

Shadows and Darkness, Silence and Secrets

Dr Andrew Armitage

Winner of the Best Paper Award

The Sixth Arts of Management and Organization Conference,

University of York, 4-7 September 2012

Abstract

This paper uses the lens of Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* to explore my organisational environment. Whilst Bachelard is an often forgotten thinker of the 20th century, his work had enormous impact upon those that followed him in the latter of this century, including Foucault, Althusser, Lecourt and Derrida. Bachelard's philosophy was a journey towards a concrete formulation of the imagination and reverie, the creative daydream is central in his emerging metaphysic, which becomes increasingly "phenomenological" in a manner reminiscent of Husserl. Although Bachelard does not use Husserl's terminology, he does though embrace his phenomenological approach in two respects: first, to grasp the creative revelation and insight into the reality or essential meaning of an image and second as a desire to reject rationalistic impulses. This results in reverie, an aesthetic intentionality to provide a metaphysic of the imagination. First, I introduce the literature regarding aesthetics of the organisation before introducing an auto-ethnographical account of my organisational environment adopting, as did Bachelard, imagery to understand and make sense of *self* and *other*. I conclude by noting that Bachelard's poetics of space allowed me a freedom seldom experienced through the more accepted modernistic discourse of organisational theory. This allowed my conscious existence to roam in the exploration of my work environment and in doing so revealed an alternative perspective of the organisation.

Key words: Aesthetics, dialogue, poetics, shadows, darkness, spaces.

Introduction

The connection between space, aesthetics and organisational studies has also attracted a varied and a well established set of literature, covering a wide spectrum of perspectives (see Linstead and Höpfl, 2000; Gulliet de Monthoux, 1993 and 2004; Ramirez; Strati, 1999; 1991; Warren and Rehn, 2007). On the one hand the emotional well being of individuals and their psychological dispositions associated in dealing with their daily encounters and on the other organisational artefacts and things that please or cause concerns for those who encounter inanimate objects in offices and working spaces (Carr and Hancock, 2003).

In *The Eyes of The Skin* Pallasmaa (1996) describes the power that architecture has to silence the noise of external activity to focus on attention on one's very existence away from everyday day life and in the present moment, and to initiate a private dialogue with the space around us. Pallasmaa has concerns of our visually dominated world, campaigning instead for architecture of the senses, and identifying a trend towards what he describes as 'retinal architecture' – an observation that architecture has become 'the art of the printed image, fixed by the hurried eye of the camera. Burrell and Dale (2003:180) argue that 'architectural arrangements actively construct the experiences and subjectiveness of different groups of people in different ways'. In their analysis they go on to claim to shift the focus from relations of production to consider issues of consumption and culture as also important for exploring the links between architecture and organization in a critical way, and, as part of this, for our understanding of the multitude of ways that architecture and space contribute to producing organizational and organized subjectiveness.

Lefebvre (1991) points to the tendency to see space as a natural vacuum within which things happen. Instead, he theorizes the way that space is socially produced, actively created. He argues that 'space is produced in social relations that is it also reproduces, mediates and transforms' (Natter and Jones, 1997:149). Within this world Lefebvre describes a number of different spaces including "abstract space" – logical mathematical, cognitive spaces, typified by Cartesian thought (1991:24), but also linked to the social experience of abstract space through alienating relations of production under capitalism (1991:49) and "lived space" which Lefebvre connects intimately with the body (1991:49 and 405). These are not unconnected but are a part of social space. Lefebvre does not homogenize space, but provides a number of different ways of understanding how space is produced. One aspect that is of particular interest to us the distinction he makes between "representations of space" and "representational spaces" (1991:42) of planners, scientists, politicians and architects: we might characterize this as 'organised space'.

Others, for example, Monthoux (2004) have explored the seemingly unorthodox alliance of the arts, management and marketing claiming that art firms, as avant-garde enterprises and arts corporations have existed for at least 200 years, using texts, images and other types of art to create corporate wealth. Monthoux investigates how to apply the methods artists use in creating value to the methods more traditional managers use in running their businesses. Monthoux shows how aesthetic management and metaphysical marketing can create value via case studies of successful art managers (for example Richard Wagner and Robert Wilson), and he illustrates the creative role, central to value-making in contemporary economies, performed by aesthetic play in art firms. Monthoux points out how

responsible aesthetic management and marketing can eradicate the problems of banality and totality, the two capital sins of an art-based economy.

Despite the forgoing, the use of aesthetics to uncover alternative perspectives of organisational life is still under theorised and reported by those who have attempted to use narrative and poetry as modes of creative or artistic forms of expression and interpretation (see Linstead and Höpfl, 2000 and Strati, 2001 as notable exceptions). As Linstead (2000:84) notes 'Yet across the social sciences, few attempts to radicalise the forms in which social investigation finds its expression have been attempted outside of social anthropology, and even there, this has not been unproblematic'. However, Denzin discusses the various forms of reflexivity found in poetical writing styles, and considers the tactics that contribute in the construction of such texts, he introduces what he terms the 'sixth moment' of ethnography, this being a tactic needed to read such texts, whereby ethnography moves through a contemporary phase of self-deconstruction to re-engage with radical democratic practice (Denzin, 1997:199-228). What Denzin demonstrates 'is a "writerly self" that 'spills over in to the world being described....with a particular hubris that is neither insolent nor arrogant. The poetic self is simply willing to put itself on the line and to take risk'. As Linstead (2000:84) notes 'The texts are multi-voiced not in the sense that that they encompass many speakers using their own words....but because they shift perspective quickly and easily, which is that poetry allows them to do, seeing a situation simultaneously from different angles'.

The poetics of the organisation: A personal journey

My journey of the poetics of the organisation begins with three fundamental questions concerned with contemporary organisational life, namely: What is the connection between freedom, art, and the aesthetic condition? What does it mean to be human? What does it really mean to know the self? In my attempt to answer these questions used Gaston Bachelard's philosophical outlook, reverie, and poetical language to express *my poetics* of organisational life.

For Bachelard, language is not only a source of meaning it is a source of *being* of the word, and through *logos* is the creation of the world. Bachelard in language discovers that it is a temporal process through which imagination becomes the 'humanizing faculty par excellence' (Bachelard, 1972: 20) and to imagine is to encounter 'the speaking beings creativeness' (Bachelard, 1969: xx). When we set our aim towards a study of the imagination is also the path to aesthetic existence, where language and images converge, and Bachelard (1960:6) throws out a challenge that asks us to experience physical space through poetic reverie in a profound and aesthetic manner, one that goes beyond scientific rationality:

'And whereas philosophical reflection applied to the scientific thinking elaborated over a long period of time requires any new idea to become integrated in a body of tested ideas, even though this body of ideas be subjected to profound change by the new idea (as in the case in all the revolutions of contemporary science), the philosophy of poetry must acknowledge that the poetic act has no past, at least no recent past, in which its preparation and appurtenance could be followed'

In his *The Poetics of Reverie*, which can be viewed as a poetic reflection on poetry he sets forth a theory of anima and of its relation to reverie, and which he describes as putting poetry on the right track, one where:

‘...an expanding consciousness follows. This where reverie is written or at least, promises to be written. It is already the great universe of the blank page. Then images begin to compose and fall into place. The dreamer is already hearing the sounds of written words’

If I was to explore my organisational reality then I had to look inward to *my-self* in order understand my conscious activity and its place in its social, historical and political context. I decided that to do so requires an approach that gave my introspections of *my-self* an epistemological disposition to the world that would provide a freedom to express its own authenticity as it met the world in *being-as-an-act*. As such, I embarked upon an auto-ethnographic account inspired by Gaston Bachelard’s *Poetics of Reverie* and *The Poetics of Space* that enabled me to produce free flowing narrative that drew upon memories and poetry to invoke images of my organisational space, enabling me to reveal and express the unfolding and enfolding of my “imaginative function”. It is a realm where the imagining consciousness creates and gives life to the poetic imagination, *my poetic imagination*. What follows is my attempt to explore my organisational reality using what I call “*deep phenomenology*” as a method to explore and express *my poetics of my organisational space*.

Shadows and darkness

Organisations can be places for creative opportunity and individual realisation, places of freedom to express oneself, or they can be places of death, places where existence is (re)created in its image, places that shape and mould those who do not resist its life force. Organisations are also places of resistance where an individual's *being* given its identity and meaning that supersede the super-structures and power games of organisational life. Here lives are lived in the shadows of oppressive forces - shadows that have their own mode of illumination, in corners of organisational life where other realities exist but do not reveal themselves to those who are blinded by their own naive sense of reality. These are lives that resist capitalist economic domination and organisations are but spaces where individuals learn to live or die, where rooms are living mortuaries before the final funeral cortege arrives to bury their memory into the unread archives of history.

These are the disturbing images of darkness that shroud my thoughts as I think of those whose dignity has been taken, whose identity has been stolen by those who have other games to play. To experience organisations in the shadows, one has to relate to others as *being-with* – to feel another's pain as you feel yours with equal intensity. *Being-with* does not engage in organisational life in a merely discursive or with its "mechanical structures" of operation. *Being-with* is a mode of existence – an aesthetic existence of pain and pleasure, either as separate experiences of reality or sometimes they might co-exist as one. Aesthetics implies the suspension of preconceived notions of scientific rationality, of surface realities based on objective *naive* empiricist methods; it projects the finitude and smallness of reality.

Fears and hopes, joys and sorrow are played out in organisational spaces – the material shallowness of a building is of secondary concern compared to the nexus of human discourse. This discourse is the common bond of community, it whispers behind the stage on which plots are played out, it anticipates and reacts to each scene. This organisational space belongs to me, to those who suffer, to those who are abused, bullied and forgotten. This is the place where *asthenias* is more than a word on a page, a word that has mere formal definition, it is way of life, a place where aesthetical encounters are realised in ascetic experience, where self harm and sacrifice are ways of living to alleviate self-doubt and self-worth, where purification is soaked in guilt. Here the lack of bodily strength, weakness and debility is the ontic self realisation of *being*, what exists behind the stage curtain of life. It is the difference of *being* dancing on and *being* directing from behind the stage – ontic reality is the latter. Aesthetics is *what is* – it is the encounter of a life that force moves below the superfluous and superficial reality of material existence. For many, organisations are places of suffering; I like so many others have to survive the domination of organisational practices that foreground instrumentalism and economic advantage at the expense of freedom and humanity. A tension arises, one where I have to reconcile sensations emanating from powerful organisational discourse and my creativity and values.

I enter a *plastic reality* as I move from the concrete reality of organisational structures, to the abstract where reason fights against a world of contradictions. My *plastic reality* solidifies when reason fuses with the empiric of the material world; here the plastic becomes solidly locked into a momentary image of reconciliation, but without success. This dialectical movement of inner and outer reality shatter their unity at the moment they are united. This is the aesthetics of intertextuality and as I

learn to exist in chaotic scenes of deceit and distress, a prisoner of my conscious activity, Byron's poem *The Passion* that captures my mood:

Befriend me, Night, best Patroness of grief!
Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw,
And work my flattered fancy to belief
That heaven and Earth are coloured with my woe;
My sorrows are too dark for the day they know;
The leaves should all be black whereon I write,
And letter where my tears have washed, a wannish white

That organisation's possess a certain dignity and reality that escapes scientific rationality is often overlooked. These other realities inhabit another domain that go beyond mere appearance and surface experience; it is an aesthetical reality that moves into the shadows of individual consciousness, where shadows turn to images as I pass beyond psychological analysis towards a reverie, where the focus is on the experience of consciousness itself. To understand an organisation is not merely to see it is as a collection of people or a superstructure that is imposed by others. Organisations can be viewed from such a perspective, but they *cannot be experienced* from such perspectives.

Like all communities, organisations possess a reality that becomes fluid, dynamic and sometimes stagnant. It is a reality of aspirations and dreams. Organisations are where careers are crushed, lives are given hope and meaning to those who inhabit these worlds, organisational identity is smuggled into conscious reality as a thief moves in the shadows of night. The organisation infuses within an individual's thoughts and actions, attitudes and self worth, a sense of *being-here*, it says to them "you belong to me". But, belonging in a communal sense is not merely *being-here*, it

is rather *being-with*, the emotional connection to others that transcends obligations to duty, but is concerned with spontaneous and voluntary actions. It is a deep conscious awareness of what already exists; to enter the shadows of consciousness is to experience a reality that already exists.

Light, darkness and shadows are all but one reality. Light is not that part of consciousness that is awake, darkness is not that part of consciousness that is asleep. Shadows do not hide reality or secrets, they are willing to reveal. Consciousness is one, a unity; there is no sub-conscious, only reality that is hidden from its awakened activity. Shadows and darkness are all me around as I sit at my desk in the full light of the autumn sun, in the milky winter glow of a fast disappearing sun as it starts to hide behind the horizon as I look across the town from the top floor of the building I work in, in the early morning of spring as the early morning light calls to me to grasp its gentle warm hand and in the sunlit summer morning as it burns relentlessly across the room uninterrupted by the silence of noise as people recoil into chores that give meaning to their lives, 'How could voices listened to with so fundamental a sympathy fail to be prophetic? To give back their oracular value to things, should we listen to them from close by or from afar? Is it necessary that they hypnotize us? Or should we contemplate them?' Bachelard, 1942:194). I can see shadows cast behind cupboards, book cases, under tables.

Even when people walk across the unstoppable sun beams and are brought to halt by disinterested bodies – a shadow is cast sometimes in front, behind or to the side of them. But what of the shadows that hide in their psychical activity – what of these? What secrets do people keep in their conscious doings, thoughts and intentions? Shelly in his poem *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* says of shadows that:

The lovely shadow of some awful Power
Walks through unseen amongst us, visiting
This peopled world with as inconstant wing

But other places of darkness exist, those places that are hid from view, in darkness that does not permit me pass beyond the barriers that confront me, to reveal secrets that are only for the privileged. Secrets are also are locked in cupboards, drawers and hidden in the silicon of an advancing technological age. Here, shadows become darkness in a material sense. What lies behind these sanctuaries? Doors that lead to rooms also provide the same protective barrier as do cupboard doors, what lies behind these wooden barriers? Who is plotting for and against whom? What deals are being made? What secrets are being kept? Whose destiny is being decided? Who counts and who does not? What injustices are being hatched against an unsuspecting world?

Silence and Secrets: Where the past and present meet

All secrets are ultimately kept in boxes, whether these are rooms, cupboards, drawers or silicon chips; ready to be released into the world as Pandora did. Secrets are kept in boxes, away from those who strain to look in as Bachelard (1968:85) notes 'every secret casket has its little casket, and this absolute, well-guarded secret'. A closed room is like a closed box, it is the guardian to other realities; it is a nocturnal world where life continues unabated. Here, life hides itself from the light of those who gaze upon its opaque mask of deceit and of my wonderment of what lies inside. Secrets occupy an existence out of the gaze of common life doings. Shadows in my organisation cannot be suppressed and are not dormant – they are real and dynamic. Just as joy and happiness come into my purview, so do sorrow and

suffering, I become but a child of my conscious existence and 'So, like a forgotten fire, a childhood can always flare up again within us' (Bachelard, 1960:104)..

The organisation tries to suppress my conscious activity into its neat compartments, to bury it in its alcoves, but consciousness cannot be compartmentalised as something physical and locked in a room. Emotions cannot be suppressed and left to die - they are enjoined in a nexus of aesthetic activity of joyfulness and suffering. Images cannot keep out those things we do not want to disclose to ourselves, nor can it suppress those happy feelings we want to enjoy where 'In days of happiness, the world is edible' (Bachelard, 1960: 141). To truly understand what we feel can only be accessed through freedom – pure freedom, a freedom of bliss that can only be accessed by a conscious reality devoid of externalities that pollute our perception of what we encounter, what we dream – here the human as artistic creator emerges, 'What other psychological freedom do we have than the freedom to dream? Psychologically speaking, it is in reverie that we are free beings' (Bachelard, 1960: 101). When the artist emerges then the shackles of domination are thrown off, of super-structures, of powerful discourses that mould actions and modes of thought. Freedom to express ourselves reigns. But we can only explore this inner world of freedom if we let the organisation 'come to us', let it play upon our imagination, let it do its work upon us, as Jean Lescure aptly put it 'An artist does not create the way he lives, he lives the way he creates' (cited by Gaston Bachelard: 1969: xxxiii). To experience our inner realities requires that we let freedom seek us out, not we seek freedom.

Imagination is a place of solitude and connection with the world; it has a poetic language of its own where reverie becomes real, where 'Poetry nourishes within us reveries which we have not been able to express' (Bachelard, 1960: 159). Here images are silently formed. *Being-with* is the joining of silent voices, of a communal spirit that is untouched by those whose myopia cannot be lowered to see alternative lives, wants and feelings. The noise of silence is voices in harmony, a silence that demands they be taken seriously. Organisations have corners of silence, where lives are hidden from the general view of onlookers, secrets are kept, plots are hatched, collaborations are formed and friendships nurtured. Silence has a poetry and language particular to itself.

Entering a building or an organisational is to anticipate the physical with the image of a reality that does not yet exist. I have already smelt its odours, felt the early morning sunshine that lights up the entrance, the atrium, the workspace that I will eventually reach by way of an enclosed cage. The refectory is not only a collection of chairs and coffee cups that greet me as I follow a well trodden path each morning – these are artefacts that sing their familiar song in response to those who listen. Their melody reminds me of notes already played in a symphony of my childhood as I recall the dining area that lay adjacent to my classroom as a young boy.

The symphony would commence during in the mid-morning break as tables were being moved and when cutlery was laid on the wooden dining tables and as the clock ticked nearer the noon hour the signal was set for its climatic ending that was brought of its conclusion when we were marched into the dining hall. But, the symphony that commenced with the soft melody of metal hitting wood was played out against the backdrop of odours that made their way from the kitchen to where we sat, much in the same way jasmine ghosts itself into our sensibilities on a gentle

summer breeze. My symphony of past memories, like an organisation, is more than a collection of inanimate objects and people. It is a place of unspoken realities, hopes and dreams. Organisations are patterns of existence, connections between events and things – they are not singular monographic depictions of reality, they are places of connections, of sounds, of odours.

I wander to my desk and feel a kind of repetition, but also a new beginning. Desks are covered with photographs, books, bags and the remnants of a technological age that drives our working relationships. The sunlight that cast its warm shafts across the room momentarily dazzle me as I pass between them, they remind me of the changing moods of work – passing from hope to anguish, from joy to sorrow. All is spread before me as I walk between desks, these private work spaces, and private lives that define those who lay claim to them, that say in a silent voice ‘keep off, no entry, this belongs to another’. The silence of each morning screams the same motto. What lies behind these public displays that say ‘this is my life – you can look but cannot ask questions’? Organisations extend their reach beyond the physical boundaries of walls into the psychical lives of those who move in about its corridors and rooms. Images of the organisation move like ghosts in the imagination; they are forever changing form and shape, drifting in and out of conscious awareness, drifting into our daydreams and catching us unawares.

You can hear people chatter in public spaces about their private and organisational lives, it’s hard to tell where one life form starts and the other finishes. They drop into the rhythm of its discourse and its culture; they act out their private lives and public actions through the language of the organisation. Their values are unconsciously determined by those set by organisational discourse and the rationality of order, of

neatness of conformity that are never explicitly stated or articulated, they are just part of an individual's psychic life where 'mysteries are buried in every human word' (Balzac, 1940: 31).

But, is this freedom? Is it not servitude to another's wishes, where the individual is not an actor of authentic self, an author of their destiny? They have not as Bachelard observes made contact with possibilities, where 'In reverie we re-enter into contact with possibilities which destiny has not been able to make use of' (Bachelard, 1960: 112). To become free, individuals have to adopt what Bachelard (1969: xxxv) calls 'Topophilia' which is the:

'....the determination of human value of the sorts of space grasped, that may be defended against adverse forces, the space we love. For diverse reasons, and the differences entailed by poetic shadings, this is eulogised space'

Space is not merely the physical organisation of buildings, organisational structures, and working patterns. Other spaces exist beyond the physical, a place where the imagination and the moving flow of images moves within the corridors of conscious existence. The space of the physical organisational constrains movement but it cannot constrain imagery. When I walk into my work place I am not entering it for the first time on any particular day, I enter it again through my imagination – through images formed prior to my physical encounter. The organisation is more than this – it is a place where I connect with the realities of other people, where 'I dream the world. Therefore the world exists as I dream it' (Bachelard, 1960: 158).

Reverie transcends formalism and creates a new map – a map of unity that re-writes the physical with the sensory. Physical, absolute space and meets abstract, relative space in one conscious action, one single image. I often navigate my way around the building not by room numbers but by colour, heat, touch and smell. A room or a

corridor is not its physical location on the ground or first floor; it places itself in juxtaposition with other objects in terms of non-physical dimensions. I have often thought about re-drawing the layout of the building in terms of heat gradients, the aroma of coffee as it floats and escapes the prison of cups held by eager hands in anticipation of receiving a shot of caffeine to revive tired minds and limbs. Do rooms have shapes and colours?

If you walk down a corridor they tell you the time of day – the aroma of those who have just walked a corridor always seems to linger long after they have long departed – they reveal the hidden secrets of those who have walked the floor I now occupy. Stale sandwich's, over heated coffee pots, cigarette fumes drifting lifelessly in the air, even the remains of human hair caught in swing doors that have fought those who dared to pass. To map a building in this fashion is a personal project that transcends the constraints of the architect's calculations, a reality that eschews the reduction of my values, pleasure, and suffering to a measurable scale. This is a map of a living reality; it is not a map of technological and scientific domination. It is a map of the imagination.

Can rooms in a building change daily, hourly or even from one minute to the next? Sometimes I walk into room and smell the unrest, unease, the conflicts and the battles that have been fought by those who have just vacated its cubical space. All looks calm, but visual perception can mislead the sense of imagination – only this can determine in an instance whether this room is calm. I think of a room not in terms of its architectural determinations, but rather as a shape and that describe its use. Sometimes a room feels square and symmetrical, where its walls are bland – this is what I call a magnolia room. At other times a room on first entering becomes a triangle, its exudes a playful tune – it is bright orange, yellow and green, other times

a circle where a calm awaits and pushes back a chaotic and approaching world – the circle is my favourite space, it exudes calmness, a sanctuary to escape even for a moment those that pursue me – this is my white room, a room of tranquillity, pure and virginal. Other rooms are hexagons, rooms that are multifaceted and have lost their calm interior and silently whisper how busy they are – these are painted bright red, they give off energy, they are remind me of fire and must be approached with a certain caution. Others greet me as a random shape that possess sharp and smooth edges, these are the rooms where my inner sympathies reach out and without further ado I start to tidy the room, to make it feel part of the building, to bring it in from the cold as a prodigal son is made welcome by his family- this is my black room, a room left to die, a room without life..

Rooms have shapes and colours, they have feelings, and they exude warmth, coolness and want to be wanted. Rooms are not just inert things, they carry the historicity of those who have used and abused them, where past consciousnesses collect in a place called a room as a shrine to humanity past. To dream images is the freedom to create, the creation of space that escapes the boundaries of and constraints of walls, for to dream is to immerse conscious connection to the alternative views of reality. This is a reality that goes beyond scientific rationality or of psychological determinations and pre-conceived categories of analysis. To dream requires we let our conscious state be taken on a journey of deep phenomenological engagement, one that moves beyond formalism and aims at its project of ontic reality – at the *being-in-itself*, as reality experienced in its first flush of youth. Poetic imagination and literary expression gives life to organisational analysis that breathes freedom into other realities. Here individuals can experience new identities, values, the relation of self and other.

Moments of reverie

Bachelard (1969:85) said 'The pure recollection, the image that belongs to us alone, we do not want to communicate, we only give its picturesque details'. In many senses this phenomenological attitude is an autobiographical account of *consciousness-in-action* where images are set to poetic language. As Bachelard (1960: 6) would say it is where 'A word is a bud attempting to become a twig'. It is the ontic life of consciousness and the evoking of different meanings as we encounter each new (and passing) image, where 'The poetic imagination does not express what remains foreign to us, all human experience and action seeks to speak through the word, to write 'and to give order to reverie and thought' (Bachelard, 1960:16). Organisations are moments of existence, of realities and of truths. They are the finite passing places where infinity stops and draws breathe before it projects itself towards an uncertain future, full of possibilities, full of hope.

Autographical engagement is the first moment of the *self's* encounter with its ontic reality, it is not merely a descriptive account of how the self wishes to project itself to others. Whilst it is couched in cultural, social and political contexts, the autographic account transcends these and takes its genesis in the consciousness of the individual. It foregrounds the image as articulated in language as its primary ontic existence. Only in this original condition of existence can it claim to be authentic, where rich and personal accounts hued out of the myriad of external noise that, a deep phenomenological attitude provides, one that goes beyond the psychology of measurement and categorisation. The autographical engagement is the beginning of a journey that gives permission to an individual to immerse themselves beyond preconceived notions of what does and does not count as valid knowledge. This is the permission to remove the shackles of modernity, the permission to imagine, the

permission to write freely, poetically, authentically. It is the permission to dream. But to dream means to let go, to float, to live aesthetically – not merely talk or write about it in the second or third person. It is where the second moment is born.

The second moment joins the *self* to the *other*. An awareness of our existence becomes immanent as we connect with other individuals together as conscious beings and not as mere collections of limbs, or even as a collective movement of thought and action devoid of human intentions. The second moment allows us to see others as we see ourselves – through consciousness, either singularly or collectively. Slipping into the imagery of our dreams takes us beyond our outer self and into our inner self', but this in turn is a reflexive movement that demands we gaze back upon others in our field of perception. But this gaze is not founded in instrumentalism, we do not see the other as relation of 'me - you', 'I - it', or 'me- them'. The relation is one that Martin Buber called '*I –Thou*' which he captures in his beautiful prose:

'If I face a human being as my *Thou*, and say the primary word *I-Thou* to him, he is not a thing among things, and does not consist of things. Thus human being is not He or She, bounded from every other He and She, a specific point in space and time within the net of the world; nor is he a nature able to be experienced and described, a loose bundle of named qualities. But with no neighbour, and whole in himself, he is *Thou* and fills the heavens. This does not mean that nothing exists except him himself. But all else lives in his light'.

The second moment demands a poetic turn that transcends all historicity, politics and culture; it precedes what is to *come-into-being* and the suspension of preconceived ideas and concepts that have been imprinted on our consciousness by those who wish to dominate us. The second moment becomes my moment and my relation of *self* to the *other* and only now can I enter my third moment, that of sense-

making and meaning where conscious awareness is allowed its freedom and poetic licence to connect *self* and *other*.

The third moment is the most intense as we embrace freedom, the *self* and *other*, it is the deep phenomenological mood that (re)states humanity in its aesthetic ontic condition. Without individual freedom and a language to express ourselves freely we cannot articulate to others what it means to be human, what our fears are, what our pains and pleasures are. Images and the imagery they produce are conditioned by the finite/infinite time-space nexus. A unique connection of time and space cannot be revisited again. When images are evoked we give instant gratification to our consciousness as expressed through (poetic) language to access their meaning. We make sense and new meanings as the stream of consciousness as a river flows past and sweeps us along in its current. When we usually speak of sense-making and meaning we reflect on events of the recent or momentary past. But when sense-making in *deep phenomenology* it is a spontaneous act where reality presents itself to our conscious being, it is here where true freedom finds its home, it is an *intensity* and *immensity* of experience that transcends scientific rationality and psychological analysis. As Bachelard so aptly describes it in *The Poetics of Space*:

‘One might say that immensity is a philosophical category of daydream. Daydream undoubtedly feeds on all kinds of sights, but through a sort of inclination, it contemplates grandeur. And this contemplation produces an attitude that is so special, an inner state that is so unlike any other, that the daydream transports the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity’

Conclusions

If we are to investigate organisational life that goes beyond surface realities and to enter the deeper recesses of consciousness we have to progress the phenomenological project to a depth that defies all notions of scientific method. Instead it requires us to engage with the primary images of reality as they are presented to consciousness in a continuous stream of images because 'Doctrines that are timidly casual, such as psychology, or strongly casual, such as psychoanalysis, can hardly determine the ontology of what is poetic, for nothing prepares a poetic image, especially not culture, in the literary sense, and especially not perception, in the psychological sense' (Bachelard, 1969: xxiv). Rather, it calls for a deepened self-awareness about how we experience our dwelling places, in my case, my organisational dwelling place and stimulated my "investigation" concerning my organisational space, on my psyche and my understanding of the relationship of this space to the outer world and to my inner world, which is between *self* and *others*.

This was a journey of self revelation of my inner and outer realities. The exploration of my inner reality whilst personal revealed an alternative perspective of the organisation contrary to the outer reality of 'scientific' method that is often the case in traditional organisational theory. The experience of my inner reality made me more aware and reflective of my organisation and the images it evoked upon my consciousness and in turn this has produced a linguistic turn that allowed me the freedom to express the images of the organisation in a (poetic) language that gave meaning to my existence of the physical world or as Gaston Bachelard phrased it 'the pen point was an extension of the mind' (Bachelard, 1960: 6). The poetic imagination opens up an alternative way of coming to terms with organisational

reality. It is an approach that foregrounds in a direct way the mode of experiencing the ontic reality that transcends the influence of external dispositions. This can only be achieved if those taking part in the journey to study the deep phenomenology of the imagination are willing to express themselves in a free and uninhibited manner. As Schiller in the twenty second letter of *On the Aesthetic Education of Man* notes:

‘...the mind must be regarded in one sense a *cipher* – as soon, that is we confine our attention to individual and definite operations – yet in another aspect it is to be looked upon as a condition of the highest reality, insofar as we are considering the absence of all limits and the sum total of the powers which are jointly engaged within it.

References

Alvesson, M. 1995, *Management of Knowledge-Intensive Companies*, Berlin: de Gruyter.

Alvesson, M. and Willmott, H. 1992, *Critical Theory and Management Studies: An introduction*. In M. Alvesson and H. Willmott (eds.) *Critical Management Studies*, London: Sage.

Bachelard, G. 1942, *Water and Dreams: An Essay On the Imagination of Matter*, Trans. Edith. Farrell, Dallas: The Dallas Institute of Humanities and Culture.

Bachelard, G. 1958, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Trans. Northrop. Fry, Boston: Bacon Press.

Bachelard, G. 1958/1969, *The Poetics of Space*, Trans. John, B. Stilgoe, Boston: Beacon Press.

Bachelard, G. 1960, *The Poetics of Reverie*, Trans. Daniel. Russell, Boston: Beacon Press.

Bachelard, G. 1972, *L'Air et Les Songes*, Paris: Corti.

Bachelard, G. 1938/1983, *Le nouvel esprit scientifique*, 15th ed., Paris: PUF.

Bachelard, G. 2005, *On Poetic Imagination and Reverie*, Trans. Colette. Gaudin, Connecticut: Spring Publications.

Bachelard, G. 1938/2002, *The Formation of the Scientific Mind*, Trans. Mary. McAllister, Bath: The Bath Press.

Balzac, H. de. 1940, *Oeuvres completes* in Marcel. Boureron and Henri Longnon (eds.), Paris: Lois Lambert.

Brislin, P. 2008, *Unified Design*, Chichester: John Wiley and Sons.

Buber, M. 1957, *I and Thou*, London: Continuum Press

Burrell, G. and Dale, K. 2003, Building Better Worlds? Architecture and Critical Management Studies. In M. Alvesson. And H. Willmott (eds.) *Studying Management Critically*, London: Sage.

Carr and Hancock (Eds.) 2003, *Art and Aesthetics at Work*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Denzin, N. 1997, *Interpretive Ethnography: Ethnographic Practice for the 21st Century*, London: Sage.

Gulliet, de Monthoux. 1993, *The Artistic Management of the sublime*, (Stockholm: Nererius and Santerus.

- Gulliet, de Monthoux.** 2004, *The Art Firm: Aesthetic Management and Metaphysical marketing*, Stanford CA: Stanford Business Books.
- Lefebvre, H.** 1991, *The production of space*, Trans. Donald. Nicholson-Smith. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lescure, J.** 1964, *Dessins de Charles Lapicque, La mer Lapicque*, Paris: Galania, in G. Bachelard. 1969, *The Poetics of Space*, Trans. John, B. Stilgoe, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Linstead, S. and Höpfl, H.** 2000, *The Aesthetics of Organisation*, London: Sage.
- Pallasmaa, J.** 1996, *The Eyes of the Skin*, London: Academy Editions.
- Patton, M.Q. 2002, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, London: Sage.
- Rusted, B.** 2000, *Aesthetics and modes of analysis: 'Cutting a show': Grounded Aesthetics and Entertainment Organizations*. In Linstead and Höpfl (2000) *The Aesthetics of Organisation*, London: Sage.
- Sassen, S.** 2000, Excavating Power, *Theory, Culture and Society*, 17(1):163-170.
- Schiller. F.** 1795/2004, *On the Aesthetic Education of Man*, New York: Dover Publications.
- Shields, R.** 1997, *Spatial stress and resistance: Social meanings and spatialisation*.
- In G. Strati, A.** 1999, *Organization and Aesthetics*, London: Sage.
- Warren, S. and Rehn, A.** 2007, *Messing up organizational aesthetics*. In Jones, C. and ten Bos, R. (2007) *Philosophy of Organization*, London: Routledge.