managerialism” is, however, not a necessary nor obvious way to manage — not even business organizations (where it originated as a trend). We believe that management practice and theory in all countries have much to learn from anarchism, and such lessons could be both helpful and inspiring (see Guillet de Monthoux, 1983). Instead of avoiding paradoxes, it would enrich the contemporary organization to accept life with the paradox of simultaneous method (ordering) and anarchy (chaos). This is not a compromise, nor an inclusion of order into anarchy. It is about the recognition of two, equally powerful processes: ordering and creativity (anarchy).



We are not trying to paint an apocalyptic picture, though, of a horrible, anarchic world in which we are destined to live. Not so, however, because it is not anarchic, but because this does not necessarily make it horrible. Moreover, while this perspective stresses individuality and difference rather than uniformity and binding ties, it does not preclude organizing, although it requires a shift in meaning of the term away from reified structures or networks and towards people who do things together.

Accepting disorder is an act of courage (in a very Foucaultian sense indeed) — giving up the sense of control does not come easily. It is not without its rewards, though, as chaos not only requires more thought, but also saves us from both the hopelessness and the dreariness of determinism. Anarchy takes away not just the support the established institutions offer, but also the oppression inherent to them. The New World Disorder awaits.

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- Chaos, <http://www.students.uius.edu/~ag-ho/chaos/>

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Intro-@ ....., <http://www.black-rose.com/intro-@html> — by Liz A. Highleyman

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