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Qualitative Inquiry

Post author/ship: five or more IKEA customers in search of an author

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Father: … In the sense, you understand, that the author who created us as living beings, either couldn't or wouldn't put us materially into the world of art. And it was truly a crime… because he who has the good fortune to be born a living character may snap his fingers at Death even. He will never die! Man… The writer… The instrument of creation … Will die… But what is created by him will never die…

(Pirandello, Six characters in search of an Author. 1921, p. 10)

In part, this paper draws its inspiration from the famous play by Pirandello in which six characters, created by an author, take on a life of their own, and go on-stage with their drama which they impatiently want to (re)present. Pirandello's work takes the form of a 'play within a play'. The characters impose themselves within the framing play and try to convince a producer to help them (re)live the drama of their authored, but dislocated, lives. These characters are then 'imposters' in the framing play, seeking sense, making non-sense in their lives in a script not necessarily accommodating that of their own authored lives.

In the current work, the play is used to evoke the theme of our study: the death (or absence) of the author (Barthes, 1977; Derrida, 1967; Foucault, 1984). Our project is not about 'author-identity' or who will become an author in the absence of the author (i.e., who

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will replace an author) but more about what is being created when author/ship is ambiguous or obscure; what is happening in the void of an author, and how might the absent presence of author/ship be experienced and lived. This void and absence - created by the removal or detachment of an author - might be filled somehow, might be ignored, erased, or left open. Like the characters in Pirandello's play, wandering and wondering in the uncertainty occasioned by the disappearance of their author, and following Foucault's (1984) description of the author function as lacking original interiority and anterior intentionality, we (from now on the pronoun we is replaced by imposter to exemplify our problematization of authorship) proceed to interrogate the (im)possibilities of the author and authorship (author/ship). In particular, imposters take this problematic to thinking through organizational discourses and practices of (sexual) diversity.

Barthes (1977) proposed that once the author is removed, texts become nondirective from the readers' perspective, especially when the author is no longer attempting to close the text and supply it with final significations. "A text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue" focusing the multiplicity on the reader (p. 148). Like the six characters in Pirandello's play - don't imposters have a complete proliferation of characters now? Who's in control of this production here, now? later? – in the current example of writing, imposters and the (im)possible participants of their fieldwork - discourses, objects, texts and signs - go in search of the (elusive, potentially fake and pretend) author. Furthermore, in this paper the imposters are not interested in describing what the assumed potential absence of the author(s) may mean or how this absence should be interpreted. Instead, these imposters explore what the absence or death of author does in this particular writing context, and how this absence might create spaces to write differently and experimentally, so as to extend the boundaries of qualitative research for and in organization studies. This intervention is akin to Ellis (2004) advocating for 'showing' in research texts as

opposed to 'telling' and is aligned with Hansen, Barry, Boje and Hatch's (2007) 'improvised collective story construction'. Unlike Hansen et al's writing, this project does not produce a coherent (if fictional) story: instead, imposters present a constellation of writing fragments produced through collective improvised writing. However, just like them, the current paper comes with the warning that '... this article may challenge some of your preconceived notions about what academic work is about and even what counts as an academic contribution to knowledge' (p. 113). In the following pages imposters attempt to respond to Alvesson and Gabriel's call for polymorphic research which culminates in papers that resist the standardised formats, do not follow a predictable structure thus hoping to galvanize the field of organization studies and, therefore venturing beyond formulaic research (see Alvesson & Gabriel, 2013).

Through this writing strategy, imposters hope to provoke 'academic' writing spaces that challenge authors and readers and scholarly productivity more generally; a challenge that does not attempt to simplify writings and writing experiences but rather, to attempt 'prospective writing' which '... emphasizes curiosity, unpredictability, and readiness toward the next possible word' (Helin, 2015, p. 184). Imposters illustrate these emerging and changing spaces throughout this manuscript. These emerging and changing spaces have been described here as events, as shifting writing processes, in which textual and experiential moments are connected, actualized, and/or disconnected without boundaries or limits (see Deleuze, 1994). Furthermore, events are not necessarily happenings but actualizations of a kind. Some of the imposters' writing events form liminal spaces and 'in-between' processes, various thresholds or entryways between past and future. Becoming events are always in the move; some speed up whereas others slow down.

Throughout the paper imposters will discuss the following events:

Event 1a: ~~Problematizing~~ author/ship in organization studies

Event 2: ~~Authoring~~ two IKEA customers

Event 1b: Meeting of virtual texts

Event 3: Authoring notes coming together

Event 4: Giovanni and Matteo shopping

Event 5: Author/ship talking back to research contexts

Event 6: Post problematizing author/ship

Event 7: Absence talking to presence

Event 8a: "TO DO AND ORGANIZE"

Event 8b: Merging absences of authors, gayness, and organizational studies

Event 1a: ~~Problematizing~~ author/ship in organization studies

When it arises at all, imposters identify two traces of theorising in organization studies that deal with the concept of author/ship. The first is represented by those scholars (Shotter, 1993; Cunliffe; 2001; 2002; Thorpe & Holman, 2003) who frame managerial practice as authorship, and the manager as an author of organizational life. The second is aligned with those scholars (Baack & Prash, 1997) who are more resolutely inspired by postmodern/poststructural theories and wonder what the death of the subject implies in the context of organizational theory and practice.

Within the first trace of writing, the 'manager as author' is a way to metaphorically understand managers' work. These scholars argue that managers can be understood as 'practical authors', because they are involved in the creation of '… new possibilities for action, new ways of being and relating in indeterminate, ill-defined realms of activity. In this way, they are more like artists than engineers' (Cunliffe, 2001, p. 351-352). Manager as 'practical author' is a metaphor conceived by Shotter (1993) in the book Conversational

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Realities where he 'draws on social constructionist suppositions to conceptualize management as a rhetorically-responsive activity in which managers act as "practical authors" of their social realities' (Shotter, 1993 in Cunliffe, 2001, p. 351). This approach explores how managers 'act as practical co-authors of their organizations' social landscape and their sense of identity' (Cunliffe, 2002, p. 131). In this theoretical alignment, authorship is conceived of as a complex self-other experience. Management is a responsive, engaged action with others through which managers create a shared view of reality and identity. 'Managing becomes a relational activity, a rhetorical-responsive practice in which managers, along with other organizational participants try to create a sense of place and situate themselves in relation to others' (Cunliffe, 2001, p. 354). Manager as author does not live and work alone; s/he is constantly involved in activities that are rhetorically-responsive and contested. Cunliffe's formulation of management as rhetorically-responsive underlines her idea that managers spontaneously and dynamically react to words, gestures and feelings in organizational spaces. Equally, management is conceived of as a relational and contested activity because 'all involved are trying to bridge the gaps and silences in talk as we try to persuade others to see things our way' (Cunliffe, 2001, p. 354).

The second and related theoretical approach to author/ship within organization studies draws more directly on postmodernist and poststructuralist theories which proclaim the death of the author and culminate with the claim of the death of man (Baack & Prasch, 1997). The death or disappearance of the author - a theoretical expression that migrated from Russian Formalism[1] to poststructuralist philosophy (Burke, 2008) - attempts to exorcise, or at least challenge, the originary power of the author. This theoretical movement questions the sovereignty of 'the speaking, full, self-present subject producing the text from her/[his] knowledge of the world and [that] she/he is the signature of its truth' (Weedon, 1997, p. 158). Concomitant with such theoretical questioning is the proposition that every thought, theory

and author is always and forever mediated. What is written is never fixed and the processes of reading and/or engagement that one text incites, and even the new writing that it can inspire, can never grasp the real meaning of the text or the real intention of those who produced those words.

Baack and Prash outline how the idea of the death and disappearance of the author (Barthes, 1968; Foucault, 1969) has led to a new conception of the subject 'as contingent, positional, and ever precarious' (p. 131). As Baack and Prash show, the work of Foucault and Barthes is aligned with those theoretical contributions made by Derrida, Hall, Kristeva, Lacan, and others on the interrogation of subjectivity and institutional power. In line with this work, the focus of inquiry becomes how discourse and discursive practices constitute the (author)subject and exercises power through the processes of defining the normal and the marginal. When imposters take this re-conceptualization of the (author)subject seriously in the context of organization studies, the focus of inquiry 'changes from who defines the terms of the organization to who is defined by them and how those definitions determine organizational identity' (Baack & Prash, 1997, p. 136).

In the current writing context, imposters (as continuously changing and emerging texts, positions, subjectivities, spaces, absences) engage with these theoretical positions so as to allow a questioning of the normativity, stability, and assumed power associated with the 'author' and, further, to interrogate what might happen if imposters fully appreciate and live the absence/death of the author (Barthes, 1977; Derrida, 1967; Foucault, 1984). The reference material for this problematization of author/ship and the example of the complex arrangements related to author/ship is an IKEA ad that first appeared in Italy in 2011. Imposters use this IKEA ad as an exemplar 'production' that imbricates some of the complex arrangements related to author/ship for, in and of organizations.

Event 2: ~~Authoring~~ two IKEA customers

In May 2011, the Italian branch of IKEA announced the opening of a new store in Catania

(Sicily) with an advertising campaign that had a huge impact all over Italy. The campaign

was based on an image (Figure 1) showing two men holding hands, seen from behind, one of

them holding the famous IKEA bag. The text accompanying the image read: "We are open to

all families.", and the ad provoked strong reactions in Italy. Some right-wing politicians

condemned it, saying it was in bad taste and disrespectful of "proper families."

[INSERT HERE FIGURE 1 – WE ARE OPEN TO ALL FAMILIES]

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Character 1: Excuse me sir. Can I ask you to come with me? And, I'll take that bag!

Character 2: Sorry, what's the matter here?

Character 1. Well, I think you're acting suspiciously. You're on your own – clearly not part of a family. And I wouldn't be surprised if I'll find things in this bag that you've not paid for.

Charater 2: No! This is a mistake. I'm just visiting Milan … taking advantage of the exchange rate to buy things more cheaply here than at home. I've paid for everything.

Character 1: Well, maybe the problem is that you're wearing too much blue when you're clearly not a real man!

Character 1: But … . I'm now just going to meet my partner at the Duomo. He's my family. These things are for our house …, our home together. And, anyway, he likes me to wear blue – thinks it makes me more manly.

Character 2: What an outrage! You call that … FAMILY?

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The following year, again in May, IKEA Italy announced that employees benefits, previously reserved for spouses of married workers or their live-in partners, would be extended to include live-in partners of the same sex. This was the first time a major company in Italy made such a move. Today, IKEA workers who live with someone of the same sex are entitled to maternity, paternity or emergency leave, including when someone in the partner's family dies, and their healthcare rights are extended to their partners; they are entitled to some time off when they get married, and they receive a marriage voucher of 120 euros, whether they get married or start living together. Last but not least, their partner gets the same store discounts and the use of the company car. In a certain way IKEA continued its narration of the gay family in a TV advertising campaign in the following years, with a series of ads offering tantalising glimpses of scenes of domestic life featuring two young men.

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Character 1: Hey! Which way should we go?

Character 2: Not sure, really. It's clear that IKEA wants us walking out of their store (should we feel rejected?) as satisfied customers. And we're clearly connected.

Character 1: Yeah, but these other cowboys (they call themselves imposters – pah!) want to read us in other ways … make us do other work, author us in some oppositional reading space that allows them to question what's available in us, in our production and consumption. And they're bringing some heavyweights into their artifices too! I remember

trying to read Barthes when I was at University. Little did I know that I'd be a jobbing actor/model at that point.

Character 2: I know. It's so hard to get in character when there's no clear direction. Is it a case of 'too many cooks ...'? I'm just glad that we have our backs to them. I'm so conscious these days about whether my breasts are bound flatly enough to pass.

Character 1: Whatever they're at, I hate having to do work that I'm not really paid for … having to carry the whole idea of being gay in Italy should merit a life-long pension.

Character 2: I know! I wonder why they didn't get Italian models for the job? And gay ones at that?

Character 1: I'm not really gay, but I'm glad of the work 'cos my agency was just about to let me go if I hadn't landed another job. Ouch! You're holding my wrist a bit tight.

Character 2: Oh, sorry! Anyway, I hope we're finished in time for lunch. Some Italian friends have promised me and my fuck buddies some authentic Italian sauce.

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However, there were also enthusiastic defenders of the ad, and even imitators. For example, the IKEA campaign clearly inspired an ad from EATALY, a new food chain that recently opened restaurants in Italy and elsewhere (including the USA and Japan). EATALY chose to use a female version of the same ad.

Roberta: The copywriter and the art director said that we are a copy of the IKEA ad. I do not like that ad. Why we have to hide our face?

Gilda: Me neither. It seems like we are in (the) closet.

Roberta: Yes, yes. Come out! Come out of the closet and move on!!! Turn our face to the audience, so that the 'Sentries standing[2]' can see the face of another family.

In the last ten years, Italy has seen an increase in the number of publications, books and films, of gay personalities, of Internet sites and newspaper articles talking about gay-related topics. In spite of these signals, 'Italy is a country where anti-lesbian and anti-gay prejudices colour the social and political landscape. Politicians openly and publicly devalue gay people' and where the 'Catholic Church has a very strong power base in all political parties and a

powerful grip' so that 'there are thus no laws against homophobia, and no general legislation

on civil partnership' (Benozzo, 2013, p. 337) or adoption for gay couples or single men or

women.

Event 1b: Meeting of virtual texts

One of the imposters accesses a shared Google document at the same time when another

imposter is supposedly writing on-line as well. One imposter is writing and troubling with

author/ship in Italy at 11 o'clock in the evening. The other one lives in Arizona, where it is

3.00 o'clock in the afternoon. This collective writing takes place across time zones and

geographical regions.

Where is the author? Who is the author? Are we virtual authors, perhaps?

Are you there? Yes.

Can imposters write together?

Yes --I start ---you continue---nobody finishes. OK?

Some accidental writing encounters happen. For one, the sun is still shining, while for the

other it is night-time. Is this writing sunbathing or going to sleep? One of the imposters is

going to sleep. Yet - the writing continues.

Bye and thank you. Have a nice weekend, my love.

You too; my sleepy left hand.

One imposter writes: I write at my desk again. Typing up a series of utterances blended with

scientifically confusing prose. I think I recognize the words I (plan to) write. Maybe.

Today. Eating only the paper candy.

A guard woman in a middle-class neighbourhood waves at the gate to greet (in)visible

(wo)man behind dark and tinted car windows. Welcome home stranger!

Beautiful bouquet of Valentine day roses- maybe taller than the sweetheart receiving them.

Who is the tallest- a rose or a woman?

Who is the least creative- an author or another author?

Another imposter continues: And I come to this diasporic conversation late - dipping in and out from those other authorial practices that give me authority in my workplace and pay my wages. I enter here and there … in anticipation of another conversation in the near future, within which imposters will try to make decisions about the paper's 'play' and 'thesis'; how might one continue authoring here, and how might one represent these experimental explorations in a document that conforms to and confirms the structures and dogma of author/ship through academic publication. Oh, yes. Imposters will be thinking about dis/semination and impact. How will it go?

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<div align="center">Event 3: Authoring notes coming together</div>

12/01/15

The author is dead, there is no intention or premeditated writing purpose and no assumptions about the audience. Why might imposters continue to write that their 'aim/s is/are….'? Or, must imposters too have a clear aim that echoes but is significantly differentiated from those other authors who have written in this field?

Imposters dismiss the author - why in the academy do scholars continue to dispute about author names and order? Who is/must be the first, the second and the third author of this paper? And this order always creates trouble. Does it really matter? But writing in the academy makes it matter: there are metrics and outputs, there is surveillance of productivity; there are rules and etiquette that govern who is who in writing, what can be written from and for the academy. These technologies of governmentality (Rose, 1999; Rose & Miller, 2013) flow and flood imposters' understandings of and practices towards this product. Here! If one of the imposters is the last author, does that mean that they mean less?

How many imposters are there within this paper? [Insert authors second names], But what about Foucault, Derrida, Hall, IKEA, Pirandello, the copywriter, the art director, other managers, leaders and scholars … who else? Don't forget the characters in the ads … and all those ghostly, imaginary producers of meaning and action, actors and pretenders who see/saw the ad … an endless line and lineage of authors.

22/01/15

Imposters probably could use Foucault almost like a master of ceremonies; as the compère, as the person who introduces the other characters; he provides continuity between the different speakers. Maybe Foucault can provide a smooth link between the others? How might imposters conjure that kind of Foucault? As servant to imposters' whims? As a foil for

imposters' experimental, exploratory corruptions of author/ship? Perhaps, in death, he'd like that?

Foucault may be in the sidebar, or the concept of power and knowledge. Foucault will be imposters' space to bring power in, question the notion of the stable and docile subject. Maybe imposters could talk about the ethics of care and the notion of care for self and the self-disciplining practices that are inherent in writing in the academy (and indeed, in producing text in/for any organisation). How do imposters constitute themselves, these characters, these theories as authors without a stable subjectivity or subject position? There is a tension here on how imposters create multiplicity: as soon as they give voice to someone over the author, they create the type of author.

Imposters also have relationships with the characters from the IKEA ad. Do the imposters equalize IKEA characters with other characters/authors like Derrida, Hall and so on? How might or should the imposters make these voices/authors work towards their conclusions?

Imposters can be promiscuous in the ways they use the theoretical positions of these supposedly great men (Hall, Barthes, Derrida etc.). This promiscuous use of these writers is consonant with their position that questions the concept of intentionality in directing a text. Perhaps, along this line, imposters need to flaunt their 'indiscipline' (Halberstam, 2011) in the interpretive and mediating work that they do here … in the in-betweenesses of textual productions and textual consumptions. As such, text is treated as a resource instead of its more usual positioning as a representation of (fixed and determinable) meaning, of a/some 'truth'. This promiscuity legitimates imposters' lack of 'seriousness and rigour' (Halberstam, 2011) in outlining and trying to fix the theoretical position(s) or argumentation structures of each of these authors. Even in invoking these writers of philosophy and cultural theory, imposters reject the idea of the coherent author accessed through those texts produced by

them - especially when those texts have been mediated and (re)disciplined by so many others who … came after them? … have (re)interpreted and thus shaped imposters' understandings of their meanings?

In practicing thus, in these tricksterish acts and arts of author/ship, perhaps imposters are introducing a multiplicity of tiny authors. Deleuze and Guattari (1987) speak about tiny/small beginnings, a thousand plateaus as an alternative to the grand stable notion of entity or author. Instead of imposters projecting or citing or underlining or interpreting, imposters are creating multiple tiny authors, through this constellation of writing authorship.

There is also an issue of representation. What will be the structure of the paper - if any – especially since imposters have multiple positionings and conversations happening simultaneously, a/synchronously? How might imposters document multiplicity? How, through the structure of the text, might imposters work against the authorial voice? Maybe imposters could delete/add things and, in some ways, show the movement within the text; with different writers coming in and commenting… comments and observations that break the authorial voice. When some imposter writes something and shares with another, the others can add or delete what the first writes. Add and delete and create/write texts …

Event 4: Giovanni and Matteo shopping

Giovanni: we need to stop by Ikea this afternoon to get some food for our Friday night party. What do you think we should serve and buy?

Matteo: Elderflower juice, pear cider, Kalle's caviar, herring, Swedish pancakes and potato cakes, meatballs, smoked salmon, and of course some Swedish cinnamon buns with? chocolate.

Giovanni: and we cannot forget cheap napkins and candles.

Matteo: row 11- Bin 7, row 17-bin 22, row 26-bin 1.

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Event 5: Author/ship talking back to research contexts

In conventional humanistic research (see also St. Pierre, 2011) the question of author/ship – when it is raised – is addressed through 'dialogic, collaborative, and composite modes of writing and research to foster more open and responsive relations between academics and the communities with whom they work' (Frow & Morris, 2005, p. 330). Following this tradition, some scholars use the very well known expression research with rather than on participants to connote the kind of research which seeks the involvement of participants so that they become co-authors of research. However, and as as example of how such co-authorship might operate in practice, Sinha and Back (2014), in their study of the experiences of young adult migrants in the UK, proposed including the name of one of their participants as author. Thus, 'the author's attribution should read "Les Back and Shamser Sinha with Charlynne Bryan'" (p. 483). This proposed strategy exposed some institutional limitations because the publisher queried the name of the research participant as a full author.

Although a fairly banal example, this incident speaks to the mundane practices that discipline, structure and are structured in accepted ideas of 'author/ship' for authoring academic texts. And, in the context of this work, just like the normativising and disciplinary practices that shape and govern the production of academic texts, so too are those texts that speak to and for organizational diversity. Organisational texts that extol the virtue of 'diversity' are intertextually entwined in the (hegemonic) cultural zeitgeist in which they appear and are consumed. In this sense then, the IKEA ad that imposters use as an exemplar in this paper, is not 'original', it has not solely originated from the brilliance of its creatives and copy-editors. This ad has its genesis and propagation in the tilth of a range of neoliberal agendas that value the domestication of (some forms of) sexual difference in the service of capital.

According to Coffey (1996) the ethnographer/researcher takes on the role of author when she/he sifts the field, collects interviews and observations, writes field notes and, in the end, composes the ethnography: 'Fieldnotes and subsequent descriptions of the field thus depend upon how the social researcher (as author) constructs conversations, actions, and events into a narrative and descriptive form' (Coffey, 1996, p. 66). This process creates characters and a social world, which depend on authors' conscience, personal meanings, interpretations, presence and understandings. This idea of researcher as author is charged with a romantic aura (the author is the inspired genius or the creator) and locates the researcher in a position of power: s/he is the authorial authority that has the power to make alive a field, a culture, a group, a community, an organization…. S/he is the authorial authority from which something originates. Following this line of thought the researcher threads her/himself into the (dead-end) street of the search for authentic voice and vocality. Indeed, very often in the literature on qualitative research and ethnography, author and authority go together with issues of voice and vocality, which, in turn, are intimately connected with the troubling of writing (MacLure, 2009). Such textual representations fix on a paper just a moment of the life of a group and there is always something that exceeds what is written. Moreover, text "might carry undetected, unwelcome traces of colonialism, racism and gendered privilege" (MacLure, 2009, p. 99) and so becomes fertile ground for feelings of guilt and blame on the part of the researcher. The author/researcher who recognizes this problem or feels this guilt becomes keen to find different ways of analysing and writing that attempts to give voice to the participants, to value their lives, to tell their stories; s/he longs to listen to what they said when they read what s/he writes (Brettell, 1993): this "can be a test of the authority of the ethnographer as author" (Coffey, 1996, p. 70).

Who wrote these sentences? Is it one of the imposters? She/he does not recognise herself anymore in these words. To whom do these sentences belong?

In feminist ethnography the:

> '"burden of authorship" has always been a concern (Behar and Gordon, 1995), with authorship being associated with attempts to dominate "the other": a masculine reach for power that stands in contrast to feminist ideals. The ethnographer must always, therefore, begin by showing that she is "writing from home", situated, positioned and able to reflect on her own perspective' (Gilmore & Kenny, 2015, p. 59).

In recognizing this problematic, researchers are exhorted to potentially adopt reflexivity (in its different forms) in order to account to/for the power inherent in the authorial position, thus rendering the bases of the writer's interpretative processes explicit. For example, Fine (1994) suggested that the researcher work in the hyphen between self-Other; this power relationship very often is exploitative and asymmetrical because when researchers enter the field, observe, listen to, interpret and write, they run the risk of colonizing the lives of others (Graneck, 2013) in distancing '… them by writing their voices out of our research and treating them as generalized abstractions' (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013, p. 365).

Barthes (1982) proposed that 'the author performs a function, the writer an activity' (p.186) and the author's only responsibility is to support literature through failure and missed commitment. The author's actions are to be immanent in its object and a writer writes with its paradoxical instrument; one's own writing. 'The author conceives of literature as an end, the world restores it to him as a means' (Barthes, 1982, p. 187). An author is a salaried priest or national treasure explains Barthes. What does a missed commitment and evident failure of a priest or treasure do to other imposters and possible authors?

Event 6: Post problematizing author/ship

Imposters' paper aligns with those contributions from qualitative research that trouble author/ship (Bridges-Rhoads & Van Cleave, 2014; Gannon, 2006; Van Cleave & Bridges-Rhoads, 2013). Van Cleave and Bridges-Rhoads (2013), for example, underlined that in conventional humanistic research (see St.Pierre, 2011), categories such as author and authorship are paradoxical because, even if handbooks and common knowledge recognize that inquiry should be a collaborative enterprise, the academic world prizes single-authorship. But, instead of throwing away concepts (i.e. author/ship) and finding new ones, they suggest doing different work with the same (necessary but problematic) concepts in order to "recast the author as unforeseeable rather than not useful" (p. 675). Focusing on the American Psychological Association's (APA) phrase 'cited in', on citational practices and on authorship bylines, they deconstruct how authors function in their working together as 'writing partners', and produced them 'as secondary sources for the philosophy that informs [their] respective dissertation"'(p. 675) (a typically single-authored text). They show how in their working together, as cited in was not about the exact meaning of a piece of theory, instead it was a starting point to think and write differently, to position the responsibilities of authorship as an unfinished process. For them authorship was not a finality or "a marker of the 'knower' but … a concept open to interpretation, to being something different" (Van Cleave & Bridges-Rhoads, 2013, p. 682).

In general terms, these scholars explore how the ideas of French Postructuralists - mainly Foucault, Barthes, Derrida and Cixous - unsettle the 'I' (Gannon, 2006) and disrupt the idea that the subject can speak for her/himself, thereby unhinging the author/ship of texts. Barthes (1977) argues that only the death of the author can lead to the birth of the reader. Barthes explains that as soon as a fact has been narrated and symbolized outside any other function 'the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins' (p. 142). To write is to create a space where language acts, performs, and generates - not the

author. Instead of life guiding the novel, the novel guides life. Maybe one could think of 'automatic writing', explains Barthes, where the hand writes so quickly that the head cannot keep up. In addition, enunciation functions perfectly without individuals' interference; the author being nothing beyond the instance writing. In the instance of writing an author composes a text as a writer who performs a task or responsibility. An author does not necessarily express, intend, or own the produced text. 'I' implies that the language knows a subject but not a person; language knows a performing subject similar to a writer (but not an author). Writers have only power to 'mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them' (p.146). Texts as performances, multiple writings come together in a reader and a 'text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination' (p.148). However, readers do not either create origins or personal destinations where writing and texts ultimately arrive but, according to Barthes, readers are without personal history and persona. Instead, a reader is someone who pulls together traces and lines, which constitute a written text.

Foucault asks 'What does it matter who is speaking?' and in so doing, he is concerned with the appearance and disappearance of the writing subject. Naming the author marks the edges of the text, and characterizes the text's presence. Different apparatuses that the writer sets up between himself and the content of his writing cancel signs of the writer's persona and individuality. The mark of the writer is his absence and 'he must assume the role of the dead man in the game of writing' (p.103). A writer writes without a persona and he/she produces a work but the question arises about the definition of a work. What constitutes a work: what is said, left unsaid, deleted and referenced?

To compensate the disappearance of an author readers are likely to locate empty spaces left by the author. The author does not generate signifiers and s/he does not precede the work and writing. Instead, the author is 'a certain functional principle by which, in our culture, one

limits, excludes, and chooses' (Foucault, p. 119). An author is an ideological, discursive product and strategic positioning. Readers call for the author's name and the naming of the author enables the identification of discourses and the status of these discourses in the society. 'The author function is therefore characteristic of the mode of existence, circulation, and functioning of certain discourses within a society' (p.108). The ways in which texts and authors operate vary according to periods and types of discourses. Foucault argues that the authorship is a function, strategy, and normalized practice.

Rather than worrying about the authenticity of the author, forms of deep expression, author's desires, or the originality of the author, Foucault directs imposters' attention to questions such as 'What are the modes of existence of this discourse? Where has it been used, how can it circulate and who can appropriate it for himself? What are the places in it where there is room for possible subjects? …What difference does it make who is speaking?' (p. 120).

Following Barthes (1977), Foucault (1969) and Derrida (1967), who posit the death of the author, are imposters then solely left with the text and its peripheral actors – its writers/readers, its producer(s)/reader(s)? If so, then who/what are these readers? Readers come to texts with particular orientations, sympathies and (adopted) positions. Similarly, texts are not completely 'free-floating'; texts are patterned by genre/form and by the inter- and con-textualising locations in which they are read. In this, texts are pregnant with and already possess the confirming and conforming impulses that shape the shifting knowledge/power nexes of the text's cultural locations. Oftentimes texts reflect strategies and instruments of power that produce them. Texts are also ground(ed) in and by those same discourses that constitute their readers: in this circularity of text/reader what are the (im)possibilities for countermanding and perverting the authority vested in author/ship, for glancing towards the slippages and leakages from and beyond the page? Stuart Hall's ideas

on the encoding/decoding (1980) of texts/signs, on the imperfect symmetricality of the relation between encoding and decoding in which there is no necessary correspondence between encoding and decoding, provides a frame for offering a range of (re)negotiated or oppositional readings for text/signs; readings that wrestle meaning in and from the (putatively natural) ring of its authorial encodings.

Event 7: Absence talking to presence

'What is absent but present (Derrida, 1967) in this ad? How might readers welcome the other when processing and working through it?' Let's imagine, then, that one of the two men (the one without the IKEA bag), is a woman. As soon as the man without the bag becomes a woman, other readings can be constructed. So let's say this is a copy, a variation on the original version of the heterosexual couple. They appear to be in love. They reproduce the ideal of the beautiful, healthy, heterosexual couple, in which it's the man who carries the heavy bag (and with the bag, the money and the bread too). Therefore a relationship of subordination/power is immediately established between the man and the woman. The man is active and the woman is passive. The man is strong and the woman is weak.

Furthermore, what material phenomena are missing from these ads? There are no children. In the IKEA bag there are some toys and the children are with their grandparents. Or maybe there are no children because the woman in the couple is sterile or is it perhaps the man who's sterile? Or both? Or maybe the woman is a bit self-centred and focused on her job and doesn't want any children. Imposters might wonder – who is it who wears the trousers in this family? And yet a proper family requires the presence of a father, a mother, and at least one child (two would be perfect, and if one was a boy and other one was a girl that would be even better, because it would reproduce the perfect heterosexual family). Does this really work as a family?

Another thing – the characters in the ad have their backs to the viewers. What are they trying to hide? Why don't they show their faces? Maybe they've been shoplifting. These two lovers have slipped into IKEA and stolen some sheets to put on their new bed. And the bed has been put in the new 'love-nest' they've just got ready, all furnished from IKEA. The textual and authorial possibilities are endless.

And here imposters are with even more new sexual possibilities. Who knows what else there might be in that bag. What sex toys for their hidden pleasures might be in there? What kinds of perversions might emerge from that bag?

[Readers and imposters hold an IKEA bag - performative].

Oh, there're lots of interesting objects. Look at this!

[Readers and imposters mime]

Oh, it's a whip! And these are handcuffs and there are leather belts, some lubricant jelly, hair removing cream and vibrators, sexy underpants….

Event 8 a: 'To do and organize'

- Go to the cleaner to pick up jumpers

- Buy food (bread, cheese, salad, milk, yogurt)

- Dentist at 11

- Call mam

- Write the conclusions for the fucking 'authoring' paper. I feel lost. I'm stuck

There are other different ways through which one can author or interact with these authored company ads. Imposters can glimpse at them: as an example of how gay culture is spread through processes of globalization; as artefacts designed to sell both products and an idea of the family to the gay community; as an example of contemporary advertising by business

companies and multinationals aimed specifically to gay people (other examples around the world are some of GAP's, Ray-Ban's and Tiffany & Co.'s); as a way for IKEA to present themselves as enlightened, progressive multinationals in favour of gay rights. Through this ad IKEA is authoring itself as one of the best companies for gay families, suggesting that the gay family is just another lifestyle choice, a historical innovation produced by demographic changes, together with changes in people's attitudes.

This ad might function as an expression of the institutional imperative that entered many multinational companies and is encapsulated by such expressions as Equality and Diversity, Diversity Neutral and Diversity Management. These mantras are aimed at recognizing and valuing differences. As some studies in the field have underlined (e.g. Richardson & Monro, 2012) the discourse of valuing diversity draws on discourses on economic value and moral value and is based on the belief that if organizations recognize, protect and value differences - reducing discrimination and achieving fairness both in employment practices and in promoting organizations as tolerant of diversity – this in turn produces benefit for organizations and their businesses (e.g. Colgan, 2011; Guillaume, Dawson, Woods, Sacramento & West, 2013).

Oswick and Noon (2014) chart the discursive shifts between the inter-related concepts of 'Equality', 'Diversity' and 'Inclusion' in academic organisational literatures across a 40 year period to 2010 and note '… a discernible shift of emphasis from "equality" to "diversity", and more recently towards "inclusion"' (p. 31). However, they also highlight the current dominance of the concept of Diversity in this literature but suggest that a discourse of 'inclusion' may well become the more fashionable discourse of anti-discriminatory organisational practices – especially in the US and by early-adopters of such discursive fashions in organisational practice. Notwithstanding their cyclical fashionabilty and the more searching question of whether they represent rhetoric or reality in organizational diversity

practices, these discourses, which celebrate differences, turn out to obscure the heterogeneity within the identity categories (such as 'gay and 'lesbian') that they deploy in order to represent their valuing of difference/s. For example, whilst ostensibly offering support to gay and lesbian people in their pursuit of full citizenship, organizational articulations/interventions that privilege recognition of domestic(ated) civil partnerships simultaneously excludes (or at least occlude) from the public debate non-normative sexualities that find resonance in single-dom, bisexuality, trans identifications and polyamory.

Event 8 b: Merging absences of authors, gayness, and organizational studies

Throughout these pages imposters have tried to appreciate how the rejection of the author/writer/researcher/manager, provides the opportunity to take a sideways glance at the implicit 'gayness' of the textual characters. It allows imposters to: produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently in/for organizations; question ideas and practices of organizational diversity and, consequently, to que(e)ry organization studies more generally. Clearly, some of the events that appear here, thanks to the licence provided by the death of the author, slide into gender trouble or undoing gender (Butler, 1990; 2004) territory. In other words, these texts attempt to break apart the heterosexual matrix, that is, the neat fit, defined as natural, and thus right and respectable between biological sex, gender identity and sexual desire that (re)produces normativity: heteronormativity and homonormativity within organizational discourses and texts. Civilization disciplines and categorizes bodies and desires and suppresses the expression of desire in all its possible multiple, playful forms.

Civilization is also enacted by the idea of the author. Author/ship disciplines. The potential death of the author has allowed imposters, on one hand, to explore different ways to

write an academic text, to do qualitative research and to produce knowledge in the academic

field of organization studies, and on the other, to explore the ad and 'liberate' it from its

regulatory/fixed meanings. Meanings of the texts are never fixed, but always defer to other

(also sexual) meanings, a chain to be followed ad infinitum. And this fun shows how the five

IKEA customers (including 3 imposters) live in-between-ness; probably all imposters

(researcher/customers/managers/authors) live between normality and abnormality, virtue and

sin, purity and perversion, and monogamy and polygamy.

In the end such ads, and (other) organizational discourses, normativize and discipline

sexual identity through the idea(l)s of couple relationship, thus assimilating it within a neo-

liberal, hetero- and homo-normative model (Duggan, 2002). As Duggan (2002) outlines, the

idea(l) of homonormativity emerged in the USA from the conflict between neoliberalism and

public expressions of, and fights for, LGBTQ rights. Those who supported the libertarian

aspects of neoliberalism, promoting unregulated individual rights and freedom of expression

in public, were presented with a dilemma-- how to unregulate individual sexual rights while

regulating diverse representations of LGBTQ identity in the public sphere. A solution to this

dilemma was founded in the economic weight of the Pink Pound and in holding out the

possibility of gay couple-dom and, ultimately gay marriage as the ultimate form of acceptable

and respectable non-normative sexuality.

According to Duggan, the gay marriage discourse allowed conservative gays (almost

all men) to shift the focus of non-heteronormative sexual freedoms and rights from the public

sphere to the domestic and the home. This reframing of LGBT freedom as a domestic

freedom led to a curious inversion of public/private influence. Duggan (2002) described the

strategy:

> This highly visible and influential center-libertarian-conservative-classical liberal
>
> formation in gay politics aims to contest and displace the expansively democratic

vision represented by progressive activists such as Urvashi Vaid, replacing it with a

model of a narrowly constrained public life cordoned off from the 'private' control

and vast inequalities of economic life. This new formation is not merely a position

on the spectrum of gay movement politics but is a crucial new part of the cultural

front of neoliberalism in the United States" (p. 177)

And from this dynamic, two leading social forces of homonormativity emerged: gay

domesticity and gay consumerism. The IKEA ad encapsulates both these forces and, at the

same time, precludes the possibilities for other non-normative sexual identities that hold with

more fluid, flexible and changing ideas of sexual identity to feel represented. IKEA's

message is significant in a context such as Italy, where non-married couples living together

have no legal rights (whether gay or not) and where gay couples cannot have or adopt

children. As such, the kind of strategy most obviously readable from the advertisement risks

being effective from the view-point of non-normative sexuality in very partial and particular

ways. Additionally, one of the results of the campaign was to radicalize and re-frame the

debate into age-old irreconcilably opposed positions.

In conclusion, what imposters have shown through their dealings with this text is that,

if the author is dead (unknown, unknowable, irrelevant or absent), there are multiple options

available when encountering organizational texts that claim to celebrate and promote (sexual)

diversity:

- readers cannot locate any 'original' intention in/through texts with any authority. And so,

    the concomitant authority of identity position (sexuality, race, gender, dis/ability …)

    available in texts becomes questionable;

- multiple (organizational) stories are possible: the text fragments, there is no definitive

    meaning/truth;

- texts no longer (re)present but provoke, stimulate, question, destabilize, generate, create and so on;

- authorship could move beyond the immediacy of the text toward the formation of discourses and creation of discursive formations;

- reading becomes writing.

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Footnotes

1. Burke writes: 'One of the leading and more hospitable theoretical paths leading to the announcement of the death of the author travels along the familiar circuit by which the work of the Russian Formalists passes through Czech and French structuralism to culminate in the poststructuralism practiced by Barthes, Foucault and Derrida in the 1960s' (2008, p. 10).

2. The expression 'Sentries Standing' (literally 'Sentinelle in Piedi') represents a Catholic movement, which organizes public silence events in Italian city squares. The 'Sentries Standing' are people who form parallel rows, where each person is one meter distant from the other. They stay stand up for one hour reading books in defence of the 'natural family.' They present themselves as sentries because thanks to this gesture they want to defend the traditional family made of a woman and a man.

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Figure 1 – IKEA ad - We are open to all families (Available at

http://it.paperblog.com/per-°©-l-°©-ikea-°©-due-°©-ragazzi-°©-che-°©-si-°©-amano-

°©-sono-°©-una-°©-famiglia-°©-293294/ accessed 5 November 2014).

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