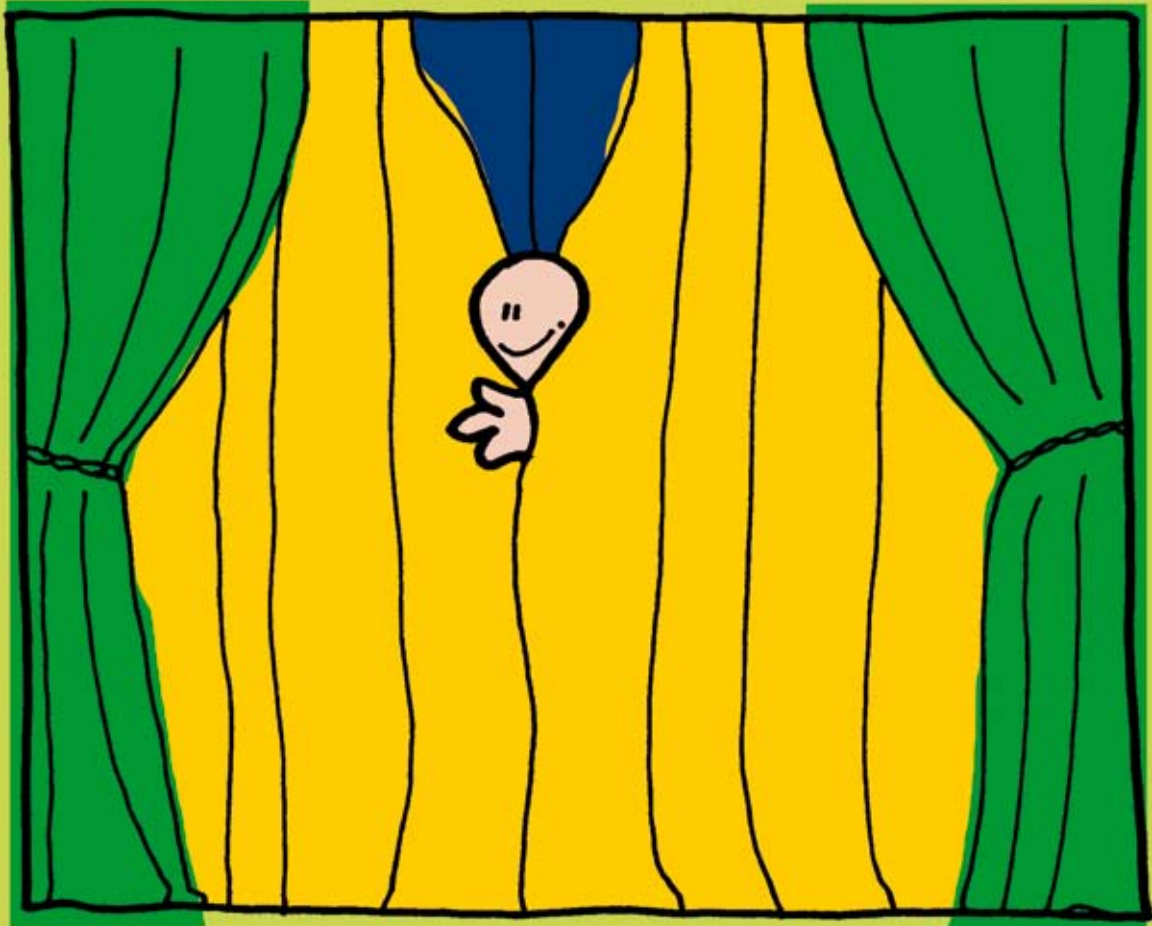


THIN BOOK

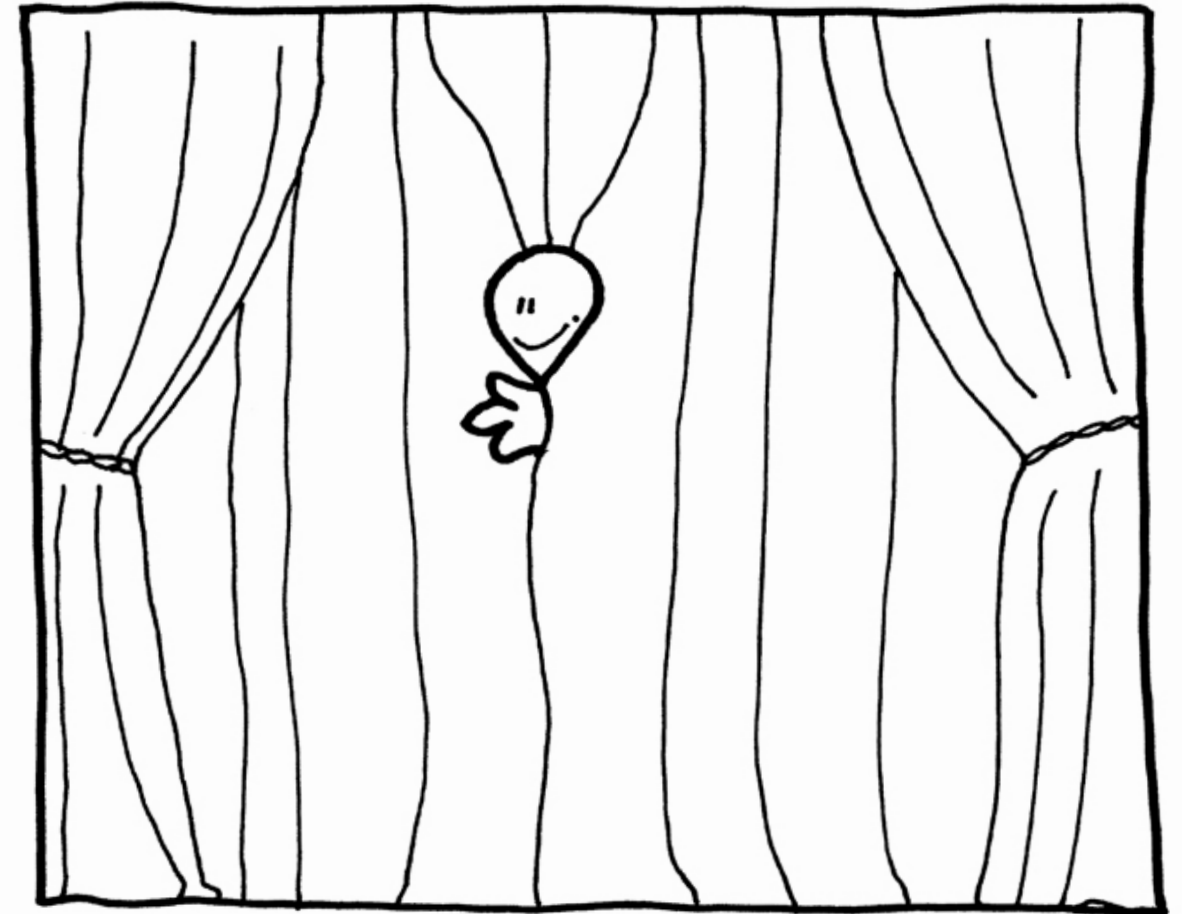


Organisational Theatre

LEARNING LAB DENMARK 2006

Organisational Theatre

THIN BOOK



Organisational Theatre

LEARNING LAB DENMARK 2006
THE DANISH UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION

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A Thin Book?

A 'Thin Book' is, as the name suggests, a book, which is thin, rough and less complete than a 'normal' book. It is a first-cut, a work-in-progress, a state-of-the-art captured in a time pocket and passed on to the public while still unfinished, offering ideas and thoughts that the reader may continue to juggle with.

The idea behind it is to capture the momentum of a collaborative learning and writing effort in a quickly produced book that is made during, and after an arranged gathering of people, in this case: the Organisational Theatre Thin Book Summit, which took place on 17th–19th March 2005 and was organised by Learning Lab Denmark. The intention of the Summit was to gather people with a deep interest in Organisational Theatre, from a range of places, practices and disciplines and to create a Thin Book collectively, based on the most imperative issues in the field and the burning interests of that group.

The content of this Thin Book was written by the participants at the Summit and during the months that followed. We want to express our thanks to all the authors for their energetic participation in the Summit as well as their efforts in relation to writing this book. Naturally there are many points of divergence and disagreements among such a diverse group of participants. The chapters thus express diverse writing styles, which underscores the differences of the contributors. Inevitably there are texts in the Thin Book, with which some of us may not agree, texts that may not meet our individual standards and beliefs. Credit and ownership are therefore assigned to the rightful co-authors.

But more people were involved in creating this book. We are extremely grateful to Silje Kamille Friis for her generous offer of illustrating the main themes of the chapters with her wonderful drawings. And thanks to Helena Karpe, these drawings were done due justice through her playful and professional lay-out. Finally, the Summit and the book would not have been possible without the competence and skills delivered by research coordinator Hilde Bollen, who not only coordinated and organized the Summit but also did most of the revising, proofreading and trimming of the texts. An editorial group has edited and laid out the main contents of the book. Learning Lab Denmark is the publisher and is responsible for the promotion and distribution of this Thin Book, which is part of a

series of forthcoming Thin Books, among others on 'Organisational Art' and 'Visual Dialog'.

This Thin Book is downloadable as a PDF-file on the Learning Lab Denmark website (www.dpu.dk/thinbook) and on a number of other relevant websites. In addition, a limited number of copies will be printed, depending on the level of sponsorship we will be able to attract. The intention is to distribute the book widely and internationally. The Thin Book on Organisational Theatre is targeted at various stakeholders within the field: artists, practitioners, business people, and researchers and hopefully it will pave the way for future successful collaborations in this field.

We, the editorial team, hope that you will read this Thin Book in the spirit it was created!



Copenhagen, May 2006: Lotte Darsø, Stefan Meisiek, David Boje

Introduction

Lotte Darsø and Stefan Meisiek

BACKGROUND

Organisational theatre performances have been a recurring phenomenon in organisations, albeit, for many years, merely as entertainment. Within the last decades, however, theatre in organisations has changed from entertainment towards intervention. Apparently Organisational Theatre (OT) answered the need of business organisations for a more engaging, illustrative, and sensory technique in relation to organisational development and change. Consequently, when managers began ordering the plays, they also wanted to define the content, and participation was not always voluntary, but rather part of work. Evidently, this demand clashed with the original liberating ideas of OT.

Naturally, this new phenomenon brought about scholarly interest, noticeable in for instance the special issue of Organisation Studies (25/5) ¹, which more or less established OT as a field. In the journal it appears that theatre has moved from a metaphor to describe organisations towards a technique to change them. For a long time the question was what the field should be called. Organisational Theatre, situational drama, corporate theatre, theatre-based training are probably but many facets of a single phenomenon. Since then, OT has been analysed from the perspective of systems theory, complexity theory, critical theory, and reception theory – however without coming to a conclusion on how it works and what it actually means.

OT is not a local phenomenon. Although there seems to be no clear date of birth, OT initiatives and companies appeared around Europe and America more or less during the same years. However, there is an abundance of different techniques. Boal-inspired performances, feedback theatre, corporate comedians, stage-managed plays, to name just a few. Despite the abundance of places, practices and theories, the field of organisational theatre remains fragmented. Few

¹ Georg Scheyögg and Heather Höpfl (Guest Editors). 2004. Special issue on 'Theatre and Organizations' in Organization Studies, Vol 15, Issue 5

practitioners and scholars know the work of each other in detail. However, we often find practitioners theorizing about their work and we regularly see scholars being interested in experiencing theatre as performers.

By 2005 the field had grown to a size that made a Thin Book Summit a promising venture. The idea was to bring together people with an interest in OT from a range of places, practices and disciplines. Our intention was for practitioners and scholars to collaborate on describing the current state of the field, probing what theatre as a technique could mean and what it could accomplish in organisations, and to explore the future of this fascinating medium.

The Thin Book is the outcome of the Summit. It is a tapestry of writing on Organization, Theatre and Acting. Its qualities are deliberately chosen to express the unfinished, incomplete, fragmented, divergent, complex field of Organisational Theatre. The content is non-conclusive and all inclusive. The texts are 'for' and 'against', dialogical and reflective, lyrical and down-to-earth, personal and general – expressing multiple voices and raising more questions than providing answers. Its purpose is to stimulate surprise, inspire and make people reflect. The idea of sending out something that is unfinished is, we hope, a way of engaging the readers in the text.

During the Summit one major concern was the term Organisational Theatre, which many of the participants found inadequate. But as nothing better emerged from our conversations we have left that issue open. On the first day of the Summit the participants co-created a giant mind map on all the OT topics of interest and each person then introduced him-/herself in relation to the map. This map was later the point of departure for the Open Space session, where people self-organised according to the topic and the challenges they felt were important to discuss with others: Questions on selling/prostituting oneself to organisations, on rules and ethics of OT, on change as 'gorilla work' or revelation or healing, on thinking versus acting and planning versus rehearsing, and on theatre offering a space of possibility for actors and audience.

THE FOLLOWING IS A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO THE CHAPTERS

The first chapter is a play, "Ottsy" by David Barry and Jan Rae about an organisational theatre consultant coming to Harvard to create organisational theatre out of Harvard Business cases. The main idea of this play is to try to capture the essence of organisational theatre together with the essence of the

conversations from the OT Summit. This play is in itself a perfect introduction to the field of OT with its many intriguing problems. A play that could be performed by students at the start of a course on Organisational Theatre and then analysed and discussed throughout the course. When reading “Ottsy” you will find some underlined sentences in the text, followed by a reference to the relevant chapter in this book, e.g. ‘Tis a pity I’m a... (Chapter 2). Whether you will decide to read that chapter and then go back to the play at this point is, of course, up to you. The point is that this play includes a connecting link to each of the chapters contained in this book.

The second chapter, “Tis a Pity She’s a Manager: Is Organisational Theatre Prostitution?” is written by Steve Taylor and Lone Thellesen. The title is inspired by a play by Webster, “Tis a Pity She’s a Whore”. This question is central to all artists who consider working with business, and according to the authors, it is a question of integrity. The chapter is written as an engaging narrative, interweaving Steve and Lone’s personal stories into the discussion of some highly provocative topics such as power versus purity, corporate versus artist.

The third chapter, “Ethics in Organisational Theatre – Two Perspectives” is written by David Boje and Henry Larsen. At the Summit it was performed in three parts: starting with a conversation between the two, followed by a short but intense performance by David throwing three lightning bolts, ending with Henry interviewing David about the performance. The question of ethics came up in various forms in most of the group discussions at the Summit. The form of the chapter follows the performance, as does the content, however, spiced with many interrelated topics spanning from academic systems of evaluation to ways of interpreting Boal.

The fourth chapter, “Planting Seeds or Throwing Bombs: The Dynamics of Change” is written by Lotte Darsø, Paul Levy, Sam Bond, Preben Friis, Hanne Olofsson Finnestrand and Kari Skarholt. Participating in the performance and the group discussion were also Margareta Kumlin and Margrete Haugum. At the Summit the discussion of the group was performed in order to show different approaches for working with change. In this chapter, a variety of challenges and opportunities are discussed for bringing change to organisations through theatre, action research and consultancy, spanning from the extremes of radical change (throwing bombs) to sowing seeds of change with a variety of combinations and approaches in between. This discussion probably raises more questions than providing answers.

The fifth chapter, “Rehearsal: The Bridge between Text and Context” is written by Marijke Broekhuijsen and Piers Ibbotson. Participating in the performance and the group discussion were also Göran von Euler, Camilla Albrecht Jensen and Susanne Kandrup. At the Summit the group performed the play “Rehearsal for ‘Hamlet’” showing the different ways organisations prepare for performance: managers versus actors, planning versus rehearsing. The chapter deals with both challenges and possibilities. What can a professional service organisation learn

from Theatre? What difference would it make to enact ideas instead of talking about them?

The sixth chapter, “In the Wings – On the Possibility of Theatrical Space”, is written by Chris Steyaert, Heather Höpfl, Daniel Hjorth, Hans Hansen and Stefan Meisiek. Participating in the performance and the group discussion was also Dorthe Bille. At the Summit the discussion of the group was performed in three acts: the preparation of the actors in the Wings, the audience meeting in

the lobby, and the moment when all meet in the magic of the theatre: the space of possibility. This chapter has theatre built into its style: poetic, lyrical, playful and magical. It flies like a butterfly. It raises several important issues that call for reflection.

FINALLY THERE ARE THREE APPENDICES:

- A: Program and process of the Organisational Thin Book Summit
- B: Scraps from Summit logbooks, emails and BLOGS
- C: Short Biographies of Participants

One notion stands out as the central point of convergence that connects the chapters. It is the concept of ‘the moment’, in which something new becomes possible. It can be found in expressions such as ‘magic’, ‘silence’, ‘the space of possibility’, ‘nedslagspunkt’ and ‘being in the moment’. There is no doubt that theatre can create that moment. The main question seems to be whether people have the courage to stay with that moment and the wisdom to seize it.

The development of a play

Can we write a script around what organisational theatre is? Can a concept become a play? Can we link the ideas of a group of people who deal in words themselves, one way or another, whether as playwrights, dramatists, actors, trainers, researchers or facilitators? What can a play do that other types of writing can't – indeed, what can theatre based intervention do that other interventions can't? Can we capture the essence of ideas and make dialogue?

We started with pictures – lots of pictures, which perhaps represent the ideas presented by the rest of the group. And the pictures developed from this:



To this:



To this:



We found ourselves with images of the duality of theatre and business (opposing or complementary), the virgin representing the purity of art and the actor prostituting that art and, the possibilities of the open space (a democratised space?), the magic of theatre , being in the moment, the process of creativity competing with the need for outcomes, the relationship between rehearsal and improvisation, the interweaving of fact and fiction, the exploration of ethical dilemmas through aesthetic representations and creative dialogue. And what is the role of the 'facilitator' (our Ottsy), who became the shadowy figure stepping out of the darkness to shine a light on hidden parts of the organisation? And we turned the pictures into words which in itself is trying to bring all these ideas to life in a different form – if art is embracing the intuitive, how can we capture feelings and emotions from words alone? Who should the characters be? Where is our narrative and voice?

So we improvised, trying to be 'in the moment', creating dialogue which started to look like a play, that is, it has dialogue and some characters; but do we want 'a good story with a beginning, middle and an end' or should we try to get 'art to mirror life'². Plays need narrative, structure, form, or in Burke's terms , the act, the scene, the agent, the agency, and the purpose... or do they? Can a drama go on in an endless loop, developing new situations and new dialogue as it develops? So, to begin again at the beginning, can we capture the essence of ideas and make dialogue? We'll let our audience decide.

Jan Rae, David Barry
August 2005

² Stoppard T *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* Act II
Burke, K. (1945). *A Grammar of Motives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Summarised in Clark T & Mangham I (2004). From dramaturgy to theatre as technology: the case of corporate theatre *Journal of Management Studies* 41:1

OTTSY

David Barry and Jan Rae

CAST

Ottsy	an Organisational Theatre Consultant
Professor Judy	a Harvard professor looking for something new
Susan	an imaginative student
John	an intense student
Pia	a pragmatic student
Angus	an OT actor
Martha	an OT actor

PROLOGUE

A bare stage. A shadowy figure enters dressed in a black hat and cape/cloak—looking very pale and distinctly vampirish.

Ottsy *(in soliloquy mode)* Oh, how low can you go Ottsy? Tis a pity I'm a (Chapter 2)... well, at least they're paying me up front for once. Haaavard Business School no less. But really now. How am I going to turn their beastly little cases into proper theatre? And why do they need plays at all?—they're already on stage everyday. If I see one more of their little charades, I think I'll . . . oh, the Globe's a long ways away.

(Pulling up his shoulders) Buck up Ottsy — look on the bright side. You've hit the big time. You're a case researcher now!

Starts humming 'You're in the Army now'. *Fade out.*

Lights come up on a university tutorial room. Professor Judy is talking to three students; she wears a big tie. Ottsy joins the group, but stands back and apart.

Professor Judy So, you've all read the case study. John, tell us what you think is happening in this case?

John Well, I think this is a fascinating case—by unpacking the elements, it's obvious that this organisation needs to develop a strategy and by using Porter's model we can start to analyse the different parts of the organisation and see how they inter-relate. We can, uh, turn it into a... a valuable chain, using Lewin's force field analysis to hammer the links together. Uh... or we could re-engineer it using Hammer and Champy. Or was that Arm & Hammer? Well, hammer it somehow...

Pia and Susan have their hands eagerly up.

Professor Judy *(Slightly disparaging)* Thank you John. Pia, your thoughts?

Pia If we're to form a valuable value chain, we should consider who is outside the chain that we might want to bring in. Then there's the question of how big the chain should be — I suspect these things can get rather heavy.

Professor Judy Susan?

Susan I think we should form a valorously valuable value chain, something that's going to do more than just weigh us down. I don't want to become another Scrooge, hauling some monstrosity around. This chain should lift us up, get us to do some good...

John If the chain isn't hauling in decent profits, no one's going to want to use it. And if no one wants to use it, then...

(John carries on talking silently with the other two students)

Professor Judy *(joins Ottsy, watching John talk to Pia and Susan)* You see! This is what I put up with, day after day, year after year. I am sick of business cases. They're all so samey. The students play at trying to analyse the cases but it's all so sterile.

Ottsy *(looks left and then right to see if anyone is listening in, then turns back to Judy, giving her a seductive look while beckoning to the class).* May I?

Professor Judy *(looking seduced and a little warm)* Why yes! Pl... Please do.

Ottsy *(turning away from Judy and towards John)* Thank you John.

John looks startled and a bit annoyed.

Ottsy I'm wondering why must we look at organisations this way? What other things could we do to...?

John Who are you? A 'late add'? (*snickers*)

Ottsy (*sternly, giving John a piercing vampire stare*) I am an Organisational Theatre Consultant – an 'O. T. C.' You can call me Ottsy. (Ottsy loses the hard stare as John noticeably backs down). Your university has hired me to write some “case plays” as they call them – they think they’re going to be the next big thing. The “Case Play Method.” So I'm trying to get a feel for the case method. Your class here is part of my research. I'm now part of Harvard's case research team, you know.

Professor Judy And I for one am hopeful. I think that case plays have a lot of potential.

John For what? And what do you mean, 'organisational theatre'? Is this going to be like that OB class where we had to square dance to the numbers?

Professor Judy Well that's a possibility, but I think there are others. Not many people know it, but once I was the lead actor in such a play – John, you would like that it was a Taylorist play. Well, a Steve Taylor play anyway. It's what got me here. Yes! To this very classroom (*Rakishly throws her tie back over her shoulder*). And last week I saw an OT play done for a hospital. Now that was interesting. This hospital was not having fun so this theatre company came along and gave them some fun.

Lights dim on classroom. Lights come up on OT actors Angus and Martha, who are surrounded by people who look like they work for a hospital—the rest of the cast. Angus and Martha mime being on a carousel, moving around and up and down, riding the horses. Saying “this is fun”, they try and encourage the ‘audience’ to join them on the carousel. No one joins, and eventually they start talking about the non-reaction of the audience. Angus and Martha then see a cord.

Angus I wonder what would happen if we pulled this cord? Could it be the big key? To the carousel? The meaning of life?

Angus pulls the cord. There is a big rumble, but nothing happens. He looks at Martha, who then comes over. They pull the cord together. A bigger rumble, and suddenly each person in the audience starts to move around in their own little circles.

Administrators, nurses, managers, doctors all start to express their different frustrations, leading to a cacophony of different voices.

Angus and Martha look at one another and pull the cord again – an even bigger rumble emerges. The audience pantomimes being on a large carousel, all moving in the same direction, each one going up and down. After complaining a bit, they start saying things like “this is fun, by going in different directions we are seeing things differently...”

Lights go down on carousel. Lights come up on the classroom.

John (*arms crossed*) What's this got to do with our MBA? Where's the relevance? I don't think this has anything to do with business – how can theatre and play help?

Susan I don't agree – I want to get fun out of my work. And if you can see what people are feeling you can understand the organisation better – after all, an organisation isn't a 'thing'. It's not real, it's an artefact...

John (*interrupting*) Of course organisations are real. And we can only analyse them by standing outside them.

Pia But what the professor showed us looked fun. I'm not sure what it had to do with theatre though.

John Work is work, and fun is what you do outside. Work and fun don't go together. Fun doesn't pay the bills or pay for the heating. When we leave this course, we're going to take senior positions in organisations, and then we'll have to think about things like strategy chains and finance—where does fun fit into that? And what's the point of all this – I like reading case studies and applying the theory and putting our responses up on flip charts. That's more fun than watching some play and trying to work out what it all means.

Ottsy (*tightens up his cloak as though cinching up a tie*) Maybe you're right John (*John smiles and relaxes a bit*).

(Ottsy pauses and opens up the cloak again)... Or maybe not (John looks worried and becomes defensive again). As it is, you are still talking out the issues rather than experiencing them – you think you're engaging in creative dialogue, but are you really? That is what businesses want to do as well, but they're trapped by the opposite problem – they're so caught up in their roles that it's hard for them to step out and see things differently, creatively.

(Ottsy smiles at John in a vampirish and hungry way) Think of OT as a kind of twilight zone where these two worlds can temporarily meet (Ottsy licks his lips)



— the ‘world of thinking about’ and the ‘world of action’. And perhaps other worlds we’re not quite aware of. It may not always be pretty, or ethical (Chapter 3) for that matter. But neither is it dull. Let me show you something else and tell me what you think.

Martha and Angus enter and take centre stage. They face each other, look each other up and down and turn their backs on each other. Martha takes off one of her shoes, Angus rolls up a sleeve. They turn again to face each other, point out the change and then repeat. This is being done in a good humoured way – on the second change, Martha and Angus start smiling and laughing.

The students watch intently, but look confused. Ottsy turns to the group and indicates he would like some comments.

Pia Is that organisational theatre? Looks more like one of those ‘change’ type exercises (Chapter 4)? Where is the plot, the dramatic development? The denouement? There wasn’t even any dialogue... and you were just talking about creative dialogue.

Martha and Angus exit.

Professor Judy You are quite right Pia; did I mention that as well as being an actor I’ve written some plays (*throws tie over shoulder as before*). A play needs a beginning, a middle and an end. It needs structure, plot, narrative, development, conflict. It should be exciting, it should change views (*she gets increasingly intense as she talks and starts to pace around the room*).

(*To Ottsy*) When we commissioned you, I thought you were going to take some case studies and turn them into plays, into theatre so it would be more meaningful.

Ottsy And where do the ideas for the play come from?

Professor Judy From the playwright of course — when I write my plays I want to give the audience a point of view, to show them there are other ways of doing things.

Ottsy But why do we need plays to do that? What about books, art, films? And if you just present plays to people and leave it at that, doesn’t the audience then

just become a passive recipient of someone else’s ideas — whose views are you changing? Look, let me show you a recent encounter with a manager who thought just that:

Manager enters (Martha), smartly dressed, perhaps the stereotypical dark suit, mid length skirt.

Actor/Consultant (Angus) enters; he is dressed perhaps rather unconventionally, again stereotypical “theatre” type. The manager takes out a calculator and a set of papers.

Manager Okay, lets get down to business. (*Angus sits opposite Manager; puts feet on the table; manager looks rather startled but ploughs on*).

Angus So how can I help?

Manager We’ve just gone and made some significant changes in the hospital, had to make a few people redundant and the remaining managers aren’t very happy. Keep complaining they have too much work to do, that they feel insecure, that we don’t have enough staff to do the job. But the point of the redundancies was to change the ways they were doing things, like delegating more, and getting them to be more, well, creative.

And, before you say anything, we’ve done all those staff development, culture change things; you know, teambuilding, value programmes, even paid for departments to have away days; one department I think spent the day driving cars over cliffs ... you know, for bonding and all that sort of stuff. But it’s not making them better managers. They fill in the sheets saying it’s quite fun but then they come back to the office and carry on exactly as they did before.

One of our directors mentioned your company, and we thought, well, there’s an idea. Perhaps you could put on a play or stage some sort of event which shows the staff how things could be if they took on board the things they need to do — that’s the sort of thing you do isn’t it?

Actors freeze. Lights come back on the seminar room. Actors exit

John Now that’s more like it. The manager gets the actors to act out a play showing all the organisational problems and the staff can watch and then go and put the solutions into action. Brilliant!

Professor Judy (*flicking tie again*) Ah yes, those were the days. That’s exactly the sort of thing I used to do.

John ... and the managers know exactly what all the issues are — after all they are in charge...

Ottsy Are they?... Are they really?

Pia But what does the audience DO?! They just watch someone else's interpretation — and why would a play done in that way be interesting to watch? I like going to the theatre but the sort of thing that the manager might commission would probably be pretty dull.

John But if you put in some learning objectives which explains what the desired outcomes are, that wouldn't be a problem. Anyway, staff wouldn't want to participate, they wouldn't want to be the actors... *(Discussion continues in a mimed way)*

Martha and Angus enter as themselves. They sit down on the side of the stage (or in the audience, i.e. become part of the audience)

Martha So what do you think of this so far?

Angus Well there's not much action is there? Rather wordy. Talk, talk, talk. Why aren't they doing something?

Martha They seem to be treating theatre as a production line (Chapter 5). I think they're a bit muddled. And as for the play — well, it's a bit derivative isn't it? I mean, us appearing as the audience is simply lifted from Tom Stoppard's play, "The Real Inspector Hound". What are our roles — are we the audience, the actors, facilitators?

Ottsy moves across to Martha and Angus.

Ottsy I think you're missing the point a bit. Theatre is more than just a play or production, or actors like yourselves being someone else so to speak; it should be a total experience. *(Sniffs the air)* I detect a whiff of sour grapes here; I suspect you think you are prostituting yourself *(Chapter 2)*, mingling with the corporate world. Am I right, or am I right?

Martha Well possibly... but this professor and her students — honestly! All that throwing her tie around and showing off. *(Mimics Professor Judy)* 'did I mention that I used to be a bit of a playwright' — and those students, so businessy and precious...

Ottsy Okay, so change it.

Angus Change what?

Ottsy The scenario, the outcomes, the 'performance'. Whatever. BE an actor, be a performer... why is it different just because it's not in a theatre with a proscenium arch? It's not the Globe but it's the same premise, seeing a situation from a different angle. Isn't that what this is all about?

Angus All about what?

Ottsy Well, if you become me *(or take my role)* and Martha becomes the Professor and I become you, and the Professor becomes Martha, well, the possibilities are endless... and aren't we about creating different worlds?

Martha and Angus look at each other, and then move (Martha putting on a tie as she goes, Angus taking Ottsy's hat — Martha takes the place of Professor Judy with the students, Angus takes up Ottsy's initial position, Professor moves down to take Martha's place, Ottsy moves to sit down next to her).

Pause — then Martha (as Professor Judy) re-starts the dialogue with the students as before—this is a mimed improvisation (speeded up), e.g. eventually the students appear to be actually passing a 'value' chain around. It is clear that something is changing — Martha removes her tie, students loosen up, etc. John variously mimics being a vampire, occasionally referring to Ottsy.

Ottsy *(steps out and addresses the audience)* So there we are—a new dialogue, a new situation, all nicely tied up. And now it's time to go. After all, you've got cash flows to work on, seminars to deliver, case notes to write up; you don't want to be here all day. And we theatre people *(stresses the phrase "theatre people," pointing to himself and Professor Judy)* have auditions to go to *(Professor Judy looks delighted).*

(Ottsy looks upstage at Martha and Angus who are having a heated, silent debate with the students). Oh how nice. They all seem quite happy... or at least more lively.

(Lights focus on Ottsy now, putting others into shadow. Ottsy moves back into



soliloquy mode, looking quite cheery). Yes, I think this may work out after all. Oh you're a lucky devil Ottsy, yes indeed. Who needs the Globe anyway? Broadway? Ha! It's the company stage for me.

(Lights dim a bit. Ottsy mimes looking into a mirror) Hmmm. Yes, you've become too wan old boy. Time for some new makeup (pinches/slaps his cheeks to get some colour).

(Flashes open his cloak and tugs at his clothes) A new suit perhaps? (Grins leeringly) The Emperor's new clothes? What's royalty wearing these days I wonder? (Looking back over his shoulders) What could a pair of wings (Chapter 6) look like? And what will they say back home...

(Begins re-arranging his hat like a crown and singing/humming Irving Berlin's 'In Your Easter Bonnet' ("with all the frills upon it; you'll be the grandest person, in the Easter parade") as the lights fade completely away).

[Blackout]



Working group participants: David Barry and Jan Rae.

'Tis a Pity She's a Manager: Is Organizational Theatre Prostitution?

Steve Taylor and Lone Thellesen

For many years, Steve lived a dual life. During the day, he worked in and with large corporations, as an Air Force Officer in acquisition and later as a consultant implementing information systems. At night, he wrote plays and worked in community theatre. His art and how he made a living – the two were separate. As an academic the two have started to come together as he writes plays about the management issues he researches – is this a dream come true or the final selling of his soul?

Lone's story with theatre started in 1990 in a large Danish factory with more than 1000 employees, producing cans primarily for foodstuffs. If theatre was the answer, what then was the question? For Lone it was this:

How do all people in an organisation get in better contact with each other in a way that will enrich both the life of the individual, and develop the product they are gathered to make and are paid to produce?

Her own role in the organisation was the one of a middle manager, who was responsible for the working environment, and she reported directly to the CEO.

Lone had experienced forum theatre a couple of times in the 1970's. She was convinced that this theatre form was able to bring in something important to the relations she wanted to change in the organisation. In cooperation with a professional theatre person she began making forum theatre – the first five years with employees at the factory as actors. They toured around the country, performing for other companies, and it worked, something happened, they attracted attention, acknowledgement and the foundation of Dacapo Theatre was created.

PROSTITUTING YOUR ART

Ten years later Lone and Steve are at a conference about Organisational Theatre in Liseleje (Denmark). Together we have been drawing a mind map on the board. There are a lot of questions and themes. Someone wrote prostitution. We are both at the same time attracted and repulsed by this question that we have met many times throughout the years in the art and business discussions.

“You’re prostituting your art!”

“Corporate whore!”

As practitioners of theatre within organizations, we may not face actual lines of protesters chanting these things as we enter the corporation, but we may hear at least faint echoes within our own head. For we are selling our art to the corporation, and in so many ways we are our art and our art is us; so we

are selling ourselves to the corporate master. But have we really become corporate whores? Is this prostitution?

Stepping back from the question, we have to wonder why it is a question and why it is that question in particular? Or to put it more simply, why would we equate doing art for corporations with having sex for money? At the core of prostitution is a duality. On the one side is the lecherous man who only wants sex and is willing to pay for it. He represents power and the dark forces of lust and lechery in the world. On the other side is the woman who possesses her sacred virtue that she should give to her true love. She represents the purity of doing something for a higher purpose (love) and all that is light and wonderful with the world. Love versus lust. Power versus purity. Corporate versus the artist.

This duality sets an evil corporate world that is motivated by power and control against the sacred art world that is motivated by personal freedom and exploration. But this is the duality as seen from outside – outside the corporate world and outside the real art world. From inside the corporate world



we see a world that is efficient and purposive. We see organizations that bring us all the technical wonders of the modern world at lower and lower prices. We see a world where people try to just plain get things done because the world needs to have those things done. From inside the art world we see that for full time artists, art is also a business. There is marketing and selling. We know that artists throughout time have had patrons and they have had to please those patrons. The duality is not so simple, the duality is not reality.

And even though we see the giant art based businesses such as entertainment (movies, television, and so on) grow and we hear management gurus tell us that modern business is in the age of the knowledge worker and individual creativity is a company's greatest asset and the lines between art and business seem to blur more and more in our reality, we should not lose sight of the duality. Not because it is true, but because it is useful in a way. It is useful for making sense of some fundamental issues around doing theatre (or any art) in the corporate world.

There is a stream of management thinking and practice that for want of a better name, we shall call “enlightened management.” It is seen in humanistic practices from McGregor's Theory Y to Senge's Learning Organization. At the core of this is the idea that people are generally good and creative and the company will do better if we can unleash a larger amount of the available human potential. Enlightened management always stands in tension with theories and practices of control that are based in the idea that the way to get things done is to plan them out in detail and then execute the plan (such as in Taylor's Scientific Management and McGregor's Theory X). In these two streams we see the echoes of our original duality. But as with the original duality, reality is much murkier. Both of these streams flow through most corporations, even most individual managers, and the waters mix in unusual and surprising ways. Doing theatre within a corporation fits nicely with the ideas of enlightened management. It does not fit so well with the theories and practices of control.

In our original duality it was power versus purity; however as many myths show us there is also a power in purity. And there is power in theatre and the tools of theatre. It is here, where the issue of selling oneself raises its head again. When you do theatre within a corporation you are offering up your powerful tools in the service – in the service of what? So perhaps the question is not whether one is a prostitute, but whether one is a mercenary. Although within the framework of our duality there may not be much difference – both sell themselves, the purity of the soldier being bound up in duty and service while the purity of the woman is bound up in love and virtue. Either way, the question remains, in the service of what?

It is in this question of service, that we start to find the practical answer to the question of prostitution. When we use our skills, when we practice our art in the service of our values then we stay pure – we are not prostitutes. When the pure maiden gives herself out of love, she is not a prostitute. It is only when she gives her love in service of making money, influencing the powerful or such that it is prostitution. So for the theatre artists who would do theatre in organizations (and get paid for it), the vital question is what am I doing this work in service of? Thus it becomes a question of integrity. Am I practicing my values in my work? For many of us, there is a value that theatre methods are inherently emancipatory, that theatre is meant to open things up, to make the unseen seen, to provoke, to create space for that essence of what it is to be human that is in each of us to breathe. For many of us, theatre includes a deep respect for process in a way that means the outcomes are unknown and the process is the product.

Regardless of what your particular values and understanding about theatre is and why you do it, as a practitioner of theatre you doubtless have a passion for theatre. You do it for the passion and that passion is your purity, that which if you sell it is prostitution. And if we lose that passion, if somewhere in our practice of theatre, we lose touch with what got us into theatre in the first place, then we have prostituted ourselves, we have sold our purity.

OUR STORIES

Today The Dacapo Theatre is a well working company with about 20 employees, consultants and actors. It earns its own money – as it always did. It is not dependent on state subsidies, nor support from political parties, unions, nor a few big clients or partners. It has always been careful to protect this position. Dacapo has created its own identity in a world of consultants leaning on American management theories and buzzwords, and they have kept their integrity in the market conditions that apply to any other private enterprise.

So Lone certainly doesn't feel she has prostituted herself by founding Dacapo Theatre, and being its leader for many years. But there are others who do. To make forum theatre inside a company together with the workers was surely in the spirit of Augusto Boal. But when they founded Dacapo Theatre, and became an untraditional and successful capitalistic enterprise, Boal did not want to have contact with Dacapo anymore.

But what has that story to do with prostitution? How does the combination of power, money and passion influence the choices Lone has made in her working

life? Lone's job in the big factory was exciting and engaging. She had lots of challenges and she had a good enough salary. When she said goodbye after twelve years, maybe she said goodbye to a more classical career in Danish industry.

When Lone started Dacapo together with two theatre people, passion became a part of her working life. She thought she had turned her back on power and money, but it turned out that their shared passion was something they could sell for money, a lot of money actually. They were invited through the front door into powerful organisations, and they found themselves in powerful positions in important change processes. What is in it for the companies, and what is in it for Lone? What are they paying for, and what is she selling? Is she selling all of herself or just a part of herself? What is this passion that came into her working life with Dacapo? A passion for involving, influencing, leading processes, energizing, creating space for paradoxes, for conflicts, shadow sides, the doubt, the laughs - to give something that comes from an inner source. To combine this passion with influence and the ability to create change is the power of life – not a greedy power, but a joyful force.

This joyful force in her life makes her tired in a happy way. She sleeps better, she makes better love, she inspires the people around her better and one day she will die more happy with the life she has lived. She lives from it – she can sell it, but at the same time it is the power of life – the vitality of her whole life. She is able to find creativity in storm and turbulence.

For Steve it is a similar story. Like most scholars he writes intellectual, academic articles, but he also writes plays and does staged readings at academic conferences and in his classes. The plays bring the theory to life and life to the theory. Sometimes Steve claims to be an academic to support his theatre habit, but gradually the two intermingle more and more, such as at this conference on organizational theatre in Liseleje. His scholarly world is much more receptive to his plays and theatrical work than the theatre world ever was.

ARE WE WHORES?

What is the risk? Prostitution? Burn out? No – the risk is not to be able to find peace. Why is Lone considering leaving Dacapo Theatre after ten years? She is a leader in a leading role that is very much like the one she left ten years ago.



Where has the passion gone? She has once again become a manager. Must she create new turbulence and development in her life by leaving and starting all over again in a new place? Is it still freedom – the freedom to leave – that makes her life meaningful?

And for Steve, is writing plays about management issues a prostitution of his art? Or is it an exercise of his freedom to practice his art as he wishes? Is freedom the real issue? Freedom to love who you choose rather than who pays you is the opposite of prostitution. And freedom to follow our passion according to our particular genius is at the heart of the issue. For Lone that freedom is challenged by the pressures and challenges of managing and running an organization. For Steve that freedom is challenged by the pressures of tenure and the academy. For all of us, there is a pressure that challenges our ability to simply follow the passion of our native genius. To give into the pressure too much is to prostitute ourselves.

But we can't forget that the duality is not the reality and there are other choices than selling yourself or being true to yourself. There are answers that are outside of that continuum. There are actions that transform the question and use the tension to find a new understanding.

These issues are perhaps clearer for the artist, but we think they exist for all employees in a modern business as a kind of common reflection on the meaning of life and work life. For how long will I take on the responsibility for working here? For how long am I willing to expose myself, my clients, my customers for this? Is there a limit to my integrity? Can I protect my integrity in other ways than just leaving? Can I protect my integrity in other ways than not making theatre in business? Can I use the tension for transformation – not just of myself, but transformation of the whole world that insists on the dichotomy between art and business, between love and money?

Working group participants: Steve Taylor and Lone Thellesen.

Ethics in Organizational Theatre – two perspectives

David Boje and Henry Larsen

DAVID Henry and I became group two. We decided to talk about ethics. Henry works with The Dacapo Theatre, a consultancy using improvisational theatre as its basic working method. The Dacapo Theatre was formed in 1995 with the idea of bringing arts and business together, crossing the knowledge and practice of consultants and theatre people. I work with OT in my writing and in my teaching. Before getting into the content of our conversation at the Organizational Theatre Summit held 17–19 March 2005, we need to set the stage.

SETTING THE STAGE

DAVID Setting the Stage means giving you background on the kinds of theatre and consultancy that Henry and I engage in. It means giving you background on our theatre theory and methods. This way you can appreciate the twists and turns in our conversations, and the kinds of theatre performances we exhibited at the Organizational Theatre Summit.

Henry and I share an interest in the theatre work of Augusto Boal. Boal developed a method called “Forum Theatre.” Forum Theatre is based on the idea that audience members can do more than be passive spectators. They can take direct part in the actions on stage. Spectators are invited to propose ways to re-script what is happening on stage. And to volunteer to become one of the actors in a scene on stage. Boal uses the term, “spect-actor” meaning the audience member is both spectator and actor in the Forum Theatre.

HENRY The Dacapo Theatre consultancy has changed its use of theatre since 1995. Initially we worked with a forum theatre method highly inspired by Boal, where we started with a fixed play. In contrast to Boal, who works with Theatre of the Oppressed we focus on what is going on between the people present. We began to do tailored scenes with issues specific to the client. We are still working this way, but we have come to see the ongoing improvisation together with the client as key in our work. In this we are highly inspired by Shaw, Griffin

and Stacey together with whom we have worked with what we call 'Working Live', by which we mean the ongoing ordinary conversation in organizations, that sometimes is full of intensity and sometimes not. It is this ordinary conversation that creates and recreates the organisation. We use theatre improvisation to increase awareness, spontaneity and risk taking in this, which is essential for change to happen.

We have experienced that working in the paradox of fiction and reality is highly creative. We bring in fiction that can be acknowledged as 'could be real' and people contribute to the ongoing movement from their real experience. This creates a safe distance from the daily routine and becomes a shortcut to talk about things which are difficult, when faced head on. This allows people to engage in the conflicts and strong feelings that would keep everyone silent in a play based directly on their history and issues.

DAVID Henry and I share a common interest in the improvisation methods of Forum Theatre, the point where the consultants are "Working Live" with the spect-actors of a client organization. Working Live is working in the moment with all the surprises that emerge. I am interested in chaos and complexity in organizational systems as well. Organizations are complex and chaotic systems in which we cannot accurately predict the effect of the theatre we set in motion.

Working Live in a complex organization is a way of thinking that has several assumptions. A complex organization such as Disney, Enron, or Lego will have hundreds of different theatre performances happening simultaneously, in different rooms, in different buildings, and in different countries. The many simultaneous theatre performances constitute a special form of theatre complexity. Participants are both spectators and actors in these organization theatres. Each spect-actor chooses which theatre to attend, whether they will author a scene, behold it, become characters in it, or direct the scene as it unfolds. This is all part of Working Live.

HENRY We use Working Live in a slightly different sense. I see the emergent scenes and stages as created between people. Just like we do not freely choose our stage, we do not decide how it emerges. In an organization we all participate in our local relations, with intentions but without knowing what it will bring. Also the mere participation changes our intention as we participate, much like in theatre ensemble improvisation. In the Dacapo Theatre we want to encourage organization participants to think on their feet, to deal with situations where something unexpected happens, and where people are not prepared for it, and no

planning anticipates what to do in advance. The ability to improvise in the moment of an unexpected event requires courage and boldness. Working Live in the organization is a way to bring conflicts and emotions within the organization into the dialog.

THE CONVERSATION: HENRY'S PERSPECTIVE

In trying to get an overview of OT we are doing a mind map. David writes "Cubism", and I don't know what he means.

The next day the two of us end up forming a group talking about Ethics and Cubism. I am not completely sure what this is, and also I am not clear about why I accepted this to happen. But in David's reaction to my question there was something about ethics here and now that triggered my attention and that I found important, without knowing exactly what he meant.

As we are talking about Kant, Gertrude Stein, Hegel, Elias, Mead and others it gradually begins to make sense for me. David has accepted to be the judge at a doctoral examination where two examiners have given contradictory views. He has now found himself in a situation where these two supposedly anonymous examiners both are present at this conference. Because he found the thesis about "cubism" interesting he had been talking about it with one of his friends before the conference, thereby realizing that this friend was one of the examiners. And after David wrote "cubism" on the flipchart at the conference one of the other participants reacted which made David suspect that this person must be the other examiner. Probably it will only be a question of time before these two people will start talking to each other about it, and then they'll realize that David already knew of this.

My interest is caught, or I can say, that making the choice of working with David about this theme makes a fresh sense, at the same time paradoxically unpredictable and yet not that surprising. As I start to understand the situation, the discussion evolves: how can we understand the ethics of this situation?

Being a consultant working with improvised theatre in organisations, this situation resonates with other situations I have experienced in the past, where something unpredictable happens, something that could not have been foreseen. Of course, if David had not been talking about "Cubism" with others until he had responded as judge, he would not have found himself in this situation. But he would also have missed several opportunities to bring this theme into the community he is part of. So by doing absolutely nothing, he might have prevented this situation.

But this way of understanding ethics is ridiculous. As humans we act in situations with our passion and knowledge, which is the essence of conversation. If we run into paranoia it is always to be sure not to take steps that are not completely cleared and thus the quality of conversation is affected. So, participating in a conference like this, without bringing in what was on his mind, would be a waste of time – and maybe also unethical.

Obviously it makes no sense to go into this with an assumption of “Grand Ethics”. In the way that if you follow norms you will never be brought into such situations. Also no kind of “Grand Ethics” can guide you to a specific answer in situations like this. We often assume that specific causes lead to specific results. However, the knowledge from the complexity science tells us, that there is no such linearity in human relationships. Obviously we have to find a different way to deal with ethics. For me this means that we have to deal with ethics in the middle of the situations we come into, here and now. Not doing anything is also dealing with it. Mead, as referred by Griffin, has inspired me about this. We are influenced by “cult values”, idealized values that emerge in groups we see ourselves as being part of. As we refer to these values, we are constantly brought into situations where different values might contradict and where there are no easy answers. What we find ourselves doing in such situations is by Mead called “functionalized values”. Of course, the cult values influence what we find ourselves doing. But it is also the other way around. What we actually do influences the cult values, in a way that is not always predictable.

We continued talking about the dilemma. David had been awake in the middle of the night, thinking about what to do. We decided that I should interview him about his dilemma – in front of the whole group in the afternoon presentation. I asked David to mention the idea of the interview to the two examiners in the following break.

THE CONVERSATION: DAVID'S PERSPECTIVE.

I realized that I would be Working Live with an unexpected, quite emergent event. As Henry told you, during our Mind Map facilitation exercise, I wrote “Cubism Theatre” on the flip chart.

I think nobody knew what I meant.

I had just read the most intriguing dissertation applying Cubism to organizational change. I was inspired by the dissertation to check out some books by Gertrude Stein who, according to the author had done some work on Cubism and theatre.

I found out that Stein wrote some seventy plays, that I began calling “Cubism Theatre.” I wanted to play with Cubism Theatre at the conference; that is why I wrote it on the flip chart paper.

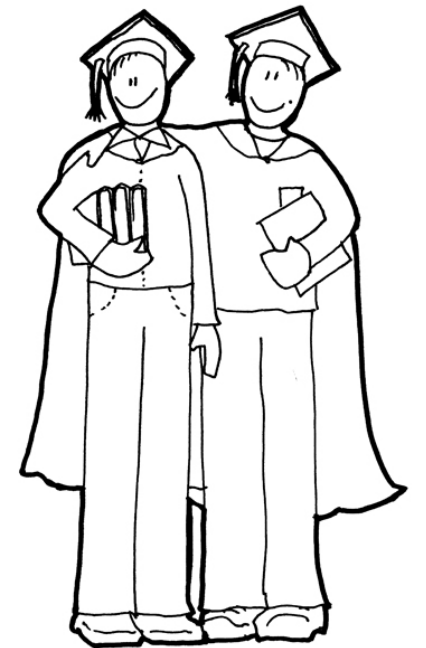
It seems that two of the participants in the Organizational Theatre Summit programme were examiners on this very same dissertation. I did not realize their identity, until each approached me, and said, “I was a dissertation examiner on a dissertation on Cubism.” In Australia, dissertations are not accepted until external examiners (from another country) agree. In this case, the dissertation had two examiners; one voted to pass the dissertation, and the other to require major revisions. When there is such disagreement between examiners, a “judge” is appointed by the university.

Guess who is the judge? It is me. I was called in to be the judge between the two examiners. And before the Organization Theatre Summit, I rendered my decision. My judgement was in favour of passing the dissertation without any further revision.

I spoke to the dissertation author, and told her that there was this serendipitous meeting of the two blind reviewers, and the judge, who also had not known the names of the examiners when he rendered his decision. Now here is the ethical dilemma. I knew that the process that was supposed to be blind review, was about to lose its anonymity. The judge and the examiners were intrigued by Cubism Theatre. It would not be long until one examiner would say to the other, “I was the examiner on a dissertation on Cubism.” To which the other would respond, “me too, wonder if it is the same one.”

I decided to Work Live. I went to each examiner and asked if they would like to preserve their anonymity or surrender it and meet the other examiner. I said both were here, and rather than bump into one another, I would just introduce them. They agreed to meet, and discussed the reasons why they had accepted or rejected the dissertation. I shared my reasons for deciding to accept the dissertation without further revision.

I took another step to Working Live. I acted out the event in live theatre at the Organizational Theatre Summit. The purpose of the play was to deal with my



ethical dilemma. What does one do when through serendipity participants in a blind process or adjudication are about to expose their identities. And if those identities are exposed is the process of adjudication now corrupted? And if that process is corrupted, does it mean that Monash University will not award that degree?

Next, is my transcript of the play that we scribed at the Summit.

DAVID: THE NEDSLAGSPUNKT PLAY AS I REMEMBER IT

Nedslagspunkt is a Danish word taught to me by Lotte Darsø of Learning Lab Denmark. She explains the word by slapping my face, but not too hard, and the Dane in me is awakened. You should know that while I have Danish blood, this is my first visit to Danish soil. Learning this word was the basis for my theatre presentation at the Summit retreat.

Nedslagspunkt has tree parts. Ned means down; slag is lightning that slaps or hits the ground; punkt is point in time. Nedslagspunkt, for me, is a way to express Cubism Theatre. Cubism Theatre is about a moment in time, it is not the usual developmental storytelling, the ones with neatly packaged beginnings, middles, and ends. Cubism Theatre is much more salient and important to organizational complexity. I view organizations as a close encounter between developmental storytelling and storytelling that is more Nedslagspunkt. Sometimes a slag, a lightning bolt is thrown ned, down, and it pierces the Earth at a punkt, a point in time. A moment of time is opened, and a space for dialog happens. In the moment of the thunder bolt, I met the examiners, and anonymity was coming undone. I cannot believe it; I find both examiners at this Summit meeting of Organization Theatre experts.

I met another Danish woman during a break, while walking through a path in the woods, on the way to see the ocean. Her name is Dorthe Bille, an actress who does organization theatre consulting. I told her I wanted to act out nedslagspunkt, and throw three thunderbolts. She stopped me, and the rehearsal began. Imagine what each thunderbolt feels like, what is the energy and colour of each one. I began to carry the thunderbolts, to hold each in my hand. Each had its own shape and colour, and behaved quite differently when I threw them.

Henry and I introduced the play. I got ready to throw the thunderbolts (actually I threw them the next day, but for writing purposes I am combining the two performances). Here-and-now, the lightning bolts struck, and I must be answerable for my judgement. I decided to act out Thor tossing three lightning

bolts into the Earth; (1) ethical lightning bolt of answerability for actions; (2) aesthetics of being in the moment of time as an event is consummated; and (3) cognitive intellectualizing of events. I am working with what Mikhail Bakhtin calls architectonics. Architectonics is the intervibration of ethic, aesthetic, and cognitive discourses. A discourse is a more or less scripted way to talk about actions in some event.

DAVID I realized the other examiner was here, both are here and do not know the other is here. Do not know they are friends, and friends with me. I am answerable!

HENRY What did you do last night when you realized that?

David grasps the first thunderbolt. It is blue, and has a willowy feel to it. David throws it but cannot foresee where it will land. It vibrates about the room, and lands between the legs of one of the audience members. He is a bit startled that it is there.

DAVID I couldn't sleep, woke up at 3 am and wrote this out: 'I will ask each examiner, if they want to meet, and discuss their disagreement and my decision.' Henry, they both said 'yes.'

HENRY How is it being interviewed here-and-now about this?

David grasps the second thunderbolt. It is black, a cognitive bolt with the black ooze of intellectual energy. You know where it will go; it travels straight as an arrow. It strikes the ground with such force, the floor cracks open revealing a place where dialog begins, but never gets very far.

DAVID I am caught between rules and relationships. Why does Australia have external reviews, and a judge? Why do they not trust their own voice? The student deserves better. My friends and I could have met and the rules say, 'no!'



David decides to toss another ethical, blue thunderbolt; one that is about answerability. Nedslagspunkt – a thunderbolt into the Academy, into the heart of the world system that makes such silly rules.

HENRY Why did you wake at 3 a.m. in the morning?

David reaches for his last thunderbolt. It is an aesthetic one; its colour is yellow, like the shining Sun. The aesthetic thunderbolt has warmth, creates energy with a different feel to it than the other bolts. It feels electric, very bright, but it too can do harm. Too much sun, the wrong kind of ultra-ray can burn a body, create cancer. Otherwise, the aesthetic glow is quite nurturing, giving life, and giving energy to the body.

As the yellow bolt strikes the ground, there are changes in the black char and in the blue colouring of the other thunderbolts. The three colours form that kind of pattern you see when they make tie-dye shirts, spinning it on a potter's wheel, letting one colour swirl into the other.

DAVID I believe serendipity has brought us three to Lisegaarden (Liseleje, Denmark) in a point in time and in this very space. The lines of ethics tangle with cognitive bullshit, and aesthetics is a way to explore the fragile organization called academia. Academia covers an abyss. The horror of it woke me up. The lightning slapped my face.

HENRY But when we talked about it, you said, how about my friendship with these two people. Without knowing it, you ended up as a judge deciding between them, and you three are here at the same conference.

DAVID No matter what I do, it's a tangle of [ethical] dilemmas. My way of performing (and not performing it) is an exploration of the rules, relationships, and of being and not being in the moment.

DAVID *summarizes the performance:* I let the three thunderbolts strike the ground. First the ethics of my answerability, then the answerability of all three of us, and of the spectators to the Summit, and of academia for creating such a strange system of review. Second, the cognitive ooze, all the intellectual typologies and concepts that come to bear. Third, the aesthetics of performing theatre as a way to explore ethics.

AUDIENCE MEMBER Is your performance a thunderbolt, aimed at academia?

DAVID I am non-violent; the thunderbolt is so violent an image.

AUDIENCE Your language is confrontive. It challenges the system. You want something. What is it?

DAVID want to protest the student, save my friendships, question the rules, not break the system. If the system is broken the student is the loser. I cannot do that to her.

Nedslagspunkt – I said “her” that was a mistake.

DAVID Henry, tell me what is there about this experience, you being a Dane to the bone, me being someone who is Dane by blood line but does not know the language, history, or culture.

HENRY I can not tell you the link to being Dane, if there is one.

DAVID I think it is Danish to raise these ethical issues, and learning the word nedslagspunkt is very important to my growth as a Dane. In the fragmentation of a point in time by nedslagspunkt, we live in the moment; we are here-and-now, we improv too fast to plan, we just bet something will happen, and move our body without all that cognitive ante-flection. Ante means before; Not reflection, an ante-flection.

HENRY'S REFLECTIONS READING

DAVID'S VERSION OF THE INTERVIEW:

We did not talk about 'nedslagspunkt' in our conversation; also I was not aware that you in a way had rehearsed the interview. However that makes no big difference, because in an interview like this the liveliness appears when you cannot solely rely on what you have rehearsed.

In the interview I focused on you. How did you feel about the situation? Among people grew a recognizable awareness and presence as they realized that this was actually going on right now. By doing an interview I quickly found myself in a situation, with ethical dilemmas that I had to handle in the middle of the situation, as I ask questions without being on top of the answers. I draw on my experience in doing so, but also here situations emerged, that I had not anticipated.

It emerged for me, that you apparently had no intention to name the examiners in the interview. To me this became strange, because everybody knew that they were sitting in the room. I assumed that people could not stop thinking which of the other participants we were talking about. However, I anticipated that you had a reason for not telling, so I did not ask.

After the interview I mentioned the theme of the names to you, and my thoughts about it. You responded, that you were thinking of the student, and that you did not want to give the university an excuse for letting the whole examination start from a fresh. In the following discussion I was aware of how the conversation emerged, with focus on the theme of names. It found its way because one of the examiners contributed to the discussion in such a way that left no doubt to anybody that she was one of the examiners. And the other did something similar, both without explicitly mentioning it. So there was a subtle movement in this theme that changed the tension so that it could move on.

When I read your version of the interview I come to see a certain indignation as a driver of the story: Why the hell does someone set up such a crazy examination system? In this way it becomes primarily a piece of special pleading. I see a paradox in this aim. In arguing for a much more subtle and open-ended way of narrating, you end up with a narrative that can easily be read as a grand narrative.

By doing this, I see that you are keen not to make the writer of the thesis a victim of this process, for instance, by not doing something that might mess up the graduation - which I agree with. However, I also think that you are on the edge of creating yourself, and with you the other two examiners, as victims of the system's decisions. I sense a kind of rage about being brought into this situation. This will be in line with Boal's approach in talking about theatre of the suppressed – a way of thinking that I see as victimization, although I appreciate that Boal has an intention to break this.

For me the key is that different perspectives are meeting each other and new perspectives emerge out of that - or old perspectives are reinforced. So trying to find one perspective for the audience as Boal is doing, is not my task. I therefore find it much more interesting to reflect about what happens between us, based on the ethical dilemma we find ourselves in and the particular way we are dealing with it. What happens in this situation between you and the two examiners, between me and you etc? How do we react to it and how does it affect our intentions about the quality of engaging with each other?

Telling a story from a strong perspective like you do creates energy. But the other side of this is that beside the strong perspective other perspectives emerge at the same time, and they influence each other somehow. Thinking of the interview as an improvised conversation does not take away our responsibility for reacting and not reacting in situations like this. Although we cannot anticipate what kind of situations we will end up in, we are responsible for reacting as best as we can

in the very moment, and for keeping attention on what is happening and how we are placing ourselves ethically in the actual situation. What you call throwing thunderbolts I would call invitations to spontaneity. You have prepared to say something where you cannot anticipate the answer. Because of that you invite yourself, and also the others, to improvise. I think that invitations like this are very important in conversation, and I see our work with theatre as such invitations.

In this particular situation the dilemma was created by the examination system. But if this had not been the case there would have been others, because of different intentions meeting each other. The key question for me is how we deal with this here and now. And in doing this, how do we keep the awareness on what is happening with us and our relationship in the middle of this. That, to me, are the truly transformational moments.

THE PLAY ENDS

David's reflections

I think we owe it to the author of the dissertation to introduce her to this story. The 2004 dissertation is titled "A Case-Study of the Experience of Organizational Change: Council Amalgamation in Regional Victoria." Since the thesis, on 22 March 2005 was accepted in satisfaction of the requirements for her Ph.D. degree by Monash University, I can now tell you her name. Meet Jan M. Schapper, or now that it is all a done deal, Dr. Schapper.

There are important questions raised in the play. Why is it that Australia, New Zealand, and the UK demand that external reviewers decide the fate of dissertations that are already done? In fact, the dissertations I review as external examiner, and in this case as judge, are hard bound copies. This dissertation is 353 pages long, with eleven chapters and four appendices. Why bring in examiners so late in the process? Why bring them in at all. And if external examiners are so important, why do countries such as the US, not use them? The dissertation author may not find out, but oftentimes, over time, the examiner reveals their identity; sometimes accidentally and other times on purpose. In short, the process is blind only for a time, and the identities are usually revealed to the participants, as a piece of work enters into wider circulation, and as participants meet at conferences of Summit meetings.

POSTSCRIPT

About Cubism Theatre; moments are strung together in some linear narrative, some developmental storytelling with beginning, middle and end. But more often, the storytelling is much more emergent, happening in the moment, where lines take off in all directions at once. In some moments the three thunderbolts, ethic, aesthetic, and cognitive hit the ground simultaneously. The ground cracks and opens up.

The essence of our conversation is what happens when rules interfere with relationships. What happens when in a moment in the here-and-now there is an unravelling of all that bureaucratic process? Henry's interest in "Working Live" and David's interest in "Cubism Theatre" combined in a discussion of ethics.



Working group participants: David Boje and Henry Larsen.

CHAPTER FOUR

Planting Seeds or Throwing Bombs: Dynamics of Change

*Lotte Darsø, Paul Levy, Sam Bond, Preben Friis,
Hanne Olofsson Finnestrand and Kari Skarholt*

We are at the second day of the Summit. Each group is presenting some essences from their group discussion. The following play is based on an actual incident that had happened a few years earlier to one of the participants.

THE PERFORMANCE

Paul is writing on the flip chart, lecturing about change. He carries on and on with a lot of platitudes. After a couple of minutes Kari, a participant, jumps up and cries: "NO!!!" She rushes to the flipchart and tears to pieces the paper Paul has been writing on and throws the pieces all over the floor in front of her. There is stunned and awkward silence in the room. She sits down again. Paul is confused and shocked; he leaves the room. More silence. The tension among the participants is considerable until Sam begins to talk with purpose in an incoherent fashion about how we might continue. He is trying to save us from the painful situation.

After a while Sam gets hold of the situation. He says: "Let's try this. Stand up and form two lines facing each other."

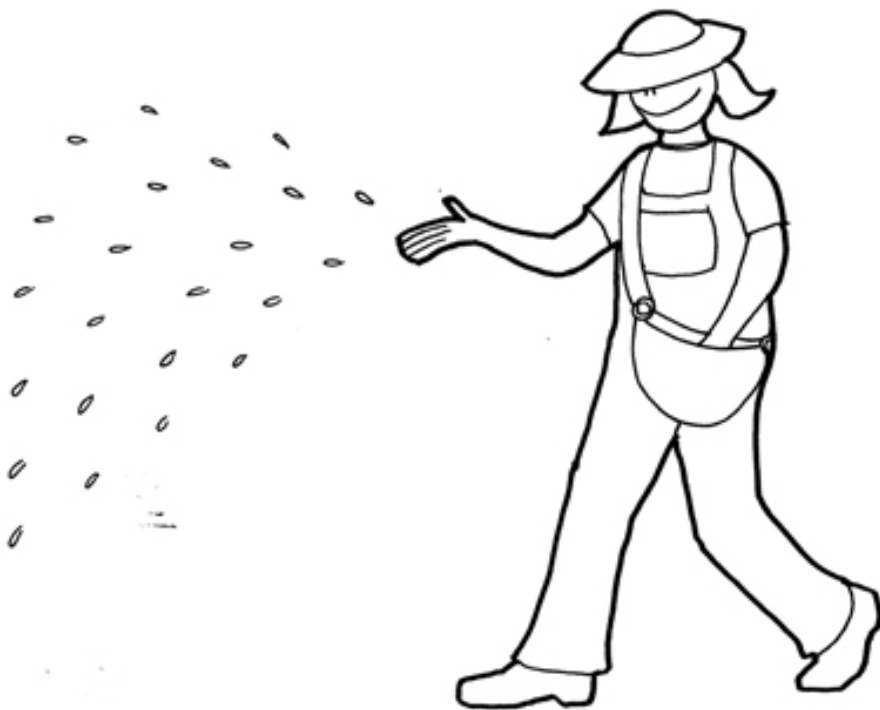
We all do as told and Sam guides us through an exercise where each person has to change ten things in his or her appearance while standing with their back to a partner. On instruction the partners turn round and face each other. They have to identify the changes made. The good feeling in the room returns, people are laughing and enjoying themselves. Paul comes back and sneaks into the line. Nobody seems to notice. Sam is energetic; the exercise is going well. He proposes doing it again only this time with 20 changes. "I don't want to do this any more, I think it's rubbish," someone says loudly enough for everybody to hear it. "All right," Sam says and everybody continues like nothing happened.

A few minutes later the exercise is over and Sam talks a little about change and how we do or do not notice when people are changing. He also points out how a moment ago everybody looked different, some without shoes, shirt outside the trousers, hair ruffled – but now everyone is busy getting themselves organised; colluding back to their appearance before they started changing. He makes the point that we have a tendency to return to our default setting.

PLANTING SEEDS OR THROWING BOMBS

In the following we will try to unfold the discussions that led to the above performance. We talked about change as a spectrum running from “planting seeds” to “dropping bombs”. These approaches can be applied in the short-term or as part of a long-term process. We were fascinated by the opportunity that sometimes will appear during such a process, “the moment”.

Our performance created a forum for discussion about how we make sense of what we, as practitioners, are doing when we go into organisations. The dramatic experience of Paul lecturing and being stopped was a “bomb”, a disruption, which offered the possibility of change. Sam's exercise was a simple demonstration of some of the elements of change processes and of its inherent challenges.



The exercise in itself could produce insights (seeds) about change, but at this particular time it was used for “smoothing out” the dangerous “moment”. The group, led by Sam, chose not to deal with the awkward predicament they found themselves in. A critical factor when discussing the whole notion of “planting seeds or throwing bombs.”

We also looked at a different approach to institute change within an organisation- the process of seeds being sown.

Important questions arise out of these two approaches debated: What is our responsibility to organisations and groups of individuals when working with them? Should our function merely be to disrupt? Or should we be embedding a process within organisations supporting and monitoring the change through various support mechanisms and processes that are initiated by the work? How willingly do organisations embrace these approaches?

Are we revolutionaries who should free the workers' souls by initiating (leading them into) some sort of Armageddon? Should we burn the fields down in order to plant new seeds? Should we tell organisations what we think? To what degree are we responsible for what happens afterwards? Who do we serve?

We opened with a “bomb” leading to a moment of disruption. This created the possibility for change. But, in fact, most of us are not in favour of throwing “bombs”, still, we do agree that for real transformation to happen small “bombs” could be necessary.

Paul explained that he often performed provocative scripts bought by clients, and once performed, left with no explicit explanation. What the clients did afterwards with the reflections on this piece was up to them to discuss. This statement Paul made was viewed as quite contentious to those of us sitting around the table as it brought up a serious question of ethics. At this point Paul started to reflect on the collusion of mediocrity, which refers to an “unspoken agreement to avoid discomfort through avoidance of real honesty and challenge”³.

This whole debate evoked a fairly strong response from us all.

Four levels of collusion were outlined (based on Paul's ideas):

- 1 Breaking the superficial niceness.
- 2 Fake revelation. The call to action. Output but no change
 - we provoke people but no change happens.
- 3 Once change has been revealed you dilute it to something safe.
- 4 Even though the change has taken place the failure to stay in the new place of discovery becomes quickly apparent.

What do we think we are doing when invited into an organisation? Do we provide input for people to reflect on - individually or together, or do we involve ourselves in a process of change? Paul's approach was based on the idea that performance is, in itself, all that may be required. The reaction is, essentially, a matter for the audience.

However, what about the potential damage that might be done by an outside "intervention"? Whether such an intervention is one where the outside party gets involved interactively, or whether it is simply a "bomb", a straight performance, there may be damage resulting from the "explosion".

In general terms, where the damage done by breaking a collusion in the short term is greater than the benefit gained in the short or longer run, then it may be better to leave a collusion in place.

There will be the "fallout" of the explosion; there may be a need to facilitate recovery, a pathway through the "aftermath", helping to "manage" the reaction. It may be that those who help break collusions are not necessarily the best people to help deal with the aftermath, with the rebuilding process.

In our group some saw themselves very much involved in the dialogue that arises when the "mirror of the drama" creates reactions. Indeed, the processes of role play and forum theatre allow individuals and groups to engage in a creative dialogue leading to greater self-understanding, and possibly change and innovation. They did not see it as their business to "bring" change, but to facilitate it in a more emergent way. Others saw their role as artists who observe the "pain of the times", as it reveals itself in organisational life, feeling restless to help reduce that pain, to overcome it through "intervention". Unlike traditional intervention where the engendered change may arise from direct change, from expertise and advice, the theatre-based "change agents" use performance, "drama itself", to stimulate reactions that unsettle the status quo, and "stir the pot". The organisation "reacts" to the theatre, is changed by it, and is never the same again.

The common ground that arose from the discussion upon the importance of the intervention being a creative process, was that it was carried out over more than one stage, based on ongoing collaboration with the client and involvement of the audience in the creation of the work, be this directly or indirectly. This approach, over time, is based on adaptation of the work, experimentation and reflection, very much akin to Action Research.

OT AND ACTION RESEARCH

The aim for both action research and organisational theatre is to achieve collective learning and change through involvement and reflection. Moreover the members of the organisation are themselves responsible to make change happen – through collaboration with theatre and/or action researchers.

The core elements of action research are⁴

- Action research is context-bound and addresses real-life problems.
- Action research is a form of enquiry where participants and researchers co-generate knowledge through collaborative communicative processes in which all participants' contributions are taken seriously.
- Action research treats the diversity of experience and capacities within the local group as an opportunity for the enrichment of the research/action process.
- The meanings constructed in the inquiry process lead to social action or these reflections on action lead to the construction of new meanings.
- The credibility/validity of action research knowledge is measured according to whether actions that arise from it solve problems and increase participants' control over their own situation.

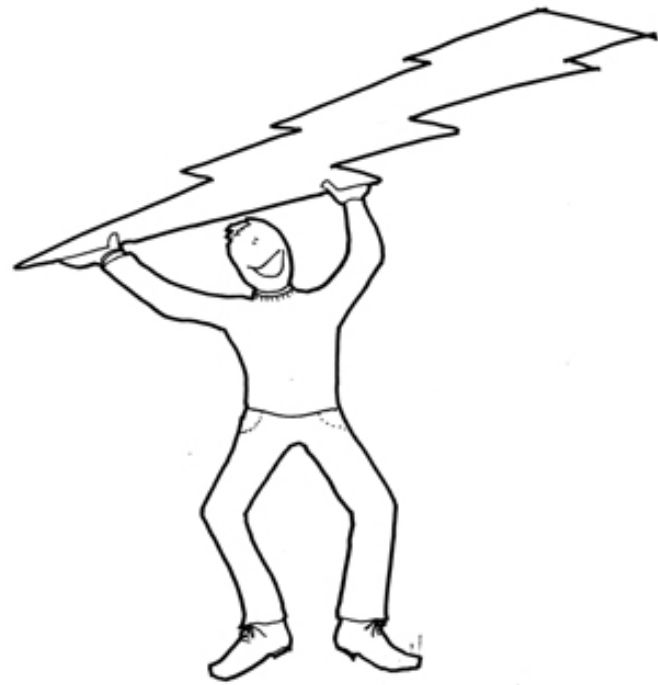
Artists and researchers have different roles when using organisational theatre as a method for changing and improving organisations. Artists playing theatre are experts in communication, where the play starts a collective thinking process at the work place. The most important difference between OT and action research is that action research implies a long term relationship between researchers and managers/workers, where OT is often used for dealing with challenges in order to find solutions. As researchers our task is also to document what kind of learning has taken place as a result of OT.

4 Levin, M. and Greenwood, D. in Reason, P. and Bradbury, H., 2002:105

THE MOMENT

The purpose of this next section is to hear from the individuals around the table discussing this topic. Let's return to the moment of "the bomb".

KARI AND HANNE When Kari tore down Paul's flip chart, the rest of the audience chose to pretend as if nothing had happened. Although everybody felt the uncomfortable tension in the room, nobody dared to stand up and ask Kari the important question: "Why did you do that?" At the same time, Kari was obviously tired of Paul's long-lasting and, to a certain degree, boring way of lecturing. She (and probably the rest of the audience) wanted to end the lecture, and change the group activity. But only Kari dared to do something about the situation – in a somewhat unorthodox way. In both situations the majority of the audience chose the safe but unproductive way: not to be involved. This action (or lack of action) didn't lead to much change. For Paul, this bomb-like experience probably made him wonder what Kari wanted to tell him. But the audience kept going as if nothing had happened – were they frustrated, angered or threatened by the intervention? What would have happened if Sam, who tried to save the situation, had asked the



audience what they felt about the situation, and invited Paul and Kari to join the discussion? Would the audience choose to speak freely about it, or would they still be silent?

PREBEN When Kari got up and tore the paper off the flipchart there was a moment of surprise, anxiety and unpredictability: "What will happen next?" It was a bifurcation point where the situation could develop in very different directions.

And if we take this seriously, it is obvious that we were in a situation of possible change. In that moment, the trouble is, of course, that we cannot know what the change will be, how the situation will develop, and not knowing and being out of control is anxiety provoking.

I think the way Sam handled the situation, by taking leadership and so re-establishing control, is how we often handle such unpleasant situations. But in fact anyone could have stopped Sam from returning to the planned program by saying: "Stop, can we stay with this for a moment?" And then we might have gone into a conversation trying to make sense together of what happened and how we might go on from here – in a different way than planned. It takes courage to stay present in such an undefined situation - leaving it open for a mutual exploration of possible new ways to make sense of the situation. It takes courage because in those situations, even though we may have a lot of experience and intentions about how we would like to go on, we know we are not in control. We don't know what will happen and we have to react spontaneously to whatever happens. However, if we want to be creative these are the moments we should welcome.

I don't want to use theatre as a means to change the concepts or the beliefs of the audience. I don't want to use theatre as a tool. Art is always about questioning the present seeking for a possible new future. The artist is usually doing this on his own or with colleagues. But, when intervening in an organisation, he's in a joint action with his audience. In order to remain an artist he has to enter this process with curiosity – seeking the moments where there's a possibility of changing patterns. He has to go into this dangerous and creative field of unpredictability. And in this work, I find presentations – even theatre performances – less useful. One can only handle unpredictable situations by being present and by acting in the moment. And acting in the moment means improvising.

LOTTE I call it a moment of truth. It is an opening, a crack, a pocket, a space of possibility that appears during a process. I have experienced it with many art forms⁵. It can emerge through a question or a statement that stands out, because it captures an essential truth or a sudden profound insight. The air vibrates and if people are sensitive enough the realisation will be followed by reflective silence. The moment is risky, as what happened was unexpected, it took a new direction. The question will usually be whether the group should follow the new thread or stick to the program. This depends on the situation, the context, the people, the framing, the setting, the time frame, the leadership, and what is at stake. Most

5 See Lotte Darsø (2004): "Artful Creation. Learning-Tales of Arts-in-Business".

often people will collude and continue the program as if nothing happened, as we (Sam) purposely did in our performance with Paul and Kari. It takes an experienced and sensitive facilitator to handle moments of this calibre and there will be no guaranteed successful outcome.

SAM It is interesting to observe how the external mass control mechanism, (manifested by the group psyche), and the internal rationalising voice is disrupted by such a moment.

Moments like these that we are discussing in this document make us confront many truths about ourselves that we are often uncomfortable with. In that dark depth lies a lot of unanswered questions quite often effected and influenced by a need to relate/ belong to a “whole”. The issue is how and whether we choose to face those truths as individuals and as a collective. The truths in themselves evidence a certain change in behaviours that are necessary to really, honestly move forward.

CONTINGENCIES OF THE MOMENT

Each change situation is unique. Even where the use of drama is based on archetypal material, or generic themes, the reaction of the client organisation, the “audience”, will be different on each occasion. These contingencies require a skilled facilitation, and sensitive performance and staging, whether there is use of direct performance, role play or forum theatre. The setting of the work will involve considerations of venue, demographics, type of organisation, and its' management style.

In our discussion, we shared experiences of how we stage and facilitate different types of work, in different cultures, working environments and so on. These were some of our collated thoughts. The biography of the organisation will also influence the way the work is framed. The phase of its development is crucial, its receptiveness and also readiness to work in a more arts-based way. It may be that we have to say “the time is not right for this” yet.

Also the framing of the material itself. The extent to which the material needs to be slanted positively to lift and inspire, or whether it is to be used more as a kind of “exorcism”. Or, it may be that the work is framed simply as a means to encourage dialogue and conversation.

We agreed there are no formulas here. Each organisation is a unique species! We need to do our research and ensure that setting and framing are adaptive

and flexible. In Dacapo, theatre practitioners work alongside a skilled consultant who acts as the facilitator of a dialogue between organisational members. The purpose isn't to frame “this” or “that” but to encourage mutual understanding through dialogue “about the drama”. The participants can think more deeply about their organisation and the changes that are potential. The drama and its resulting dialogue can help to reveal this potential.

The different setting and framing will also influence the form and style of communication: the type of interaction, the genre of theatre, the choice of approach. In some organisations, forum theatre is most suited where a process of questioning will help to reveal a change agenda. In another setting, stepping into role and experimenting with different types of resulting behaviour may be more appropriate. In another setting it may be that a direct performance of a play, containing themes about the human condition – trust, belief, fear, courage, for example – may have a significant impact and be seen long after as a critical incident, strong enough to encourage reflection, dialogue and change in the days, weeks, months and even years to follow.

SHORT-TERM VERSUS LONG-TERM INVOLVEMENT

Paul's rather provocative notion of letting off a well-intentioned bomb and then making a quick run for it didn't accord well with most in the group! However, the spirit of engendering a critical incident which has lasting impact did resonate with most. All of us would like to feel that our work lasts beyond the end of the day! Most of us can still re-play the detail of the moment in our heads as we reflect now.

Often some of the most challenging and potentially inspiring artists and artist trainers, have a portfolio of work and processes that do not lend themselves easily to evaluation and performance measurement. Indeed, as in challenging mainstream training, feedback sheets might actually be negative, evidencing discomfort and unease in participants, and have a “watering down” effect of the experience itself. The benefits may be deeper and may reveal themselves over the long term, for example as a radical change in attitudes or behaviour. Good feedback sheets may well be the sign of a 'collusion of mediocrity, where apparently 'happy sheets', actually hide a collective 'relief' that the arts based training didn't (thank heavens) manage to 'rock the organisational boat' in any significant way. It ends up all being just word play that ticked the necessary training box- “work covered- budget signed off”.

Art has the potential to turn training and development events in organisations into "critical incidents". A critical incident in a workshop is usually something which, after the event, is looked back on as being significant. Significant enough to be remembered. Significant enough to stand out in ones heart and mind. Potentially significant enough to lead to a change in attitude or behaviour.

Major change is often described in dramatic terms, just like the describing of a play or a film. The use of theatre, specifically in training, is no frivolous or entertaining side show to the main "event", but the training itself. The use of drama can impact directly as an "intervention" in the process of change. It can encourage re-evaluation, rethinking, re-framing, emotional response and even behaviour change.

Confronting characters from a play which has important things to say about the human condition, about life, about work, about questions of change and transformation, the audience can see aspects of themselves in the "mirror of the drama". They can see characters and behaviours that inspire them, that anger them, that make them uneasy, that make them laugh or cry and, most powerfully, that really influence positive and negative aspects of their own personal and organisational selves.

Much training and development activity simply is not significant or critical enough to inspire change. It is not strong enough to act off an intervention in the change process. No matter how pragmatic the "tools and techniques", no matter how slick the PowerPoint slides or the workbooks are, change and transformation will not last beyond the journey home from the workshop or training event. Unfortunately much arts-based training also falls into this category. The theatre scripts are poorly written, the characters funny, but stereotyped or poorly drawn, the workshop processes resemble too much poor training with the art "plugged in" in a false or bland way. Simply put, the drama isn't powerful enough to last beyond the closing "thank you".

Action Research is an iterative process allowing experimentation over time. Where the relationship with our clients is longer term there is the potential to be more adaptive, to build upon learning and change, and to innovate. Even a minimum of two "interventions" allows five possible change points. There is the preparation and diagnosis before the first intervention. There is the first intervention. Then there is a gap of time between first and second interventions. A second intervention allows reflection and further embedding of learning and change. Then there is a further chance to look ahead and experiment further after

the second intervention. This encourages the arts-based change to become a process of ongoing change and continuous improvement.

If a longer term relationship cannot occur, the single point of intervention would have to be a very well chosen, well planted, and hardy seed! Or perhaps a bomb. Not all agreed on this. The debate goes on!

CONCLUSION

Are we change agents? Are we change facilitators? Are we terrorists, preachers or missionaries? Are we teachers, trainers, or artists finding new channels for our work? Are we all of these or none of these?

Are we arrogant to think we can or should change others with our work? Are we cowards if we avoid that call to change?

Our group began a dialogue that lies at the heart of a debate that has been raging in the world of Organisation Development and Change Management for decades. What was unique about our discussion was the consideration of theatre (in all its different forms) as a tool, an approach, a method of change management. The sheer memorability of good theatre, the impact of it, the fact that it can stay with a person for years, that it can unsettle, that it can inspire, that it can engender laughter and tears in equal measure, creates a vast potential for using theatre in individual, group, organisational and social change. Whether theatre is a "bomb" that levels personal or organisational ground, a kind of constructive destruction that allows new edifices to arise, new seeds to be planted, or whether it is a more gentle, nature-respecting process, of planting seeds, of nurturing and patiently engendering developing change, still is up for discussion. We concluded that the diversity of approaches is a strength. What becomes crucial is that setting, communication and framing are contingent. It is always dependent on the utter uniqueness of the moment, and needs to always be changing, responding to shifting dynamics in the corporate climate.

Working group participants: Hanne Olofsson Finnestrang, Kari Skarholt, Lotte Darsø, Margareta Kumlin, Margrete Haugum, Paul Levy, Preben Friis and Sam Bond.

Rehearsal

– The bridge between text and context

Marijke Broekhuijsen and Piers Ibbotson

This chapter offers a reflection on the phenomenon of ‘rehearsing’ as practiced in theatre. It also represents our view on the rehearsal as a service/product development model and the possible value of this concept in the context of organizations, especially professional (service) firms.

INTRODUCTION

Like some of the other participants at the ‘Organisational Theatre Summit’ we, the authors of this chapter, have a professional background both in theatre and management development.

Our working group focused on the phenomenon of ‘preparing to perform’. In order to “show” rather than “tell” our colleagues something about the huge differences in the ways business and organizations prepare to perform or develop their product/service, our working group made up a small play called ‘Rehearsal for Hamlet’. In order to get an impression of this play – keeping in mind that reading a script is very different from the actual performance of a play – we ask you to look at Box 1.

Box 1 **A Rehearsal for “Hamlet”**

Five people in a room, sitting round a table, discussing a project with a flipchart and papers etc.

Director All right, everybody, sit down, we have just one more scene to rehearse, the theatre is booked, we have sold a good number of tickets for Monday.

Hamlet If we can finish off planning for this scene today, we will be ready to launch the performance on Monday.

Gertrude’s maid We’ve sold 200 tickets already, we’ve nearly sold out.

Director Fine – good: I knew there was a market here for this product. We are all set then. So – Hamlet. Act three scene four. Hamlet comes in: where were you standing in the last scene and how will you come in?

Hamlet *(Pointing at diagram of the stage on a flip-chart)* Here. In this scene I have decided to come in from the left, I will walk for five or six meters to this point here and stop and say the words.

Director Can you be a bit more precise with those figures? How far exactly?

Hamlet I think it is probably nearer five point five meters. *(He measures the distance on the chart)* Yes, it’s five point five.

Gertrude’s maid Umm... Can I come in here? I need time to get to fluff the pillow on the bed and leave the scene... I need something like 30 seconds. But Hamlet is in the way.

Hamlet So what is my time schedule?

Gertrude’s maid Three and a half seconds for the move across to the bed, should give me enough time.

We don’t know what you think of this rehearsal... maybe it depends partly on what you know about theatre! At the conference some people in the audience reacted to the play the way we intended it to be: a parody. But to our consternation others reacted as though there was nothing weird or ridiculous in the scene. Maybe the behavior shown in the little scene is so dominant in our society and organizations, that it did not strike some spectators as a strange method related to the purpose. They did not see the complete in-effectiveness of this ‘rehearsal’ for a theatre performance of Hamlet...

We figured that this was a way of getting into the concept of ‘rehearsal’.

THEATRE AND ORGANIZATIONS

In the last couple of decades theatre seems to have been discovered as a meaningful metaphor for various aspects of organization and management. But theatre offers more than this metaphorical perspective. Theatre-texts (plays)



offer great possibilities to reflect on the social reality of organizations and management. The profession and craftsmanship of acting and directing include competencies and methods that enlarge the behavioural repertoire of managers. And although the transfer from theatrical competences to managerial ones is not always evident or easy, we want this chapter to add another link in the chain of theatre-methodology for management. We think an essential element of the theatre-practice: 'the rehearsal', can offer a useful contribution to some aspects of management, particularly in professional service-firms.

Probably because of the importance of 'performing' in professional service organizations, theatre professionals are often asked by these firms to bring in their expertise one way or another. So were we. We observed many situations and regularly found that the quality of performance could be higher, in spite of good quality and zeal of the individual professionals involved.

Before we go further we will describe what we think of as the special characteristics of 'services'.

- Services are intangible
- The consumer of a service is also its co-producer
- The 'production' and 'consumption' of a service coincide
- The delivery of a service is transitory
- A service is connected to a person(s), it is personal
- Services are processes.

A large part of business-activities in Western Europe has moved from the manufacturing of objects to the manufacturing of moments; from the manufacturing of things (ships, fridges, computers) to the making of events (adverts, deals, contracts, behaviors), moving from products to services. Because of some essential differences between products and services this change has an impact on many aspects of organization and management.

With regard to 'preparing for performance' we have found in some service-firms a kind of 'embarrassment' concerning the introduction of new services or the changing of existing services. Managers still seem to be looking for appropriate ways to get from the idea of a new (renewed) service, event or moment to the successful realization of that idea. It seems to us that either:

- People tend to fall back on traditional and familiar product-development-models

Or

- People rely on the individual know-how and the skills of professionals, counting on them to be able to transform ideas into realization. They depend on the tacit knowledge and experience of professionals to enable them to translate ideas into new behavior.

Because of the nature of services/moments that we outlined above, it seems to us that these two ways might not quite do. We believe the concept of 'rehearsal' as practiced in the theatre, may be useful here as an alternative and complementary method of development.

The product development models used in professional service firms are borrowed from engineering. In the engineering model there is a cycle of testing, evaluating, modifying and re-testing. And there are places to do this work; laboratories, where prototypes and models can be rigorously examined and modified prior to letting them loose in the real world. An important reason for companies to test their materials or products is, of course, the reduction of risk related to investments or effects.

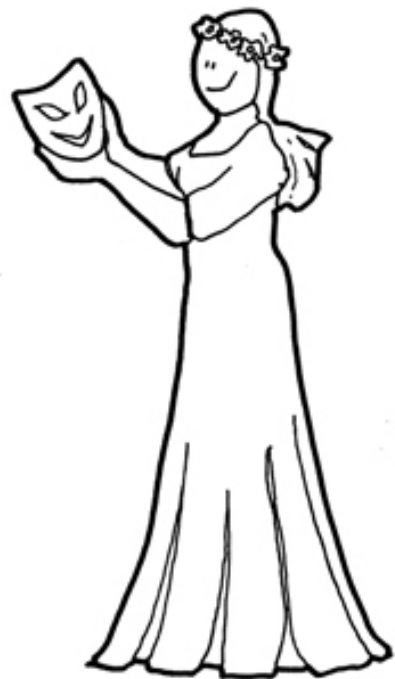
This engineering model has been transferred to the more intangible process of developing ideas for actions in service industries. Customer feed-back and focus groups are used extensively in a rough model of testing. But these techniques are not as rigorous as what is possible in engineering. Engineers do not sample public opinion to find out what is an acceptable thickness of cable to support an overhead power line. Engineers test their ideas against the known and immutable laws of physics. Against what laws are you testing services /events? An understanding of the nature of the rehearsal process in theatre may offer part of the answer to this question.

Relying on the skills of the professionals when new services/events are introduced, is a good thing because most professionals are used to improvising – because a service, by its very nature, is never quite the same from performance to performance. In theatre however, no one thinks that well trained actors can 'do' a performance only on the basis of their individual skill. They are expected to be able to rehearse... before they have a try-out with a live audience. What is the specific character of a rehearsal then, compared to the practice of professionals in other fields?

THEATRE AS A PROFESSIONAL SERVICE ORGANISATION

In order to consider the rehearsal-process as a possible development-model, first a bit more on the nature of theatre and the function of rehearsal in theatre. In organizational language 'making theatre' is 'delivering services/moments':

- The core of theatre is the performance: a process of co-creation between all the makers and the audience at a specific time and place
- Acting is always inter-acting
- The performance is intangible
- The 'customers' are co-producing (if the audience doesn't play along in the illusion, there is no theatre; without spectators one cannot even speak of theatre)
- It is connected to a person, persons (a part can never be done the same way by a different actor)
- The performance (the service) can not be produced before consumption; so the professionals cannot design and make the product to deliver it at the desired moment. They must prepare themselves to be ready to perform adequately at the desired moment.



As in other professional organizations, it is essential that the professionals involved are well trained (have the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to do the job) and continue with further training. They have to carry on practicing throughout their professional life. But training, practicing and rehearsing are three different things, though all three are needed in the theatre-profession. As we have said: no-one in theatre thinks that well-trained actors can 'do' the performance only on the basis of their individual professional skills, however experienced they may be. Neither does any actor or director think that a play, or a text, however well written and annotated by the author with instructions for director or actors, will bring about a performance by itself. The written script of a

play is not a performance. The gap between the text (or the director's and actors' ideas about the text) and the actual performance at a specific time and place is bridged by the rehearsal. Rehearsal is the bridge between text and context.

REHEARSAL IN THEATRE

A rehearsal is a process of co-creation in which all the participants in the story that is to be played out work together to find the best possible interpretation of the text under the guidance of a director.

Creating art means giving a concrete form to an idea; an idea is not a work of art yet. In the rehearsal process one is looking for forms, which are beautiful and meaningful; meaningful in the eyes of the makers and the audience, and meaningful in relation to the chosen interpretation of the play and the characters. Rehearsing is the process of looking for these forms and meanings by trying them out, by enacting them.

During rehearsal the critical question at any new suggestion is: 'will it work?' – Does this style of playing, this way of appearing on stage, this design, this change of rhythm or lighting - work? An idea might be new, spectacular, a creative find, if it doesn't work, if it is not functional in the whole of the performance, it will not be used. In order to answer that question 'does it work?' during rehearsal, the following conditions are essential:

One has to try new forms by doing, by enacting them. Theatre is more the result of doing than of good thinking. Only by doing do you get the information you need about whether it works or not and about what the next step is.

Acting is action – making a gesture into the space. Until an action is taken, the creative process has not really begun. The descriptions of the possible actions in the actor's head are only fantasies until a gesture is made. In rehearsal, actors and directors read, discuss and think about the role of course: but until the first action is embodied the process of creation has not really started. It is not until the first attempt is made, the first words spoken into the space, the first gestures made, that the necessary understanding is there for the creative process to begin. The first attempt, – the first contact with the raw material from which the performance will be shaped – alters the understanding of the task, and of the potential of the creative conditions that have been set up. Rehearsal proceeds by iterative failure. What actors and directors understand is that until the first attempt is made there is only an idea about the performance and the idea about the performance will never manifest itself. The reality will always be different.

Of course directors have their own ideas about style, rhythm, scenes, characters etc. based on their general interpretation of the play. But the concrete form of the play will originate during rehearsal. The play develops during rehearsal by exploring many possibilities that preferably, are as much in contrast with one another as possible.

One explores not only variations on a theme, but also variations in themes – especially in the beginning. It is more useful to look for contrasts than to look for what is better. Improving a mise-en-scene is less interesting than trying to find a contrasting way to do the same scene. 'Don't improve on your first few ideas; try something else, try something different'. The director encourages actors to enact different versions of a scene and helps them by imposing different constraints. A constraint is, contrary to what people often think, an enormous catalyst of change and of creativity. The director can both encourage divergence and shape the direction of the actor's exploration by offering constraints; by framing 'what if?' questions, by challenging assumptions, and by placing resistance in the way of the performers. For example:

'What if in this scene it is pouring with rain?'

'What if you try to kiss her before you finish what you are saying?'

Theatre and rehearsing are first and foremost interactive processes: the performance is the result of different contributions of many professionals and of the personal chemistry between them. This art form is not about the individual expression of an individual feeling or idea. This means everybody has to give way to the 'whole', each individual has to be dedicated to the 'whole'. An actor or designer should be able to put away private feelings, put aside his/her ego and concentrate on the matter at hand. Keywords are 'letting go', 'trusting' and 'humility'.

The director plays an important role during the rehearsal. He or she is the one who chooses the initial conditions from which the explorations will proceed. He or she will move the process along by looking carefully at what actors and other makers are presenting and choosing among them. Good directors maintain complexity and openness as long as possible. They postpone the moment at which decisions about a form are taken, they delay as long as possible the moment when things become 'fixed'. They hold open the creative space. The director is present, watching, listening and evaluating – putting into words what he/she sees the actors do, expressing what is happening on stage.

The Director is the eye and ear of the group. His/Her contribution is to see clearly what patterns are emerging from the collective creative process and select the ones that will 'work'; those that are beautiful, true and meaningful for what the director wants the final event to achieve.

During rehearsals not only the director is present and watches the various trials, but the other actors often do too. The actors are witnessing the full story of the activity under development. Everyone involved in the play has a chance to witness and to reflect, which helps everyone to grasp the idea of the full script. The sensitivity and cohesion you gain by rehearsing together makes a group of people into a team, which is essential for a good performance.

We have been working with the rehearsal-model in various types of organizations and with various objectives. Each company context asks for its own development model (of services or products), the rehearsal-method is one of them. In our opinion the 'rehearsal-model' is an interesting alternative to the product-development-model and complimentary to the practice of relying on the existing professional skills of individual members of a team or organization.

The rehearsal-method respects the aspects of 'team', 'process' and 'context' in a service organization. True to the very nature of theatre the concrete form and precise application of the method can only be found by doing, by enacting it each time anew...



AFTERTHOUGHT

The result of rehearsing: the creation of meaning in a specific context brings us to two other reasons why we think the rehearsal-method is useful for organizations today. These are:

- Changes in today's view on social reality and organizations (such as the notion of the growing complexity and dynamics of organizations and society; the necessity to deal with responsibility without control: 'to be in charge but not in control')
- Changes in today's notion of knowledge (e.g. the idea that besides academic knowledge that is true and valid irrespective of the context) another kind of knowledge is needed: 'acting knowledge'. We think theatre has a lot to offer to the development of this 'acting knowledge'.

We hope to write more about our experiences with, and reflections on, this theme somewhere in the near future.

Suggested reading:

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Vaill Peter B., *Managing as a performing art: new ideas for a World of Chaotic Change*, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1990

Winograd T. & Flores F., *Understanding computers and cognition*, Norwood: Ablex, 1986

Working group participants: Marijke Broekhuijsen, Piers Ibbotson, Göran von Euler, Camilla Albrecht Jensen, Susanne Kandrup.

In the Wings
– On the Possibility of Theatrical Space

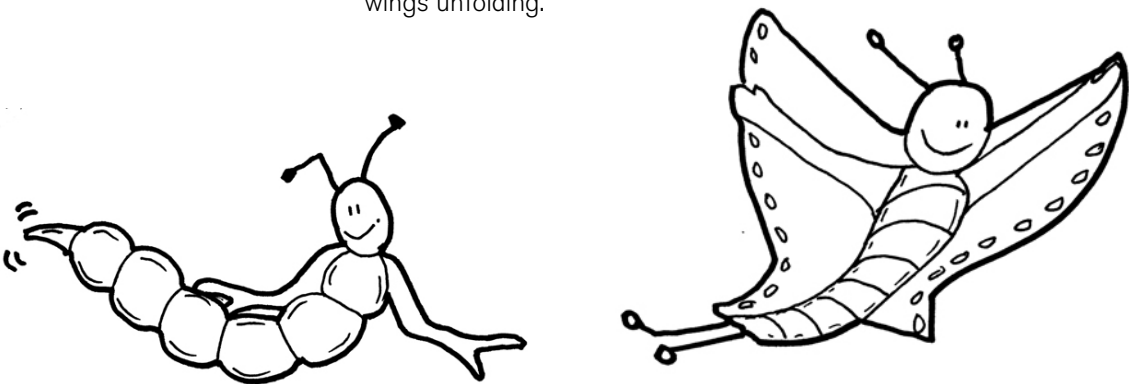
*Chris Steyaert, Heather Höpfl, Daniel Hjorth,
Hans Hansen and Stefan Meisiek*

PRELUDE

Enter: The caterpillar
creeping up their sleeve
looking for a space.

Wrapped in expectation
cocooning, soft and safe
away, yet in it all.

Exit: The butterfly
feeling of being possible
wings unfolding.



PROLOGUE

The following musings attempt to capture a common element of public theatre and organizational theatre: the creation of a space of possibility between actors and audience members that allows for something new and unforeseen to become

sensible. While in public theatre this possible effect is thought to entertain and enlighten the audience, in organizational theatre it is frequently thought to be a driving force for organizational change. In any case, it is what we will call a “line of flight”, a non-anticipatable way out of well known structures.

THEATRICAL LINES OF FLIGHT

“The rest is silence” is how Hamlet ends his part in the play and how Robert Wilson starts his monologic version of Hamlet to indicate that it is as much here that the play starts, that play becomes possible. The possibility of theatre is the silence, a line of flight (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987) that affects us.

There is quite some magic in the silence before a play starts and theatre becomes possible. It is the moment when one hears the echo of the theatre bell, when the lights are dimming and last coughs are dying out. It is a silence of intensity and tension that asks the Lyotardian question: “Arrive-t-il?” – does it happen? It is when you keep your breath while you should be breathing out.

There is also quite some danger in that silence, alerting us to the fragile space of theatre. Any moment that space can implode, any fraction of time might escape us, a resonance might start: an anticipation of transformation.

Theatre is a space of possibilities, a space of the possible. This is our question: What space makes theatre possible? What does it mean to consider the performance space as the site of possibility? What is this hierophantic space (Gk. hieros, holy; phainein, to show) which is the site of ritual, the place of theatre? In theatre, everything is possible; nothing is fixed. Time collapses and slips, characters change, transform themselves, gender is fluid, nothing is disallowed, everything and anything can enter the site. Nothing is what it seems. So it provides an opportunity for the most “dramatic” and revealing transformations to take place.

For our answer, we will not enter the stage directly, nor try to conceive the theatrical space unswervingly since no representation of this “empty space” is possible. The only possible way is by entering the wings, the sides of the stage, the off-stage. The wings surround the scene and form the scene. From the wings, audiences, actors and angels – each with their own angle – go out and meet on the in-between stage. The interplay of their multiple outlooks – this multiple authorship – creates the intensity and the surprise that is called theatre.

Now the bell rings! Follow the audiences gathering in the foyer. Look at the actors waiting in the wings. Put on the wings of angels and troubadours that make magic and carry them like the Gods that brought us theatre. Silence emerges. Imagine to be in Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream and to hear Benjamin Britten's operatic music where three parties form our three angles we think co-construct the possibility of the theatrical space: the lovers as audience who watch the play by the craftsmen; the craftsmen who as amateur actors rehearse their upcoming play and the fairies who like angels intervene in matters of life and love. Shakespeare lets these story lines run alongside, creating for each other surprises and lines of flight. In this interspace where one doubts whether this is a dream or real, magic or counterfeit, what matters emerges: otherness, desire, love.

Every play presupposes a midsummer night, a twilight zone, where such strange conjunctions appear and where dream and desire take over. Silence again! The lights dim as if the sun went under. As if the night falls, there is some diffuse light left, a twilight. And then that magic meeting might happen as all sneak into that empty space: audience, actors and... angels.



AUDIENCE

*Playing with Persians and Turks, I realized
that for the past 40 years I've been rushing.
Forget notes and how you articulate them
– think about space.*

Cellist Yo-yo Ma, Time Magazine (NZ edition),
April 4, 2005

The first wing in producing a site of possibility involves a wing of the theatre, the foyer. This lobby area inside the theatre but not yet in view of the stage is the space where the audience begins preparation. As the audience enters this outer space, they begin to distinguish and separate themselves from the outside world. Not yet in sight of the stage, they are at a threshold of sorts. They join

the collective identity of the audience and leave behind their everyday props. While the actors are taking on a role, audience members leave certain roles behind. While the actors' role is consigned, theirs is unconsigned. Their role is one of openness to presentation, to prepare, to receive, and to project. To place themselves into whatever comes next, to take the role of the yet-to-be-known Other. There is hard work to be done in this wing if we are to create a site of possibility. In order to make them ready to enter a space, magic is pushed into the wings.

Quite literally, the magic might creep up their legs and enter their chest, massaging them. As they enter the wing, their space slowly darkens and packs them in. More and more spectators are let into the foyer, but the theatre stage is kept closed. They are forced into the wings, and wings are forced upon them. The foyer lights are slowly turned down until their wing is an intimate one, while space is closing down around them. The magic of music imposes upon them some emotion. As lights are turned down, the music is turned up and is creeping, sneaking upon the audience, that, only half aware, begins to shout. The wings – more and more crowded – push the audience members closer and closer upon each other. Perhaps they are as close now as they will be in their seats. This magic in the wings requires them to engage more closely, speaking and laughing louder and louder while still moving closer and closer to each other in their shrinking, darkening space. Personal boundaries collapse and a sort of sublime madness creeps upon them in the darkness and urges them to shout: a crowded intimacy and a packed roar. How far is this from the image of howling tribal ritual trance under a midnight sky? Outside is well out but they are still not yet in.

They are at the point of rupture at the prospect of pouring into the site of possibility. They are prepared for transformation. They have half-embraced a yet-to-be known purpose. The inner doors are opened and they pour into the site. They all face the stage in a pregnant moment. The energy is unchanged but silence comes and attention is directed towards the stage. It is the space and time of a site of possibility. Their rave is still present; a silence screams echoes off the walls and keeps all else out of the liminal. It is an intense yet fragile moment. The roaring silence protects the space and invites more magic.

ACTORS

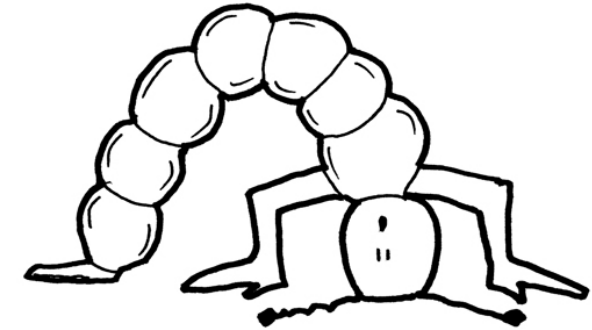
Astrolog:

*Beginne gleich das Drama seinen Lauf!
Der Herr befiehlt's, ihr Wande, tut euch auf!
Nichts hindert mehr, hier ist Magie zur Hand:
Die Tepp'che schwinden, wie gerollt vom Brand;
Die Mauer spaltet sich, sie kehrt sich um,
Ein tief Theater scheint sich aufzustellen,
Geheimnisvoll ein Schein uns zu erhellen,
Und ich besteige das Proszenium.*

Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Faust, Der Tragödie zweite Teil

But what do actors think of the wings, the borders of the stage they will enter, the marginal, the liminal, the points of entry? These areas deserve their particular attention because they are the places, which mark the boundary of the transition into the magical, where the dramatic persona is assumed or, less easily, discarded before and after the performance.

In modern theatre, the auditorium is darkened before a performance in order to focus on the frame of action, on the site of performance. Darkness is in contrast to light. By revealing the action in the light and, at the same time, by eclipsing the audience, traditional theatre is theological in character. It divides the world into sacred and profane areas. Its boundaries are marked by the proscenium arch, the shadowy world of the rear of the stage, and by the front stage, the space between actors and audience. It is a site of ritual performance and transformations take place within its framing. Consequently, to enter the site of performance is to cross a threshold into a place where anything is possible. Illusion, fantasy, time-slips, reversals and doubling – all are the vehicles for the creation of theatre. Like the entrance in the wall through which the Steppenwolf passes into the Magic Theatre, there is always a threshold to be crossed by both the actors and the audience. For the actor, the transformation takes place in the wings or, more precisely as the actor leaves the wings and enters the performance space. The wings are the liminal space between the realm of the backstage area where preparations are made, costumes sewn, props mended, where production staff rush around creating the set, where mugs of tea are left abandoned, the green room conversations left behind. The wings are the narrow passage way between the curtains or the flat where the actor sets aside present





concerns in the service of the role, touches some favourite talisman or prays to some favoured god, assumes the role and mounts the stage.

To mount to the place defined by the proscenium arch, both literally and metaphorically, is to enter a performance space which is circumscribed by context, text and intention. The site of performance is the spatial context of the dramatic act. It is here, away from the rehearsal room that the performance takes on a life of its own. It is also here that it is regulated, ordered and sustained. Consequently, to enter the space is to enter into the trajectory of the

performance. This is true of all kinds of performances and sites. This is as true of the theatre as, say, a wedding ceremony or even to the task of having to begin to work again after a period of holiday. There is an effort involved in preparation. The actor must assume the role to enter the performance. This is why the idea of the “wings” is so crucial to the performance site. In the wings, what immediately precedes the actor’s entrance is set aside in favour of the dramatic performance. The play is in progress and to enter the performance is to accept that this is King Lear and not Cleopatra. The stage is set, the drama in progress, the trajectory of the action defined. Always there is the anticipation, the anxiety, the excitement which precedes entry.

The apparent coherence and consensus regarding the accomplishment of the performance depends primarily on the successful assumption of the role and on masking. The dramatic mask conceals ambivalence about the role, about performance and about the production but it is not infallible nor, indeed, irreversible. When the mask fails the performance is thrown into question: becomes ludicrous. For the actor, the extent of his/her degradation is revealed. The actor has not successfully carried it off, the preparation has been incomplete, the role fails. However, when the mask is made grotesque, when the actor forces the role to and beyond its dramatic possibilities the mask fails and, in turn, the performance. There is a nicety in the interpretation of a role which the actor finds not only in the performance of the other players but in the mutuality

which develops with the audience. In the wings, this is all in prospect. The actor prepares. The audience settles back in the darkness of the auditorium. A hush descends on all present. The magic of theatre is about to take place.

ANGELS AND TROUBADOURS

Silence

Questions:

Does or should anything survive the space?

Intensify the moment of possibility and leave it there.

Icarus

And the rest is silence.

Beyond the safe ground of origin in the theatre and its representations in language, a world of imagination challenges us to create, to take off. There is an unbearable lightness, captured in the figures of troubadours and angels that the order of discourse has sought to tame and control. This is the preoccupation of management (manos, the hand that touches and controls; contra- + rotulus, against what is rolling); to control, to secure a conduct against the openness of angels and troubadours. Here we seek not to add to the enormous history of control but to affirm life ‘in the wings’. We do so following the playful tactics of angels and troubadours. Next to audience and actors, as a third “group”, they form what Michel Serres (1997) calls “the third”, a third space.

How could the practices of troubadours and angels work as tactics of resistance against the vulnerability of the virtual to the directedness of the actual? How could we describe their ways of lightness and ease? They seem to emerge in the in-betweens: being present and perishing; earth and heaven; the virtual and the actual; sensing and sense-making. We learn from these



travellers of knowledge, heralds of messages, that the point is not to find that language (of science) according to which we can determine the origin or the truer truth. We do not seek the unified language according to which we can judge the accuracy and order of the partial and secondary. Our focus – as Michel Serres (1997) has stressed in his studies of angels and troubadours – is on the constant work of translation: the interconnections between the virtual and the actual, between the shining language of angels, poets and troubadours and the everyday practices of people. These interconnect, transform and create openings, tendencies to become in unforeseeable directions. We could learn from them how to travel and travel lightly.

These angels, they keep secrets, bring promises, make us move, protect our lives as well as that they bring our stories to new regions, those masters of wings. From the ripeness of imaginations resting in the regions of angels, the troubadours return with the force of higher sanction: the surplus of the real, the lives of angels. And those troubadours are 'plunging' their instruments, gesturing towards the possibility and leaving you in a state of singing. They are travellers in music, poetics of sound, looking for the moment, luring in the wings, creating the event, transforming our corporeality in making us dance.

For a life in the wings, or, for knowing how to deal with ending up in the wings, we suggest that we study the lives of angels and troubadours. These have developed tactics of response to the affects of art, to the magic in life. They take flight – with imagination and music – and seek the possibilities of the event, the moment that escapes language but prepares another space where our passions are received and transform what we took ourselves to be.



RÉSUMÉ

“...[W]inged with desire”

William Shakespeare, Henri VI

Theatre, as many of us can testify and bear witness of, can create affects which produce an immediate response. It is not the meaning of the experience but this response which is important to us. This response to one's tendency to become, to take flight, to move is what we describe as the response to finding oneself 'in the wings'.



Why do we say that the meaning of this experience of theatre is not what's important, but the response as such? The long-standing tendency to seek 'the meaning of...' is the result of having invested heavily in a representationalist epistemology. In contrast, we stress a world of simulacra, of imaging, of desire. Instead of an order of levels of being, we emphasize a series of actual-virtual relationships. We see actuality and virtuality as coexisting, and ask you to think of the virtual not as "...secondary or caused by some already given, self-present and undifferentiated actual being." (Colebrook, 2002: 162). 'In the wings' we respond to this interconnection between the actual and the virtual as they interconnect and transform each other and open up new possibilities for new becomings – new lines of flight (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987). The affects as responses pull us back from composite meanings, from the tendency to interpret and to find the deeper meaning.

Art is productive. It has an excess one might call magic, but that we have tentatively called 'the wings' in the present essay. These wings are the possibility that carries you in the opening or interruption of art. From the connections that art produces – the connection between story and actors; actors and audience; between people in the audience; play and audience; etc. – there will always be a possibility for further becomings. The connections are never fully determined as to what outcome they will produce. There is always a drift, a surplus, an unforeseen – a line of flight. Theatre, in being precisely productive in this sense, is 'dangerous' as it never promises to keep the discourses within the laws of order. You take off in the wings, and in that moment you cannot say where you will touch ground again.

Magic is here something different from the bourgeois concept of theatre that takes the theatrical space for its entertainment and escape. Instead we follow

Heidegger who said in his famous essay *The Origin of the Work of Art* (1971) that the aesthetic experience is characterised by participating in a clearing of openness where truth happens. People that become part of such an experience are 'standing within' this truth as it happens in the work (of art). We find this emphasised also in Vattimo's (1992) and in Benjamin's (1999) discussions of the aesthetic experience where a blow or shock marks the discontinuity, which leaves us in a state of disorientation. Theatre is also in this sense dangerous, as it creates intensities, organises our desire, our investments in affects – it intensifies the political. It brings us to the possible without delivering what it is the possibility of. It is the possible (the virtual), and as such it is immensely vulnerable and should perhaps – for this reason – also remain personal.

There is maybe a necessary impossibility here: the 'what to do with'-question that our habit of sense-making imposes on us in the moment of possibility. We do not know what to do with our wings. Yet, this is when we are faced with our response to art, and where we are pulled back from our concepts and located in the openness where it all can start – where flying, imagining, magic is possible. In the wings the actual and the virtual interconnect and transform each other.

EPILOGUE

*If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended:
That you have but slumbered here,
While these visions did appear;
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend.
If you pardon, we will mend.*

William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*

After the play, as the doors of the parterre and the stalls open, as actors undress and take off mascara, as silence is broken up and thresholds overstepped, all what we hear is a murmuring, the strange and intense echo of transformation. The vacant theatre is no longer silent.

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Working group participants: Dorthe Bille, Hans Hansen, Daniel Hjorth, Heather Höpfl, Stefan Meisiek, Chris Steyaert.

The Summit

The Organisational Theatre (OT) Thin Book Summit, which took place in Liseleje, Denmark on 17–19 March, 2005, was organised by Lotte Darsø, Hilde Bollen and Stefan Meisiek at Learning Lab Denmark, The Danish University of Education.

The process of the summit was intended to be organic, starting with building relationships and networks. The key words of the summit were interaction, learning and co-creation. Rather than having a conventional, presentation-based conference forum, we wanted to facilitate interaction and learning through a variety of approaches.



THE BASIC OUTLINE OF THE SUMMIT WAS:

Day 1 (from 1pm–9 pm):

- Getting to know each other
- Drawing a big mind-map of the field of OT together
- Each person presenting parts of his/her work in relation to the map
- Adding the final adjustments to the program of the summit
- Enjoying a short performance as a conversation starter

Day 2 (from 9 am–9 pm):

- Open Space – Working in groups of special interest
- Presenting the group work for the plenum using presentational and theatrical techniques
- Reflecting on the effects, on our own learning and on the potential for organisations
- Inviting in critical perspectives and challenges
- Talk about content and form of the Thin Book and start the writing process

Day 3 (from 9 am–2pm):

- Developing our visions for the future of OT and writing them down
- Capturing our learning, reflections and visions and continue writing the Thin Book
- Agree on who does what after the Summit

We asked each participant to send us a one-page description of their work, based on the following questions:

- What is your background and how are you connected to OT?
- What do you find most interesting and intriguing about OT?
- If possible, give one example of what you consider successful OT (and maybe one example, of what you consider unsuccessful).
- What is your “burning question” in relation to the summit? What would you like to explore?

The pages were sent around to everyone before the summit started. Short summaries of these can be found in Appendix C. People were asked to bring along their normal working tools (cameras, laptops, costumes, and other materials) in order to produce a real time account of the essence of our conversations and insights for the Thin Book.

We used several formats, including Open Space, plenum, co-creating an enormous mind map, walk-and-talks and small group work. People were invited to contribute to the program and the process with an exercise, a performance, a process, a song, an icebreaker, or something that they thought would help us create an unforgettable meeting and an important Thin Book. From these suggestions we composed a joyful, interesting and engaging program. We made the final adjustments together on the first day of the Summit.

THE PARTICIPANTS

We started in May 2004 by sending out emails to our networks in order to find out if people would be interested in attending an OT Summit in Denmark and the immediate response was that people were very keen indeed. After this we sent out invitations to academics and practitioners (a total of 50), who were known and who were recommended. Of course, many people had appointments that they could not change and some asked if they could send a colleague instead. We thus ended up being 26 people in total with the break-down academics/practitioners being approx. 50/50. Geographically there was a good spread with delegates from the US, New Zealand, UK, Netherlands, Switzerland, Portugal, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The following is a list of the people, who attended the Summit, in alphabetical order (after first name) and the positions they held at the time of the Summit:

- 1 Camilla Albrecht Jensen, Actor, Denmark
- 2 Chris Steyaert, Professor, St. Gallen University, Switzerland
- 3 Daniel Hjorth, Associate Professor, Malmö University, Sweden
- 4 David Barry, Professor, LLD & CBS, Denmark

- 5 David Boje, Professor, New Mexico State University, USA
- 6 Dorthe Bille, Actor, Videnskabsteatret, Denmark
- 7 Göran von Euler, Actor and CEO, Pocket Theatre, Sweden
- 8 Hanne Olofsson Finnestrand, Researcher, Sintef, Norway
- 9 Hans Hansen, Assistant Professor, Victoria Management School, NZ
- 10 Heather Höpfl, Professor, University of Essex, UK
- 11 Henry Larsen, Consultant, Dacapo Teatret, Denmark
- 12 Hilde Bollen, Research Coordinator, LLD, Denmark
- 13 Jan Rae, Researcher, London South Bank University, UK
- 14 Kari Skarholt, Researcher, Sintef, Norway
- 15 Lone Thellesen, Consultant, Dacapo Teatret, Denmark
- 16 Lotte Darsø, Research Manager, LLD, Denmark
- 17 Margareta Kumlin, Actor & Process Leader, Pocket Theatre, Sweden,
- 18 Margrete Haugum, Researcher, North Trondelag Research Institute, Norway
- 19 Marijke Broekhuijsen, Actor/Consultant, Director Senior Management Programmes, Nyenrode University, The Netherlands
- 20 Paul Levy, Actor & Director CATS3000, Senior Research Fellow, Centrim, UK
- 21 Piers Ibbotson, Director & Consultant, Directing Creativity, Visiting Fellow, University of Kingston School of Business, UK
- 22 Preben Friis, Actor, Dacapo Teatret, Denmark
- 23 Sam Bond, Director, Trade Secrets, UK
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Scraps from Summit logbooks, emails and blogs

KARI AND HANNE The Organisational Theatre Thin Book Summit at Liseleje in Denmark was a rare experience due to the openness, reflection and curiosity about each others' work and interests. Twenty-six artists and researchers from ten different countries were gathered for three days. As participants we were invited to be active in shaping this Summit, and the first day we spent much time in getting to know each other. We laughed a lot, and had a great time together.

From the beginning we could feel the positive atmosphere in the room, which was filled with engagement, laughter, play, and lively discussions. Many of the participants said that the playful and positive atmosphere gave them energy, and the discussions went on after finishing a long day at the Summit. We met artists and researchers who joined the discussions by asking challenging and interesting questions rather than presenting the “right” answers. They could easily have communicated in a more authoritarian manner because many of the participants were actually experts within their field, but they were more concerned about opening up the thinking process. This practice opened up the opportunities for sharing and learning between the people attending the Summit. During the Summit we thought that the communication between the participants was amazing, and we still think about it and talk about it with our colleagues.

STEVE What I experienced and liked at Learning Lab's Organizational Theatre Summit in March 2005 was:

- sharing of practices
- deep conversation about current issues
- deepening sense of community
- meeting others in the field and sharing food and drink
- performances and art

MARIJKE I too think of our days in Denmark with joy. They gave material for thinking about our profession for many months to come... It is a pity, the 'normal work' load is so great; it would be wonderful to think and write immediately after returning. I had many ideas and also got some more defined notions about where I find myself in the professional field. I certainly will write about that one day...

DAVID BOJE I too would like to express how wondrous a summit this was for me. It really opened up some possibilities; it shimmers still in my imagination.

PAUL It was a pleasure to meet you all and I am still buzzing from all of the discussion and interaction. This is my OT Summit BLOG March 2005:

Thursday 17th March

The classic mind map covers four white boards mapping out a field that seems to cover theatre, art, business, politics, psychology and economics.

The immediate thought: is all of this diversity a sign of unconnectedness and chaos in a field too large, or are we an overlapping, rich, manifold perspective community?

The map is not the territory but Jesus; this map is territory enough for a life time!

Role play and forum theatre blend with anti-capitalism and the wish to heal the “bunch of shysters” that is industry and commerce.

I love this diversity. I feel like a child being allowed to play in a toy shop. I am bringing my own restlessness, my unease about the dominance of forum theatre and role play, and psychodrama in the field where I would prefer to erect a circus tent and scream “Roll up! Roll up! Come and see a show!”

Do we simply serve the industrial and commercial monster or are we here to influence it, to change for our version of the “better”? Or both? Or neither? The daily rates are so good; they can fund all of our precious loss-making art ventures in one single blow.

“If business stinks, do we simply serve the role of air fresheners?” I think I must really love business. I love its gadgets (upon which I type); I love its chocolate and its amazing way of heating my home and waking me up in the morning. Yet I feel restless at the soulless, machine-like methodology that makes ghosts of those who walk as the living-dead in its repetition.

What is the difference between a line of production and a line of poetry?

Friday 18th March

We breakfast sumptuously and then remind ourselves that we are not here just to talk but also to WRITE! Panic sets in and the community fractures in such a charming way; I feel I am amongst an English church bazaar committee. Out of the fires of disagreement emerges that healing thing known as a process.

Our group considers the concept of “change” and how to embed change in organisations.

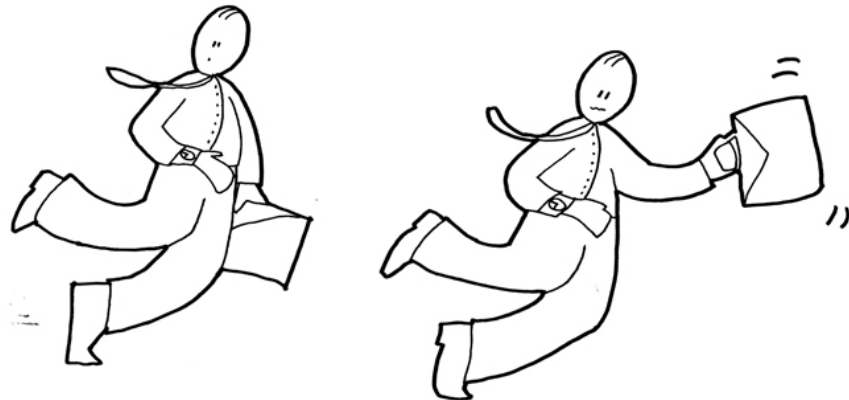
- How do we embed change?
- What is cultural change?
- Do we have a right to change people?
- If we simply “respond” for money are we nothing more than whores?
(I wonder what more is there.)
- What are the ethics of change?

The experience of Dacapo that it is the power of Dialogue that can open up the world of change, it identifies what is POSSIBLE. When possibility emerges from dialogue and that possibility creates COMMON GROUND, then change can begin, either through self-change or a consultancy-aided process. Several of us are both artists and consultants. We ACT on the stage and we ACT upon change.

For me, the ethics involve breaking “collusions” – I am very interventionist and lose sleep over it. Still being on the road to sainthood is never easy. (!!!)

The groups debate and then share. It seems our book will be more of a tapestry. Heads down to write and I am left pondering the meaning of it all.

You are my community, and I didn't know I had one. I hope we remain in touch and are not just an anonymous Aquarian Conspiracy. I will welcome you to Brighton, and serve you only the finest fayre.



Biographies

Participants in Thin Book Summit (in alphabetical order)
and the positions they currently hold:

David Barry
Banco BPI Chair in Creative Organization Studies, UNL (Universidade Nova de Lisboa); Adjunct Professor, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, dbarry@fe.unl.pt davedbarry@gmail.com

"I began experimenting with arts-based methods during the 80's, in my teaching at Syracuse University as well as in my consulting work. When I made the jump to New Zealand in 1993, I started bringing in more narrative forms of work, which gradually led to my being interested in Organisational Theatre. In 2003 I moved to Copenhagen to join The Creative Alliance at Learning Lab Denmark, where my work with OT took a large step forward as I joined Stefan Meisiek in his research on the Dacapo Theatre. What intrigues me about OT is the way that it covers 'everything' in one medium – sight, sound, touch, narrative, deep cultural history, social interaction... I'm also curious about how this 'everythingness' works – is having so many properties in one medium always such a good thing?"

Dorthe Bille
Actor, Videnskabsteatret, Denmark, bille@videnskabsteatret.dk

"I have been working with theatre for several years, as an actress, a teacher, a director, and a project manager etc. About a year ago I started as cultural entrepreneur producing science theater. Science theatre is a fusion of the lecture and the theatre performance. www.videnskabsteatret.dk Science-theater is a way in which you may communicate scientific results and knowledge to a broader audience. The layman is thereby given a chance for (or change of) insight in important knowledge and the performance will create a space for critical dialog and debate. Another activity I offer as cultural entrepreneur is courses and workshops for organizations and institutions. In this work I use different acting techniques, and drama pedagogic methods such as forum play – forum play is a pedagogical development of Forum Theater."

David M. Boje

Professor, New Mexico State University, USA, dboje@nmsu.edu

"I am connected to OT by my writing and by my teaching. I teach leadership and consulting is theatre. What I find most intriguing about OT is the collision between affirmative spectacle theatre and the satire of carnivalesque theatre; this forms a dialectic relationship. The carnivalesque street theatre that resists the global empire of Nike and McDonald's has been successful in getting these global players to reimagine their production processes. At the same time, it is unsuccessful in creating liberatory subjects (i.e. the workers are still low paid, unrepresented in collective bargaining, and worse the street theatre has stalled in the case of Nike). Can there be a dialogue between the appreciative and the critical theatre approaches? Although an academic, I use many practical exercises in my teaching and in my consulting."

Hilde Bollen

Programme Coordinator, LLD, Denmark, hbo.ild@dpu.dk

Hilde is coordinator of the Master Programme in Leadership and Innovation in Complex Systems (LAICS) www.laics.net and the Laboranova Research Project at Learning Lab Denmark/DPU. She has an MA in Arts Administration from New York University and a BA in Fine Art and Art Education from the Royal Academy of Fine Art in Ghent (Belgium). She has worked as an administrator at New York University's Department of Arts and Arts Education, The Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, and has held managerial positions in the public sector in the UK – particularly within the areas of international cultural cooperation, information management and business support for the creative industries.

Sam Bond

Director, Trade Secrets, UK, samdesk@tradesecrets-uk.com

"I trained as an actor at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre School in the U.K. and I continue to work as an actor in British theatre, TV, film and radio. I set up Tradesecrets as a partnership in 1996 with Karl James and have been running the business for the last nine years. Our connection with OT started with our idea. We pretty much started working against a background here in the UK where there was no real understanding of how business and arts could work together. We had an idea to bring the rehearsal room process into the boardroom and use some of our games and exercises as vehicles to explore the dynamic

of how teams were operating within the corporate sector. We have written several programs for Personal Development, Leadership and Impact in personal Performance for various businesses. Our coaching work uses different mediums to get our message across: Storytelling, Percussion, Cooking, Drawing to name a few."

Marijke Broekhuijsen

Consultant, Director Senior Management Programmes, Nyenrode University, The Netherlands, m.broekhuijsen@nyenrode.nl

"I am originally trained as an actor (Theatre School Amsterdam) and graduated in Cultural Pedagogics (University of Amsterdam). Later I got a Master in Art & Media Management. I spent many years in adult education and as curator of the Amsterdam Historical Museum. My career in MD started at Shell in 1980, when I was asked as a theatre professional to train managers in self-development programs. I have since performed various activities in MD or OD context for companies and governmental organisations. In 1990 I started working for Nyenrode University, first for the executive MBA, later as program director of (open and in-company) senior management programs; and also as a teacher/ coach in other programs at Nyenrode. I know OT from different perspectives: from the theatre-professional side, from the MD-professional side and as a program director. My question: how to transfer to not performing artists the work-, the craftsmanship aspect of theatre without dispelling the magic?"

Lotte Darsø

Associate Professor in innovation, Learning Lab Denmark, The Danish University of Education, Denmark, lotte.ild@dpu.dk

"I have an MA in Social Psychology from the University of Copenhagen and an industrial PhD in Innovation from Copenhagen Business School. I began experimenting with the Arts in 1999, among others with storytelling and Forum Theatre. I have been working with OT several times with the Dacapo Theatre, both exploring improvisation and OT at learning conferences and also in consulting jobs with clients. In my recent book 'Artful Creation', I interviewed 50 artists and business people, among these 16 actors, directors and researchers and found – to my surprise – that none of these actors and directors was doing the same thing. Everyone had a different angle or touch. When I first had the insight that OT can be a way of prototyping ideas, thoughts and possibilities, I was quite intrigued by this, but later I have discovered many other fascinating aspects of OT."

Göran von Euler

Actor and CEO, POCKET Theatre & Education, Sweden, goran@pocket.nu

POCKET is a consulting and educational company supporting people and organisations in change. Pocket was one of the first groups in Sweden to develop OT (interactive theatre) as a method for personal, group and organisational development in professional life. Göran is one of the founders – he is a teacher of education and psychology and is a trained actor.

Hanne O. Finnestrand

Researcher, SINTEF, Norway, hanne.g.finnestrand@sintef.no

"I have an MA in Sociology from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. Through most of my research project, I have been working together with industrial companies improving working environment and value creation by using both well known and innovative methods. All of them in close collaboration with management and unions. By using theatre and theatre techniques, we tried to bring a new way of improving collaboration between the managers and the union. Together with Kari Skarholt, I've worked with OT through the project "Dramatized Enterprise Development". The purpose of the project was enterprise development, where we combined action research with theatre techniques. The most interesting and intriguing about OT is how it can contribute to organizational learning and knowledge creation. As action researchers we are interested in using and developing new tools in organizational development processes. We see theatre as a useful tool to address important questions in organization in a way that affect people's feelings and involvement."

Preben Friis

Actor, Dacapo Teatret, Denmark, pf@dacapoteatret.dk

"I am an actor, and I've worked with OT in the Dacapo Theatre for ten years. I just finished a MA on Research in Organisational Change from the University of Hertfordshire. From my point of view, as an actor, I am intrigued by the liveliness of the audience, which is much more concentrated and involved than an ordinary theatre audience. From my point of view, as a consultant, I find that theatre offers the possibility of involving the participants intellectually, physically and emotionally. And no other media offers the same possibility of experiencing the relational nature of organising."

Hans Hansen

Assistant Professor, Texas Tech University, USA, hans.hansen@ttu.edu

"My interest in organizational theatre began with my dissertation as a PhD student. I conducted an ethnography of a theatre company that co-authored sketch comedy shows with the help of corporate management. The shows were performed at corporate functions with a variety of agendas (teambuilding, post-merger integration, cultural engineering, manipulation, etc.). What I find most intriguing in relation to this project is the prospect for collective 'reality making' using theatre as an intervention or theatre as a tool for strategy making."

Margarete Haugum

Researcher, Trondelag Research and Development Institute, Norway, mh@tforsk.no

"I am an economist by education. This also covers agricultural subjects, organisation theory and innovation. I am about to finish my Ph.D where I look at consumer quality in supply chains. Many of the projects I am involved in at the research institute have something to do with innovation. This is actually the link to OT, because I am interested in what arts and business can learn from each other, and especially what happens to the involved people when they start to experience the other side, and further how this may be a source for innovation. My knowledge so far is that OT can be performed in many different ways, which may give different effects. So OT is not only OT. Another fascinating part is the fact that people get roles, and what happens when you get the ability to play a role – can we view this as playing roles in our real life?"

Daniel Hjorth

Professor, Copenhagen Business School, Denmark, dhj.lpf@cbs.dk

"I am a researcher in entrepreneurship and organization theory. I work with entrepreneurship as forms of social creativity, and emphasize the playful sides, opening up to the use of aesthetic knowledge and perspectives for an understanding of entrepreneurial creation processes. I have developed a performative approach to 'presenting' research, which allows us to create experiences and affects instead of only reporting from a text. We perform research in the form of theatre-performances, using scripts to guide a story that takes 'the audience' through experiencing the points we like to get across. These performances have also been published as scripts and we encourage the

appropriation of them in novel ways. This is a way to change the way research participates in society. The form relies on basic features of drama, i.e., of alerting a broader range of senses in order to 'communicate' the message. It is a more 'rich' way of communicating complex concepts to practitioners in organizations."

Heather Höpfl

Professor, University of Essex, UK, hopfl@essex.ac.uk

"After I finished my PhD in Organisational Psychology at Lancaster University UK in 1980, I worked in the professional theatre until 1986. First as Administrative Director of a Theatre in Education Company and then as a Tour Manager for a Touring Repertory Company. I have written several papers on Organisational Theatre and Dramaturgy, convened a stream at EGOS with Prof Georg Schreyoegg, Berlin, which led to the production of a special issue of Organization Studies and will lead to an edited collection of papers in the next few months. I have organised theatre workshops for practitioners and set up a workshop on Pirandello with Prof Burkard Sievers in 2002. I am most intrigued by the relationship between theorisation of organisations and dramaturgical approaches."

Piers Ibbotson

Director & Consultant, Directing Creativity, Visiting Fellow, University of Kingston School of Business, UK, piers@directingcreativity.co.uk

"I run the Directing Creativity Programme, which was originally developed for The Royal Shakespeare Company with the support of Allied Domecq plc, the RSC's principal sponsor. The programme provides management development and consultancy for business using techniques and approaches from the world of theatre; with the dual objectives of enhancing business performance and developing closer links between industry and the arts. I trained originally as a geologist and worked in the oil industry for a number of years, before entering the theatre in 1980. I had a successful career as a performer, working at the Royal National Theatre and the Royal Shakespeare Company as well as making appearances in TV and film. I use ensemble exercises and status games and simple elements of Boal's Image Theatre to facilitate what you could call "visual conversations" using images to express issues."

Camilla Albrecht Jensen

Actor, Denmark, albrecht.ankjaer@post.tele.dk

"My interest in OT has mainly grown out of my involvement with the arts and adult education. I have a Masters in literature, film and media, and I have been teaching literature. In connection to my work as a teacher I have found much joy in working with topics such as creativity and the role stories can play in education. For almost a decade I have played in different underground improvisation theatre groups, and from this I started teaching impro as well. I have for some years played in the theatre group De ImproTændte (translation: "the ones who are turned on by improv"). In the group we have mostly done shows, conferences and workshops, in which we either communicate or show phenomena in the organisation. What I find very interesting is the resourcefulness of using theatre for training, because people are involved and may even be touched while they train their skills."

Susanne Kandrup

Senior Consultant, LLD, Denmark, ska.lld@dpu.dk

"I have a background in IT as well as leadership development. I have built my own IT consultancy which I sold years ago and since worked in Leadership Development, being responsible for Corporate Leadership Development at LEGO Company. Later I have taken a Masters in Psychology and I'm now working with groups of leaders and also developing a Masters in Leadership, Innovation and Complexity for Learning Lab Denmark and Copenhagen Business School. I have been an advisor on finance & fundraising for the Dacapo Theater for some years. I appreciate OT because it has a special capacity for holding complexity as it is expressed in the workplace. It inspires and provides energy towards handling complicated and burning issues. It provides a vehicle for combining arts and business that can produce novel viewpoints and support innovation in organisations."

Margareta Kumlin

Actor & Process Leader, POCKET, Sweden, margareta@pocket.nu

Margareta has a bachelor in educational and social sciences and is a trained actor. She has been working at Pocket for 15 years. The most interesting and intriguing about OT is the power of the method. People get engaged, involved and start to communicate with one another about things that matter to them. And they reflect on their behaviour, and they change. Not because someone told them, but because they got an insight.

Henry Larsen

Consultant, Dacapo Teatret, Denmark, hl@dacapoteatret.dk

"I have been working in the Dacapo Theatre since 1999, as a consultant and researcher. It attracts me because I experience the use of improvisational theatre in organizations as very powerful, and in the Dacapo Theatre we have continuously developed our way of working with organizations, at the same time trying to understand what we are doing. In 2005 I finished a PhD about this drawing on insights from complexity science. Working with improvisational theatre encourages "working live", by which I mean that people are taking the risk of improvising with each other. Playing fiction, which people recognize as "could be real" invites people to respond by immediately bringing in their own experience. Consequently the ongoing exchange of gestures becomes a joint creation of a paradoxical fictitious reality that very often is highly creative. Usually a significant liveliness emerges that serves as a strong invitation to risk a change from a "safe" patterning of conversation which is recognized as change. This also is the case for me as a consultant, which at the same time feels risky and highly inspiring."

Paul Levy

Actor & Director CATS3000, Senior Research Fellow, Centrim, UK, cats3000@supanet.com

"I am a social scientist by training, and now director of my own training and organisational theatre company. I have written several books including Technosophy (about wisdom and technology management) and E:Quality (about diversity and employee involvement). Our company takes theatre performance into organisational life. We have worked with organisations throughout industry and the public sector and are currently touring a show called "Empowering the Cheese" which is all about the world of work, and also a piece called "Photocopier" which is a sketch show performed live at a company's photocopier! I work closely with Arts and Business in the UK and have evaluated their own Creativity in Management programme. For me OT is a new audience for theatre. The potential to develop theatre as a "critical incident" in training, as an intervention in organisational change processes, is huge." More details of Paul's work can be found at www.rationalmadness.com

Stefan Meisiek

Associate Professor, Nova University, Portugal, smeisiek@fe.unl.pt

"I have been conducting research on the effects of OT since my Masters' studies at Freie Universität Berlin. Back then, I came in contact with OT in Germany and France, and it was amazing for me to see that one could use an art form to change organizations. When I moved to Stockholm, I was delighted to find that there were also various companies offering OT in Scandinavia. At present, I am working as an associate of Learning Lab Denmark on an evaluative study of OT in a home care organization. I have never worked as an actor, nor taken any classes in scriptwriting, and thus my approach to understanding OT originates from my academic background only. Most intriguing about OT is that it works in such resourceful ways. That it reaches employees in ways other media do not. That it was at the forefront of bringing more artful methods into the corporate world."

Jan Rae

Lecturer, London South Bank University, UK, jan.rae@lsbu.ac.uk

"My background in both theatre and management led me to my current interest in the use of theatre and drama in the organisational context. My doctoral research is exploring the ways in which theatre and drama is or could be used within organisations to bring about individual or organisational change, and whether theatre in this setting can retain the power, excitement and authenticity that the best drama can bring to its audience."

Kari Skarholt

Researcher, Sintef, Norway, kari.skarholt@sintef.no

"I have an MA in Sociology from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology. I was introduced to working with theatre in organizations through using improvisation theatre as a methodology to enhance collaboration and creativity within and across project teams in the oil company Statoil. Before that I used narratives and storytelling as a methodology in exploring work practice as regards leadership and interdisciplinary collaboration in Statoil. Together with Hanne Finnestrand, I've worked with OT through the project "Dramatized Enterprise Development" (see Hanne Finnestrand bio)."

Chris Steyaert

Professor, St. Gallen University, Switzerland, chris.steyaert@unisg.ch

"My main activities have been to use theatre in its broadest sense in the class room, on the academic conference scene and a couple of times with companies. Theatre – its performative force – is about the embodied situating in a specific time-space of processes, including organizational processes. It is a connecting and creative activity of body-mind, expression-idea. It is about creating and performing. This is what I do when I ask students to make the classroom into a living space (not a stage; I don't want them to be or become in any way actors) where different media, interaction forms and scenarios are interwoven into what is most "real" about theatre: the time is alive, sensible, and now it can happen, it happens or maybe not. Similarly, I have been "presenting" papers to academic audiences in a variety of play forms, not to "play theatre" but to embody thinking, to connect with audiences differently, and to write organizational theory imaginatively."

Steve Taylor

Assistant Professor, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, USA, sst@wpi.edu

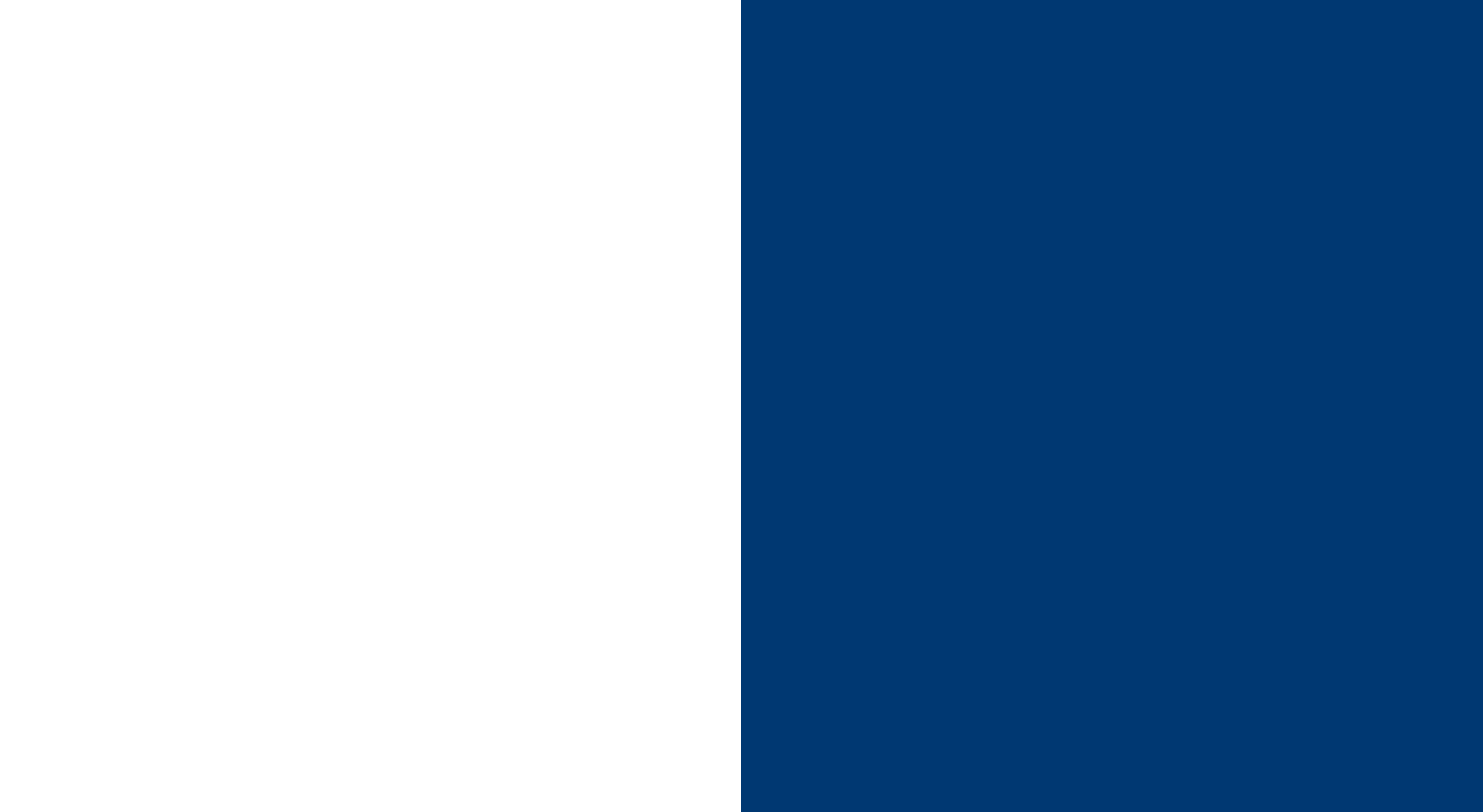
"My interest in theater became serious when I was a freshman in college and I took a course called, "plays and playwriting" taught by A.R. Gurney, Jr. From that start I ended up getting my B.S. in playwriting (at M.I.T.) and came to self identify as a playwright. For many years after college, I worked at various jobs and did Community Theater in my free time. When I turned 30, I decided to get more serious about playwriting and went back to college to get my Masters degree in playwriting and directing. During that time I realized that I was really interested in theater as a means for social change. And I decided that the key arena for social change in the United States was business. So a couple of years later, I went back to college again to try and understand something about transforming organizations – this time getting a PhD at Boston College in Management. My burning question continues to be about how we can use theater within organizations to facilitate social change."

Lone Thellesen

Consultant, Dacapo Teatret, Denmark, lt@dacapoteatret.dk

"Using theatre in organisational development is for me about involving everybody. We are all dependent on the conditions under which we work and live, and at the same time, we are also creating these conditions. This becomes more and more true, but the possibilities to influence these conditions differ from one person to another. The Dacapo Theatre has 10 years of experience in using OT. Our work has developed a lot since the first play, and it is difficult for me to pick out two jobs that may represent the good and the not so good example. For me right now one burning question is: Is it possible to use the good experience we have made in OT to give a boost to the political debate, in order that our excellent democracies can develop like the enterprises do?"





ensemble theatre

THE 2016