From appearance to experience

The accelerating production of scientific knowledge does not happen in a sociocultural vacuum. Our entire culture is under (re)construction. Other continents of cultural imagination also mobilize, move and transform. Artists experiment with diverse manifestations of their art and reach increasingly differentiated audiences – appearing with performances, installations, works of art and aesthetic services. When dust settles, these appearances are usually transformed, they are leaving experiences behind – in the eyes and ears and – digitally enhanced – memories of the beholders. Religious experiences emerge both within the institutional churches mobilizing professional clerical bureaucracies, which face critical constituencies of the faithful and unfaithful, and outside of their institutions. Outside of ecclesiastical bonds, metaphysical experiences are giving birth to the new, emergent forms of collective and individual spirituality (after Zen and the art of motorcycle maintenance, awareness, wellness, yoga and mysticism of self-reflection, contemplation, meditation and enhanced feelings of being here – emerge and flourish).

However, JOCM is primarily about academic research, science and scholarship, communities of critical knowledge producers, about self-conscious disseminators, about sceptic co-authors of implementing projects. When looking at the recent waves of meta-methodological self-reflection, we can notice that the accelerated growth of knowledge does not allow us to contain its components as we did before clouds took over. We cannot afford to package them neatly into boxes of methodological paradigms and research programs, which in turn are blocked into containers of academic domains, which in turn are stored neatly in automated storage facilities and libraries of states, or on hard discs and in giant data banks of corporations. We are slowly beginning to understand how all new knowledge has to register within individual and collective awareness in order to trigger the process of negotiation – of granting a status of a legal alien among other pieces of knowledge, which have already received, even if temporarily and conditionally so, a required citizenship in the Republic of Science. We are slowly beginning to understand that exhortations for more inspiring leadership (in management) and creativity (in leadership) will fall on deaf ears if we do not walk the creative talk. How does one walk creative talk? How do we coordinate social interactions and articulate social communications so that creativity is facilitated, enhanced, stimulated, shielded from being stillborn?

First, both Einstein’s God, who does not play dice, and Schrödinger’s cat, which both is and isn’t there, reappear and live unhappily ever after. Second, there is no algorithm for creativity – experience and creative responses to appearances and challenges always happen in context. One size of an idealized context does not fit all. True, we do use abstraction and codification, randomization and dissemination, but we do so in order to move ideas around, not in order to standardize experiences. Third, we, the researchers, the observers of appearances and the agents responsible for reflecting on them and advancing them to the ranks of experiences, change preferences, shift value rankings, and make sudden, surprising choices. All this, and more, can be found in the second issue of JOCM in 2017.

First, Hao Shen, Yu Gao and Xiyun Yang present a study of “Matching organizational climate and control mechanisms for fast strategic change in transitional economics: evidence from China”. Since the Chinese economy is currently undergoing changes linked both to the withdrawal of the economic protection of the state and to the reinforcement of the party control of the managerial cadres, the question is not particularly theoretical. Second, Beata Glinka and Przemyslaw Hensel reflect on “Reforms and identities: how relentless
pursuit of improvements produces a sense of helplessness among bureaucrats”. Like their Chinese counterparts, these two Polish researchers are also basing their observations on the post-communist developments in contemporary Poland. Bureaucracies learn, both in China and in Poland, and elsewhere, but so do those, who are being controlled by the bureaucracies. The third paper by Yaqun Yi, Zelong Wei and Meng Gu – “Bottom-up learning, strategic flexibility and strategic change” addresses this social learning process, in which top-down and bottom-up learning strategies compete with direct consequences for the change processes at hand. These strategies do not work directly on employees of any formal organization. They are usually intimately linked to the cultural climate of the company – social, organizational and personal norms decide if we print more than we need, that we use more electricity than we need, that we accumulate more waste than we could. Piyapong Janmaimool wrote about this in “The role of descriptive social norms, organizational norms and personal norms in explaining solid waste management behaviors in workplaces”. But creative learning is not only limited to the single company. Some companies can learn from other companies, not necessarily of the same specialty and region – in fact, examples from airlines or hospitals were used in order to design processes and projects for banks, universities, or hotels. The fifth paper has been written by Klaus-Peter Schulz, Silke Geithner and Peter Mistele. It focusses on “Learning how to cope with uncertainty – can high reliability organizations be a role model for manufacturing companies?” Local radio stations do not strike us as lacking in rhetorical devices, but still maintaining good relations with stakeholders is not limited to a proper production and dissemination of radio broadcasts. Anna Kalinowska-Zeleżnik, Sylwia Kuczamer-Kłopotowska and Anna Lusińska write about this in their paper entitled “The reflections of the CSR strategy in the activities of a public medium, as exemplified in Radio Gdansk”.

Needless to say, a meta-reflection on the dubious value of most formal documents labelled as “strategic mission statements” is also present, adding a pinch of salt to the above considerations. Steven Henderson wrote on “Strategy as nonsense: strategies for hunting the snark” (with an all too obvious hint at the title of one of the most ironic poems written by Mr Dodgson better known as Lewis Carroll). The next paper is by Abdul Wahid, Nur Kamaroiah and Mohd Mustamil Norizah, who wrote on “Way to go in maximizing triple bottom line of Malaysian telecommunications industry: potential of spiritual wellbeing through spiritual leadership” and who suggest that leadership does not have to be limited to the managerial doctrine of business as usual. The next paper was written by four authors, Alejandro Cuadra-Peralta, Constanza Veloso-Besio, Jose Iribaren, and Rodrigo Pinto – “Intervention for supervisors, based on social skills and leadership, in order to improve organizational climate perception and organizational performance outcomes”. The title is not brief but the content is indeed what the title announces – a plea for a tool-kit for sensitive change-masters, who work through the organizational cultural climates and display what is currently often called “mindfulness”. We are thus among academic researchers and we observe them when they cope with the uncertainties imposed by organizational change. Can they still creatively provide sufficient input into the inventiveness potential of their country? The review essay by Piet Moonen, which tackles such questions, is entitled “The governance of innovation from a European perspective: social articulation and the transmission of knowledge”. Contexts in which innovative ideas add creative spark to our activities differ, and national cultures are not unimportant in shaping them before the first inventors start dreaming about driverless cars.

Business as usual? Hardly. Times are unusual, so are academic businesses.

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