

## *Is there anybody listening?*

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### ABSTRACT

This special number of *Tamara* presents papers on systems, (im-)possibilities and possibilities of listening, which is a very rich theme, needing exploration. The articles are less applied and more experimental. They reflect the interest in applied philosophy found in portions of organizational and management studies in Europe.

Themes of listening, noise, communication and narrative meaning are examined inspired by various post-structuralisms. The sources examined include some of the most spectacular intellectual outliers and individualists of our cultural tradition: from Lawrence Sterne to Antonin Artaud, Nikolas Luhmann to Michel Serres, and Gilles Deleuze to Julia Kristeva. Three special numbers of journals have or are appearing in rapid succession currently around the theme of 'listening': (i) *Group and Organization Management* (vol 32 no 1 February 2007), (ii) *Revue de Sciences de Gestion* (forthcoming) and, (iii) this number of *Tamara*. The first is the most empirico-descriptive with articles by Carl Rhodes and Alf Rehn amongst others about Rap and hip-hop. This work is in the tradition of the long-standing assertion that music, for instance jazz (Mary-Jo Hatch & Karl Weick) but also classical music, could serve as a mimic model for organizing. The second is fairly social-constructivist reflexive; it is interested in how the aural via listening, music and sound can and has created significance. And this number of *Tamara* goes deeper into the structures, systems and epistemes of meaning, signification and the oral. Several of its articles are deeply performative --- evoking issues and questions via their presentation, style and timbre.

The articles:

- o Jean-Luc Moriceau offers us rhythm - or the joy of poetic listening as ritornello;
- o Steven D. Brown explores

silence as collective shared production;

- o Rolland Munro is playful, meandering, and asks us first to listen --- only clarifying his intellectual point mid-way;

- o Heather Hopfl turns to Artaud in her exploration of structures of belief, violence and authenticity;

- o Niels Åkerstrom & Asmund Born explore the boundary structures that (mis-)organize communication;

- o Hugo Letiche asserts that understanding and order depend on noise, chaos and disorder.

Themes of silence and noise, originality and repression, self and text, are explored. What does the organizing of space(s) entail wherein almost all sound, meaning or belief is repressed, permitting music, reflection, self or discussion to prevail? Originally there may be noise, disorganization and chaos; silence, order and identity come afterwards. Stillness, empty space and possibilities for significance are imposed; listening, understanding and meaning entail being deprived of energy, noise and complexity. Ordered social, economic, acoustic or intellectual space may seem everyday, natural, almost inevitable, but it is not. We banish the hurly-burly of the street, take distance from the factory's din, and repress the shouting masses, to get our ordered universe. The silences of reading, looking and examining, have come to dominate. We look at, scrutinize and inspect organization much more than we hear, appreciate or attend to it. Attending to the

### **Lightfoot & Letiche**

other, listening, communicating, spiritual contact, are often lionized --- perhaps because we really have so little to do with them.

These issues have been addressed drawing on fields such as self and persona, group and significance, self-organizing (dis-)order, boundaries and significances. These articles should amuse and challenge you. They demand theoretical attention and are more nonconformist and innovative than most.

Theoretically inventive and original work is the foundation to renewal, change and creativity. The closer our reading comes to possibilities and the theoretical future-perfect, the more alternative ways of thinking are made available to us. This is a source of less clarified ideation, which invites you to work-it-through. Welcome to this laboratory of thought, possible perspectives and exploratory ideation.

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