

When Spaces Meet: Images of Spirituality and Organizing^[1]

by Monika Kostera

School of Management, Warsaw University, Poland

ABSTRACT

The aim of this article is to propose a narrative (syntagmatic) theory of how a meeting between spirituality and organizing can occur. The theory is composed of fictive stories collected by me from various authors. It takes the form of another story, a kind of meta-story, authored by me. I look upon spirituality as awareness, and I associate it with smooth space in Deleuze and Guattari's (1996) terminology. Organizing is to me an ongoing process, both based on and enabling communication, and I link it to more striated space. Authors were asked to think about a meeting between those spaces represented by minimal symbols and compose a story. I have organized the narratives according to their main plot and storyline into stories of clash, enclosure, merger, and experience. In the first the spaces conflict; in the second, one turns of to be part of the other; in the third they unite in another space; and in the last they co-construct a novel understanding. I then discuss the plots, the outcomes of the plots, and how the plots work to produce the outcome. Finally, I explore the symbolism of the encounter between spirituality and organizing, looking for possibilities of greater understanding and inspiration.

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to propose a narrative (syntagmatic) theory of how a meeting between spirituality and organizing can occur. A narrative is based on association, it adds events one after another in time and uses metonymy as means of generalization (Latour, 1992). A theory is an account, "an attempt to explain a segment of experience in the world" (Hatch, 1997: 9). A narrative theory is a kind of account that uses narrative logic (and not e.g. logo-scientific; on different kinds of logic see Czarniawska, 2001). I will compose such a theory of fictive stories collected by me from various authors. It takes the form of another story - a story about the stories. The significance of doing this is rooted in the conviction (shared by me and the authors of the stories) that spirituality complements organizing in an essential sense, enabling collective creativity. The text looks for theories that neither use spirituality in a manipulative way to exploit people even more, nor see organizing as evil to be renounced. The first step is to explain what I mean by spirituality on the one, and organizing on the other hand.

SPIRITUALITY

Anthony de Mello (2000) contrasts spirituality with religion: religion as practiced today deals in punishments and rewards. It breeds fear and greed - the two things most destructive of spirituality (de Mello, 2000). Religions are more like ideologies, they can be fair, or humanistic, but sometimes they can be dangerous, and inspire violence. They are institutionalized spirituality; that is, its organized form.

"Spirituality is awareness, awareness, awareness, awareness, awareness, awareness," as Anthony de Mello (2000) put it. Awareness is the way to enlightenment which is the heart of spirituality. To be enlightened is to see:

Spirituality is about seeing. It's not about earning or achieving. It's about relationship rather than results or requirements. Once you see, the rest follows. (Rohr, 1999: 31)

Enlightenment means a change devoid of motivation, as motivation encapsulates change; due to motivation "the future is what we are now" (Krishnamurti, 1996: 55). It is unpredictable, unpredicted, and uncontained

change - a transformation (Rohr, 1999). It can be found by an inquiring mind, but not by way of formal education or logical problem solving, development in the sense of training the logical mind, or adopting of rational techniques. The mind should be free and completely dedicated. Enlightenment feels like ecstasy, a transcendence of subjectivity and objectivity, a state which indeed cannot be described, especially not analytically described. De Mello (2000) depicts it in the following parable:

“There are three stages in one’s spiritual development,” said the Master. *“The carnal, the spiritual and the divine.”*

“What is the carnal stage?” asked the eager disciples.

“That’s the stage when trees are seen as trees and mountains as mountains.”

“And the spiritual?”

“That’s when one looks more deeply into things - then trees are no longer trees and mountains no longer mountains.”

“And the divine?”

“Ah, that’s Enlightenment,” said the Master with a chuckle, *“when trees become trees again and mountains, mountains”*[2]

Through awareness the person can consciously perceive the world and her- or himself. The enlightened person is free and does not need identify her- or himself with the ego - she or he is present in the Now (Tolle, 1999).

ORGANIZING

Like Karl Weick (1969/1979), I do not believe in fixed, solid phenomena called organizations, but in processes of organizing, or bringing together of “ongoing interdependent actions into sensible sequences i.e. (which) generate sensible outcomes” (Weick 1969/1979: 3). The result of organizing are cycles linked together as loops (and not chains of causes and effects). The stages of a cycle of organizing Weick describes as enactment – which means that people bracket out a segment of

their environment and make it real through their actions; selection, where people try to reduce ambiguity by framing them with the help of their cognitive schemes; retention, or keeping of the effects within their cognitive schemes. Organizing is thus about active and continuous sensemaking, as much as it is about practice making the processes real or enacted (Weick, 1995). Organizing does not, then, mean strict ordering in the sense of imposing the rules of rationality, but is a complex process of sensemaking. The paradox of the sensemaking process of organizing is that successful results are stored (retained), extending the cognitive schemes, but at the same time limiting the possibilities of change: the process is one of ordering and directing.

My aim now is to connect spirituality and organizing, with both being understood in the processual way. Processual theories of organizing and understandings of spirituality are radical reactions to reification commonly encountered in mainstream discourse. To my knowledge no attempt has been made yet to link them theoretically.

TWO SPACES

Both organizations and spirituality are ambiguous, fluid, and far from solid. They are not each other’s opposites. But neither do they overlap. In order to reflect more directly on a possible encounter between them, I have opted for a territorialization of them; that is, I associated them with respective types of space and then staged an encounter between those spaces. Narration presupposes spatiality: in order for ideas to be presented, a space needs to be created for their presentation. Narration is a territorialization in the web of meanings. Territorialization is a concept coined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1996). They see territorialization as the result of interaction processes between physical and/or psychosocial forces. Territorialization is an active process, where all the actors involved may be human, or non-human, sentient or non-sentient, material or supernatural. For example, the Earth’s gravity territorializes people, trees and buildings in

their movement through space, acting on them through its energy. The ascribing of meaning can be seen as a reterritorialization process, consisting of material and phenomenological aspects, as it settles the event in a fairly concrete frame. Territories and territorializations may be not only physical but also psychological and spiritual (Deleuze and Guattari, 1996).

First, I would like to present my own view of the two spaces and their brief characteristics. As for spirituality, it can be pictured as an empty space, in the sense that it is an unlimited possibility, an undefined presence, devoid of self (de Mello, 2000). Spiritual space is a natural setting for individuation and the expression of the person's transcendental aspects. In that space, relating to others is altruistic, or, in Krishnamurti's words, "to express compassion one has to be truly free" (1996: 94). However, communication is not in itself a trait of spiritual space; it demands collective action and shared meanings enabling people to understand each other. Spiritual space is so individual that all language is lost.

Organizational space is often associated with a linear reality (Burrell, 1997), but given that organizations are in reality processes of sensemaking, it need not be seen this way. Simply put it is about the right place and right time, where people do the right things (Czarniawska, 2000). People need not share all the definitions of what they do and why, not even of what is right. They should agree upon all the most general points of reference so that they can act together (if they carry a table they need to know which way is up, and which down, and where they are to carry it). Organizational space is that of communication, although expression is not a natural trait of that kind of space.

Spiritual space is, in Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) terms, a smooth space, while the organizational one is more striated. Smooth space consists of movement, representing nomadism and freedom; striated space is inactive, ordered and possible to control. I do not see organizational space as completely striated,

but more so than spiritual space.

THE MEETING OF SPACES

I chose a method of gaining insight not far removed from either of the two spaces' languages: that of story collection. Stories are intimately connected with processes of organizing; they can in fact be seen as storytelling (Czarniawska, 1997). Spiritual spaces, too, can be produced by stories, notably the parable (e.g. de Mello, 2000). I asked for fictive stories rather than realistic prose because I am not concerned here with physical or social space. Imagination is a mode of experience that is useful both to spirituality and organizing (on the organizational uses of imagination, see Morgan, 1993).

I have chosen to represent the two spaces I wished to be narrated using basic images that archetypically symbolize what I think of as their most central features. The smooth space of spirituality was represented by a nomadic monk, while the more striated space of organizing by a door of a building hosting the corporate HQ. I asked friends via email to write short stories, belonging to a genre of the author's choice. The stories should begin with the phrase: Once upon a time a monk knocked on a big front door of a corporate HQ ... Later, I asked my students to write stories during a seminar I teach at Warsaw University. The authors could sign their stories or remain anonymous. I received 24 stories, some in Polish and some in English.

In the following sections I present main plots of the stories. Each is illustrated by one or more typical examples. Thus I construct one more story, about what in my opinion happens in the symbolical meeting between the spiritual space and the organizational space. My story collection is a way of co-authoring performative definitions (Austin, 1973/ 1993) based on imagination and experience. Social actors construct such definitions in order to make action possible. They do this for themselves, as well as for others. They are neither "false" nor "true", but they can be accurate, beautiful,

important, etc. (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1991). My role in this process is that of the editor, actively looking for interesting material and trying to express herself through it. The result is a narrative theory, explaining the ways in which organizing and spirituality can come together.

TALES OF CLASH

In most of the stories spaces conflict with each other. At times one wins, at time the other, the disagreement sometimes taking on violent forms. I call them tales of clash. One of the most cruel stories throughout the collection is one by Jan Czarzasty, where God reveals His patriarchal, vengeful nature:

Once upon a time a monk knocked on a big front door of a corporate HQ and asked a guard to let him in.

“Do you have an appointment, sir?” – the guard asked politely.

“I have a mission from God,” the monk replied with a straight face, *“and I have to see the boss. It’s urgent.”*

The receptionist would not let him in, however, and called in the guards.

Two robust and mean-looking guards appeared suddenly.

“I’m afraid I have to ask you to leave, sir,” the guard told the motionless monk. *“Our company is on the Fortune 500 list. Thousands of people all around the world make their living thanks to us. We produce, sell and push human needs and desires toward new frontiers in an endless pursuit of happiness. Our bosses, those giants on the last floor, care for us all, working 24 hours a day. And now you, Mr. Nobody, wearing that ridiculous robe, simply come in here and want to see them?”*

“Yes, I’ve got a message from God,” the monk calmly replied.

The security were not impressed and the monk had to leave.

Three days later an earthquake destroyed the HQ. Well, originally God did not have the intention of erasing the boss and several hundred of corporate employees off the surface of

the Earth. He only wanted to express his great appreciation to the corporation for promoting family values and sponsoring churches and charities. Nevertheless, kicking his messenger out of the building was simply too disrespectful to let it go unpunished. The person at the top of the corporate pyramid should have a sense of hierarchy. Such pride, one of the deadly sins, must be reprimanded. And who said God really resembles his conceived-in-Hollywood Santa-Claus-like image of a soft-spoken and generous grandfather distributing only gifts but no twigs?[3]

In this story the organizational actors see the monk as somebody weak and they show him his lowly place in the pecking order. They are strong: “our company is on the Fortune 500 list” and there is no place for a “Mr. Nobody, wearing that ridiculous robe.” However, it turns out that the monk has a boss that is even stronger. For how long, compared to His magnificent creation, has this unfortunate little Fortune 500 world existed? And yet they dare to insult His messenger. He raises his fist in wrath and strikes down the little nobodies inhabiting the corporation. Great as He is, He is not beyond the desire to prove who really is the boss.

In some anonymous stories, the monk was ridiculed and offended by the people of the corporation, but God failed to make a grand entrance . In one story, the security people denied the monk shelter and laughed at him. In another, the corporation’s victory has a happy end. The monk was not rejected but welcomed, and he became thrilled by the youthfulness and joy of the organizational actors so much that he “shed his monk’s robes and joined the ranks of the people of success, forgetting what he had come here for”. However, in most stories of clash the spiritual space wins over the organizational, at least in the long run. It does so forcefully, like in Jan Czarzasty’s story, or with subtle grace, as on one where the monk discovered that the corporate world is devoid of spirit and literally painted it in bright, living colors, thus waking up the spirit.

Sometimes the clash does not produce confrontation but an anticlimax - the spaces fail to meet. For example, in Peter Case’s story

the monk is taken for a homeless person and, out of her prejudices and fear, the receptionist shuts the door in his face. Who knows what would have happened if the receptionist had let the monk in? Maybe spiritual awakening, or perhaps a violent clash of worlds? But, on the other hand, just what happens every day, when the receptionist prevents homeless people from entering? Maybe she thus prevents chaos and impurity - but maybe not.

But the unlikely can happen, too. Heather Höpfl tells the tale of the corporate man who, in spite of the improbability of such a meeting, managed to encounter the monk. At first the monk was barred from entering by the woman at the reception desk:

"Show me," said the monk, "where I can find the heart of this great enterprise".

"I'm afraid," replied the woman on the reception desk, "that strangers are not allowed to go onto the CEO's corridor.

The monk was an outsider, he was not welcome in the office. He was even denied the possibility of having some food at the company's cafeteria, because it was only for personnel. Outside on the street, through a window, he saw a man pacing restlessly, and their eyes met briefly. Thus the meeting, however improbable, took place between the two actors - one on the inside, the other on the outside. Later they met a second time, reterritorialized, in a café used by university students located nearby. The monk went in there and felt at home among their noisy banter and youthful camaraderie. He bought a sandwich and a cup of coffee and went to sit near the window. After a little while, he saw the man he had seen from the window. He was walking down the street. His face was drawn and tense. When the man saw the monk in the window he paused, hesitated and then crossed the road towards the café. A moment later the door of the café opened and the man came in. He looked hurriedly around and then came over to where the monk sat.

The man hoped for some comforting words. He approached the monk with his tale, an agonizing dilemma, who listened to the confession and said:

"[Y]ou must make what you know available to people who can stop it".

The manager is not a believer and feels anxious about the future of himself and his family, while at the same time wanting to do the right thing. He expresses his moral anguish about his environment:

"Everything is about money. My boss talks endlessly about what he is worth, about shares, cars, his houses, about profit. Why should he worry about children's health? My organization has no heart". The man hung his head.

"Then you must be its heart. You must be the living, beating heart of the organization. While you remember this, you must be the love that the organization lacks. You will be wounded for your pains but you will not die. The organization that has no heart is dead already. Forgive me for talking to you in this way but so much now depends on you. Be brave and act. Only pursue good. Remember your larger family". The monk took the man's hand. "My son, I believe God has brought me to you today because that is the way I live. You don't believe in my God but you are a good man. Goodness must act. Action is what is needed to restore the heart. Be of good courage. Take heart".

Then the monk got up, moved towards the door and was gone. The man looked down at the table and there beside the monk's cup he saw a crumpled scrap of paper. On it was written, *"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares. Hebrews: 13 v. 2".* He knew what he had to do.

In this story the meeting was improbable, the receptionist was not willing to let the wanderer in and the story might as well have ended with the same nothingness as in many of the previous narratives. However, a meeting of looks through a window pane becomes the first step to an unlikely encounter. Other organizational actors might have not noticed the spiritual actor, but the protagonist suffers and is more open to a revelation. The meeting takes place outside the two spaces: on the territory of another organization, less rigidly organized.

In most of the stories where one of the spaces remains invisible to the other, it is the corporate actors that demonstrate their persis-

tent blindness. In one story the reverse is true. Sebastian Kruk writes of a monk wandering around in the corporate HQ, wondering where everybody is and failing to see anything much. There is only darkness and a strange hum, not coming from any visible human source. The management center turned out to be a computer. The monk was amazed, looking around for someone who supervised the machine. He did not find any such person and went back to the monastery, disappointed.

TALES OF ENCLOSURE

In a smaller group of stories one of the spaces inundates the other. One turns out to be more universal, either engulfing the other or turning out to be the ultimately real one. I call them tales of enclosure. In Hervé Corvellec's story the spaces are depicted as initially in opposition to each other, instantly recognizable as different; they stand for different values but even so no confrontation or clash takes place. Instead, it turns out that one of them integrates the other. The corporate actor eyes the monk without much interest or respect, ironically incredulous that he would have any "ground" to meet the CEO. But it turns out that there are "grounds" indeed:

"My order has bought this company," the monk replied.

This was how the two ladies at the information desk were the first to suspect that the largest bank, insurance and brokerage company of the 21st century was soon to go through some dramatic changes.

As in most of the clash stories, the monk is not welcome by actors of the corporation, who are proud of their elevated position in the corporate pecking order. They are not interested in meeting another person or culture. They judge others by herd-standards, and show contempt when they see someone who is not a hegemonic male. Organizations indeed do not care to meet people. They rarely pause to regret it. Managers are not recorded crying in great masses for their lost opportunities of meeting Bill, the laughing American fan of Bob Marley, or Agneta, the beautiful lesbian activist.

Or wandering monks! However, this time they will have to pause, perhaps even stop, and take a good look. The monk is insignificant by their standards, but their standards will soon now be exchanged for his standards. They are part of his space.

Usually the organizational space is depicted as contained in a larger, spiritual space, as in Maureen McElroy's story. First, the monk is denied entry by the representatives of the corporation. The receptionist in this story was polite and the following dialogue took place:

The receptionist, well groomed both in dress and tone, asked if she could be of any assistance.

"Yes" said the monk *"I would like to go up to your roof and pray."*

"One moment," replied the receptionist, outwardly unruffled but inwardly stumped by this unusual request. *"I will contact Security and see what can be done."*

The politeness of the receptionist is not an expression of profound friendliness, just part of her professional role. While the monk sat down waiting, she complained to the security chief about a "nutter" having entered the building. The "nutter" in question does not seem dangerous, just "baggy," however, the security chief is definite: he should not be let up onto the roof:

"Don't be daft. No-one in their right mind comes up to our door asking to pray on the roof! For my money he's a bomber, or a suicide, or both. Either way, he's not going up on the roof. Get rid of him."

The receptionist did not want to upset the monk, and so she wondered how to get rid of him politely. In the meantime the monk had disappeared. A frantic search ensued and panic began to set in. Every possible area in the 30-storey building was searched. The chief of security was considering possible scenarios, none of them too cheerful. At the same time:

Up on the roof, a man was watering plants. The area was quiet, tranquil and protected from unwelcome

breezes by large glass panels which were clear, allowing unrestricted views of the surrounding area. From this vantage point it was possible to see beyond the buildings to the hills and fields beyond. The gardener stood up, admired the view for a moment, and left the roof garden by an inconspicuous door. Two birds carried food for their young, safe within a nest hidden in a large bush.

Meanwhile, the Personal Assistant of the CEO was taking care of everything and it was to her that the Security Chief turned with a request to speak to the boss. As usual, she explained that the C.E. was unavailable – in fact, she had never met him (even though she was reluctant to admit it), but this was hardly necessary, given that all decisions were passed via email or fax. As usual, she took care of the problem, which the in-house policeman described. As a result, a fire drill was commanded and all employees accounted for. No danger was pending, it was decided.

With everyone back at their desks, the ‘mystery of the missing monk’ remained unsolved.

Up in the Executive Office, looking down at the staff safely evacuated, and now slowly returning to their work, the C.E. smiled, and, safe in the knowledge that he was looking out for his staff, returned to watering his plants.

The Security Chief berated the receptionist for leaving a visitor unsupervised and tightened up the systems. New, more and better security monitors were installed. The doorman was given the additional task of keeping an eye on anyone waiting in the lobby. In time the whole episode faded into memory and then from memory.

Up on the roof, a man watered the plants, fed the birds and watched over his people. Sometimes he even moved among them, but they did not see him. A monk in an office is something that should not be there - and so is not there.

Who would suspect the very essence of the organizational space, the top of the hierarchy, to be a door to another dimension? Or to another space - the CEO is both a represen-

tative of the spiritual space himself, dressed as a monk, and he occupies a differently constructed physical space in the corporate building. His office is both the visible epitome of hierarchy and the passage from frantic activity into quietude. But he is never there - he spends his time on the roof, watering flowers and watching birds. This is impossible for the people of the organization to perceive.

A different kind of passage is depicted in Agnieszka Rosiak’s tale. The monk believes himself to be entering a giant organization and proceeds to explore it with amazement and confusion, until he realizes that the organization is in fact a part of a higher, more fundamental order, of the spiritual space. He has entered purgatory and is learning to become more individual and creative together with other people. One day they will transcend the temporary space and ascend to heaven. The lesson is already taking root, although slowly and gradually, in people. At one moment he sees the foretaste of what heaven will be:

The monk noticed the clothing of the people. He was surprised to see that now it was no longer the gray identical uniforms but multicolored costumes of many different forms. [...] It seemed that it was possible to discern their personalities. The inner worlds of the people radiated, overlapping each other, creating a common picture like a rainbow.

TALE OF MERGER

In two stories the spaces merge in another, which embraces both. I call these tales of merger. A female student locates the merger in a narrative space, which can be shared by the researcher and the researched. The monk knocked and “the door was opened by another monk who happily started to tell him stories”.

Józef Mrozek also makes the merger happen in narrative space, but the narrativity is much less comprehensible and its dimensions far less straight. The story starts in a deceptively similar way to most of the stories I have collected: the monk knocks on the door and is dismissed by a guard.

Once upon a time a monk knocked on a big front door of a corporate HQ. Nothing. The monk knocked again, louder. A uniformed guard appeared from nowhere like Richelieu from behind the arras.

Then all starts happening at once, allusions cross-refer to each other, names are dropped, hints are hinted at. Soon it shifts to another plot and even another genre. Then it turns again. Over and over again, the turn is performed until the vague and ironic ending:

“My name is Bond” said the second monk *“James Sergejevich Bond. I am just shocked, not confused.”*[4]

“My pleasure,” said the guard. *“I am Gates. Bill Gates. Welcome to the Microsoft Corporation.”*

The disparate and sometimes dissonant symbols tossed together by Józek Mrozek are able to meet in the narrative space – symbols of West and East, popular and vulgar culture: razor-blade gangsters, mafia bosses – meets with the sublime: enlightenment, St. Augustine. The monk meets the guard, but who is the villain and who the hero? Is there a plot and a set of symbols and genres, or do they flow freely and spontaneously, following an order that is neither typical of the spiritual, nor the organizational? I think the latter is true: the text is not enlightening nor organized, there is no good, no evil, not even action. Or they are all present as characters, equal and subject to another kind of logic - the narrative logic. The ending does not conclude nor locate the spiritual and organizational spaces in relation to each other, in fact the story had deterritorialized itself somewhere at the very beginning and the various spaces simply do not exist. The ending performs the purely narrative ploy - it surprises and opens to new associations and ideas.

TALE OF EXPERIENCE

One story, by Jerzy Kociatkiewicz, contains a different plot. Here the spaces meet and produce together something new. It is what I call a tale of experience - the meeting of the spaces enables a creative action to be taken.

Once upon a time a monk knocked on the door of a corporate HQ. It's all a bit of exaggeration, actually - he wasn't that much of a monk, and the corporation wasn't all that big either. Even the knocking seemed half-hearted, much like one hand[5] clapping. Still, he did knock, and after some time (a bit too much time, the monk thought), the door opened, and an individual in a shabby suit and a tie looked out, sized him up, and said, rather rudely, *“what do you want?”*

And so the monk asked his usual question: *“What is Buddha?”*

“That'll be five dollars,” came the short reply.

“B-but...” stammered the monk.

“Five dollars, or you get no answer,” said the businessman.

And so the monk went away to meditate on Buddha being five dollars. After all, it wasn't the strangest answer he had received so far. Three years later he returned to the corporation. This time everything was different. To start with, the monk seemed much more inspired, as if lit by some deep understanding. The corporate building looked more impressive, too, as it had been redecorated in steel, glass, and marble[6]. The man who opened the door was, however, the same, although somewhat older looking and dressed in a more expensive suit. He wanted to bark out the same question as five years earlier, but something in the monk's smile told him to keep silent. And the monk kept smiling, then reached into a pocket of his robe and took out a single grain of rice. He held it up for the other man to see. The businessman looked and was enlightened.

The spaces meet and perform something new together, and in the background there is a supportive narrative space. The genre of Zen tale makes the meeting possible in a distinctive way. The encounter of spaces does not produce an outcome that can be derived from the elements present in the story. It can be read literally, as an account of two persons performing rather strange actions, but it is not the most rewarding way of reading the story. The way I like to read it is as an open text, where the real action starts as the story ends. It is up

to the reader to imagine what happened next. The unarticulated continuation of the story exists in some combined space produced by the meeting of the spiritual, the organizational, and the narrative spaces, and the reader is drawn into it and invited to take an active role.

CRUSHED OR INSPIRED

To summarize the main plots of the stories: spaces clash (tales of clash), sometimes they clash so profoundly that they fail to touch; or one turns out to be part of the other (tales of enclosure); or they merge in a third, encompassing narrative space (tales of merger). In one story (tale of experience) they meet and produce something new from their encounter. The spaces sometimes keep their spatial identity throughout the story. Many narratives, such as the anonymous tales of clash I mentioned, the characters and symbols representing the two spaces become deterritorialized and the story reterritorializes them into some other setting and space, or loses one or the other completely. Some stories, such as many of the clash tales and all of the merger tales, are not about the spiritual and organizational spaces but about just one space: the organizational or the narrative. In some cases (as the anonymous clash story where the monk became an employee) the victory of one of the spaces is so complete, that the other becomes erased from the narrative. In one case, Józek Mrozek's postmodern tale, the narrative presents itself as the postmodern omnipresent text of which everything and all are part, self-reflexive, ironic, and amoeba-like flowing in all directions, in which everything is embedded, and boundaries are just textual rules, to be kept sometimes - but not imperative. The text ultimately rules itself.

Whenever spatiality is distinctive in the stories the actors gain a freedom to move, as movement is enacted in space. It exists as a potentiality, or the move has already been taken. This is true, among others, about the experience tale and Heather Höpfl's story. In deterritorialized stories, where the symbols are kept as part of the narrative but the spaces have been erased, the freedom of movement of the

actors is limited. The gangster-monk of Józek Mrozek can perform all kinds of breathtaking narrative turns as long as they remain purely narrative. I cannot picture the monk meeting an angel otherwise than in some self-reflexive irony.

The spaces are usually portrayed as more or less each others' opposites. The organizational space is hierarchical, structured, ordered. In almost all the stories mainstream symbols of corporate power are present in the description of the organizational space: managers wear suits, receptionists are well groomed, the CEO's office is vast and expensive looking, etc. The physical setting and the interpretive schemes are ordered and often rigid, restraining the actors from individual perception and individual expression. In almost all stories organizational space is definitely a striated space, sometimes oppressive and sometimes productive. Spiritual space is usually portrayed as fluid, smooth. The monk moves freely and in one story his freedom is further emphasized by the open space in which he dwells. Sometimes the smoothness does not grant happiness: in some stories the wandering monk is tired and sad, he has no roots but he also has no rest (many of the clash stories). Typically (the most striking example is Agnieszka Rosiak's tale), the spiritual space is colorful, the home for compassion and genuine feelings. Or, as in some cases, dull and old fashioned (the story where the monk became an employee).

Another question is about the outcome of the plot. Sometimes the spaces meet in some kind of transformation: subjugation of one of the spaces, invasion, or a new construction (most of the clash, merger and enclosure stories). Often they fail to meet (part of the clash stories). This is due to blindness, usually on the part of the organizational actors. The story where the spaces keep their spatial identity and perform something new together (the experience story) presents actors engaging in actions meaningless at first glance. In a deeper reading they turn out to be interacting on a profound level. It may be spiritual, and the enlightenment reached by both of them seems to point in that

direction. However, I do not read this story just as an account of spiritual enlightenment. The monk was enlightened as a result of an action that the businessman performed. Corporate symbols, such as dollars, headquarters decorated in glass, steel and marble, seem to be part of the mystical interaction. What is enlightenment – to the monk? To the businessman? Is it the same thing or different? Is it spiritual, organizational? Territorialized in striated or smooth space? Reterritorialized elsewhere, in a new space? Or deterritorialized altogether? Faithful to the genre, I leave all the above questions open.

Finally, how does the plot work to produce the outcome? The first narrative path leads through blindness to failure to meet. The actors are not open reading the Other's symbols on the Other's terms. They may have a strong motivation to read them in the own well trained way, for example, pride of their status in the societal herd (part of the clash stories, especially Jan Czarzasty's tale). Or the actors may not be prepared to perceive what is in front of their eyes because they are used to interpreting everything before they really see it (as in Maureen McElroy's story). They see a room and they think: a CEO's office. They see a garden and they think: a garden. They immediately place the items in a structure of other items and meanings determined by language: the CEO belongs in the CEO's office, while the gardener belongs in the garden. The CEO is a person with high status and dressed in a suit. The gardener is a person with low status and dressed in overalls. The monk is something that does not belong in either of those settings. In such a well defined world, there is no place for things that do not fit into the settings, they have no place, they are invisible. Sometimes aspects of the different spaces meet, but blindness prevents one of them, usually the organizational actors, to see the spiritual actors for what they are (as in clash stories where the monk is rejected before he is heard out). They see a superficial image which they read and react to according to their encoded standards. The same process is started as described above: the actors immediately interpret and label what

they see and then they evaluate it according to the set of meanings that the labels belong to. The man in the long robe is a "nutter," a homeless person, a Mr. Nobody, someone that there is no reason to take seriously or even treat decently according to the embraced system of norms. The spiritual symbolism is translated into the organizational code and no communication is possible.

Another narrative path leads to encounter. In Heather Höpfl's story in a moment of severe stress the manager meets the eyes of a supernatural being. His suffering makes him pause and he listens, realizing that he has spoken with an angel. An impossible encounter: yet it is not the existence of the Other that is impossible, but the meeting. Meeting the Other depends on being able to see. What the manager saw was an opening, a crack in his world, springing from his broken heart. The path to encounter leads through the crack. In one story the actors exchange obscure expressions which the reader cannot easily interpret. From the story she or he can infer that the actors had similar problems. They concentrate and meditate on them, creating an opening, a crack in their worlds, until they become enlightened. They communicate, but their communication is not easily interpreted. Not talk but silence produces the crack. Silence can be the path to meet another space. But why should one bother to meet it in the first place? This is implicit in many of the stories: there is a fundamentally important inspiration that can be gained from such a meeting. The theories which I have presented in the first part of this paper suggest this as well: the smooth spiritual space can be a good context for people to gain insight. The organizational space, more striated, could be a perfect context for doing things together, for communication. Taken together the spaces inspire each other: people can share their insights, and they can work on shared aspects of expression. This may result in originality and beauty but may, of course, also take many other forms, from violence to kitsch, as the stories rightly point out. Violence occurs when the spiritual space is devoid of its smoothness and becomes more striated - a

religion, in fact, or just another organization (organized spirituality). The clash happens between two organizations and hierarchies rather than between organization and spirituality.

In terms of a narrative theory, there is an association between spirituality and organizing. People need spirituality to gain insight. They can encounter it by awareness. But people also need organizing for communication and common action. They can acquire it through shared symbolic sensemaking (talk). Neither organizing nor spirituality needs to rule or manipulate the other. There is a path to a creative encounter. It leads through seeing and silence, a conscious effort to perceive the other on its own terms. And so the story begins...

REFERENCES

- Austin, J. L. (1973/1993). "Jak działac slowami" (How to do things with words) in: *John L. Austin* (collected works edited by Bogdan Chwedenczuk) *Mówienie i poznawanie: Rozprawy i wykłady filozoficzne* (Talking and learning: Discourses and philosophical lectures.) Warszawa: PWN, p. 545-708.
- Burrell, G. (1997). *Pandemonium: Towards a Retro-Organization Theory*. Thousand Oaks-London-New Delhi: Sage.
- Czarniawska-Joerges, B. (1991). "Culture is the medium of life." in: P. J. Frost, L. F. Moore, M. Reis Lois, C. C. Lundberg and J. Martin (eds.) *Reframing organizational culture*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, p. 285-297.
- Czarniawska, B. (1997). *Narrating the organization: Dramas of institutional identity*. Chicago-London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Czarniawska, B. (2000). *A city reframed: Managing Warsaw in the 1990s*. Harwood.
- Czarniawska, B. (2001). "Is it possible to be a constructionist consultant?" *Management Learning* 32/2: 253-266.
- De Mello, A. (1992/1998). *Awakening: Conversations with the Master*. Chicago: Loyola Press.
- De Mello, A. (2000). *Spiritwalk: Resources for awakening*. Retrieved from the world wide web on May 8, 2000, www.spiritwalk.org/demello.htm.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Deleuze, G. and Guattari, F. (1996). *What is philosophy?* New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hatch, M. J. (1997). *Organization Theory: Modern, symbolic and postmodern perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kostera, M. (1997). "Personal performatives: Collecting poetical definitions of management." *Organization*, 4(3): 345-353.
- Krishnamurti, J. (1996). *Rozmowy z samym sobą*. (Krishnamurti to himself: His last journal) Poznan: Rebis.
- Latour, B. (1992) "Technology is society made durable" in: John Law (ed.) *A sociology of monsters: Essays on power, technology and domination*. London: Routledge, p. 103-131.
- Morgan, G. (1993) *Imaginization: The art of creative management*. Newbury Park-New Delhi-London: Sage.
- Rohr, R. (1999). *Everything belongs: The gift of contemplative prayer*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Company.
- Tolle, E. (1999). *The power of Now*. London: Hodder & Stoughton.
- Weick, K. E. (1969/1979). *The social psychology of organizing*. Reading: Addison-Wesley.
- Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

NOTES

- [1] This text is a version of a chapter in the book by Monika Kostera, *The Quest for the Self-Actualizing Organization*, published by Liber (Malmoe-Copenhagen) in 2005.
- [2] The Master in de Mello's stories is "not a single person. He is a Hindu guru, a Zen roshi, a Taoist sage, a Jewish rabbi, a Christian monk, a Sufi mystic. He is Lao Tzu and Socrates, Buddha and Jesus, Zarathustra and Muhammad. His teaching is found in the seventh century B.C. and the twentieth century A.D. His wisdom belongs to East and West alike." (de Mello, 1992/1998: V).
- [3] In Poland Santa distributes presents to good children and twigs, a symbol for whipping, to naughty children [MK].
- [4] The Polish sentence translates also as "shaken, to stirred."
- [5] The left one, to be exact.
- [6] Whether it looked more tasteful remains outside the scope of this story.

Copyright of TAMARA: Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science is the property of TAMARA: Journal of Critical Postmodern Organization Science and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.