

Call For Papers: The poetics of organizing

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With this call for papers, we would like to open up a space at the crossroads between poetry, poetics and organizing, where ideas about organizational life, organizing, thinking, feeling, relating, learning but also *un*learning as well as knowing can be born. This is a crossroad that can take us in many directions, and we do not aim to close them down beforehand. Rather, let us be clear that when we relate to poetics and 'poetry', we do so in a wide sense, through going back to the etymology of the word.

*Words:
 alignments of letters that capture
 so much meaning
 and yet so much still escapes
 going unregistered
 annotated in the margins
 cleansed, deleted
 often forgotten
 ...*

Typically, poetry is acknowledged in relation to *poiesis* – making, remaking, or even, revolution (Terry Threadgold, 1997). *Poiesis* can also mean to "bringing-forth", a threshold of becoming, a verb that brings to life (Derek Whitehead, 2003). It is a way of igniting sensemaking and at the same time a coping mechanism and a way of healing. Donna Haraway (2016: 58) stresses the relationality of this practice when she writes about *sympoiesis* as making *with*: "it is a word for worlding-with, in company." Poetry has its own qualities, settling with matter and time, human and non-human others.

*Poetry comes and finds me
 when I am not calling
 poetizing the experience to
 reverberate the world (Gaston Bachelard, 1969)
 to find a language to 'sign' the world (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1973)
 striving to bring these bodies
 y-our bodies*

*from the margins
back to the center (bell hooks, 2000)*

Poiesis can be experienced as a process rather than a clearly defined output thereby opening up space for novel connections and bringing people together across time, space and other divisions – what would poiesis-organizing entail? Thanks to the ancient heritage of this form of art, it inhabits a wide variety of sources and academic fields. Namely, philosophers of diverse traditions, thinkers working on aesthetics, feminist scholars, ethnographic writers, activists and artists, they can all, in their diverse and distinct ways, contribute to what it is that we seek to address in this call for papers, and how we intend do so, in our explorations of how organizations, organizing, poetics and poetry might intersect, recognizing that:

*Poetry illuminates these
“places of possibility within ourselves” (Audre Lorde, 2017, p. 7)
a journey of downward ascent,
as Hélène Cixous (1993) calls it*

*exploring what
our different
sensuous bodies
and analytical minds
are capable of!
Together.*

Methodologically, poetry as an arts-based method can be used on its own or in combination with other methods of inquiry as ‘an act of creative resistance’ to inhabit the margins and crack open ‘a metaphorical landscape’ offering ‘alternate voices to the dominant narratives communicated by interconnected institutions of power’ (Cali Prince, 2021). Poetry, in its many forms and articulations, can go beyond prescribed ways of reading, writing, understanding and doing organizations to surface experiences and spaces. As such, it is also connected to ethical considerations of voice and power, who is allowed to speak in and of organizations, and who is heard. Heather Höpfl (1995) argues that poetry can be effectively deployed to disrupt organizational rhetoric and power dynamics.

*Forget the names they keep shooting at us.
Their guns are relentless,
so be scatterbrained.*

But

*Do not forget
heartfelt sorrow;
we are all
brothers and sisters
in the sadness of heart.
Kings never get it.*

Theoretically, we see a strong link between poetics and embodied, emotional, sensorial understandings of organizing. Our approach to poetry in organizations and the poetics of organizing is also attuned to the concept of “low theory” (Judith Halberstam, 2011), whereby theorizing is considered a way to develop towards a goal, and to make a difference, which belongs to everybody and not just the experts. The poetry and poetics of organizing are therefore not only relegated to poets, but to all living and non-human beings.

*Inhale the sunshine.
Walk barefoot on grass.
Plot to overthrow ‘innovative excellence’.*

*Open up
to dilate your pores
To caress the gesticulations of living
To rehearse unrepeatable experience*

Breathe. Write a poem.

Thus, this call for papers welcomes contributions to the theorizing, understanding, teaching and practicing of organizing, not only with and through poetry, but with and through all forms of language, and beyond, that seek to capture the poetics of organizing, thinking, living, feeling, relating, learning, unlearning and (un)knowing. We approach the notion of ‘poetry’ as text, as sensemaking, as poetics and as a way of being and knowing in organizations. As such, rather than focusing only on the production of poetry, we are open to experimentation with methods, writing, content and perspectives, concerned with explorations of the poetics of organizing and organizations, to challenge and inhabit traditional approaches to Management and Organization Studies. In this context, we are also interested in exploring the potentials of poetry, and of the poetics of organizing, to enable us to rethink academic processes in relation to research creation, relational knowing (Susan Meriläinen et al., 2021), dissemination, reviewing and editing *differently*, thus also offering promising contributions to the burgeoning stream on ‘doing *differently*’ in the academy (e.g., Alison Pullen et al., 2020). These angles can be explored and implemented through traditional and/or poetic styles of writing, drawing on empirical research and/or theoretical studies. We hope you will join us in this exploration.

*“Though emotion and poetics
constitute scholarly treason,
it is heresy
put to good use” (Tami Spry, 2001: 709).*

*So, please
whatever remains in mind
after the thinking dispels
write it down.
We are here to listen...*

*In a collective effort
to become knowable
maybe known?*

...
...
...

Submission and Informal Enquiries

Please ensure that all submissions follow the guidelines available on the puntOorg network website. Please note that in this call for papers we welcome experimentation with non-conventional contributions, in terms of content, formatting and writing style. Manuscript length can vary, but would normally be of maximum 11,000 words including appendices and supporting materials. Please also be aware that any images used in your submission must be your own, or where they are not, you must already have permission to reproduce them in an academic journal. You should make this explicit in the submitted manuscript.

Manuscripts must be submitted by 15 September 2022.

Prospective authors are invited to discuss manuscript ideas for the call for papers with the guest editors before the deadline for submissions (Ilaria Boncori: iboncori@essex.ac.uk).

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