

Editorial

On the Shoulders of Giants: Our Collaborative Special Issue of *Tamara*

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This special issue is dedicated to the giants that shaped the field of management and organization studies (MOS).

In this editorial, we celebrate the giants of our field – thinkers, researchers, and creators – whose work inspired the authors on professional, intellectual, and deeply personal levels.

As we stand on the shoulders of giants, it is our scholarly duty to celebrate the foundations that they have laid. Although each generation must challenge the established wisdom, question assumptions, and thus push the field in new directions, these contributions remain our foundation.

In the spiritual traditions of many cultures, ancestor worship is broadly understood as an interaction between the living and the dead, or as a form of ancestral influence on the living. Ancestor worship is even regarded as a cultural universal (Steadman et al., 1996). Viewing academia as a world composed of diverse disciplinary, national, and temporally dynamic cultures, we can observe a similar phenomenon: the influence of academic “ancestors” on the living. Through their ideas, writings, and legacies, we continue to communicate with them.

This involves both reverence and reflection. We inherit not only their triumphs but also the responsibility to address any blind spots or unexamined assumptions that shape our current practices.

Our contributors have shared reflections that range from detailed biographical sketches to the narrative recounting of personal interactions that have shaped their professional journeys. This diversity underscores the myriad ways in which our intellectual forebears have influenced current theories and practices, highlighting both the academic and the personal resonance of their contributions. This is also a way of writing – *writing differently* – characterizes the tradition of *Tamara*, which, in the words of the Manifesto authored by the journal’s founder, David Boje (2001, p. 16), “defines space for dialogues among wandering audiences who chase fragmenting storylines from room to room in the mansion of science.” The lineage of ideas that we inherit is never static. Just as rivers reshape their banks over time, we too must reconfigure and sometimes

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challenge the doctrines laid down by our giants, transforming the legacies of the past into the breakthroughs of the future.

This issue captures the quintessence of scholarly evolution. As academics, we are not standing alone. We are building on the foundations paved by the others.

It is both a testament and a renewed manifesto, upholding the role of academia in appreciating and drawing on the ideas of giants of our field. By revisiting and rethinking the contributions of our mentors and inspirations, we not only pay homage to them but also pave the way for future generations of scholars.

This special issue marks a shared editorial effort between the two new editors and a former editor, symbolizing the importance of continuity and services as a bridge that honors the legacy that we are building upon. We are building upon the groundwork laid by Professor Boje and the subsequent editors. Our collaborative work as editors, bridging past and present, serves as a testament to the essence of academia. In this spirit, we invite the *Tamara* community to partake in a collective dialogue that spans generations, fields, and backgrounds, celebrating both shared heritage and diverse perspectives.

Without such bonds, living communities – including academia – fall prey to entropy (Stiegler, 2018). Entropy is not about chaos but rather a perfect linear ordering of disconnected elements which do not make up a larger organic whole. On the contrary, a living community constitutes an organic whole and may seem quite chaotic at times. Neoliberalism abhors chaos. The diversity of heritage, perspectives, ideas, and languages is not welcome by many mainstream neoliberal academic outlets and institutions. At *Tamara*, we cherish it as our most valued trait, allowing us to be both interesting and robust (Hamant, 2024).

In 1967, the brilliant French director Jacques Tati created *Playtime*, a beautiful and prophetic film set in a super-modern district of the city full of perfectly ordered, proportioned, and perfectly clean skyscrapers made of glass and aluminum, corridors shining with emptiness, sterile streets, company headquarters, and apartments. Everything is modern, transparent. A triumph of rational management over the imperfection of human nature. The urban space looks perfectly smooth, planned, defined in every detail. One of the characters – Monsieur Hulot, played by the director himself – sets out in search of someone with whom he has arranged a meeting in this space. He keeps on missing his acquaintance, instead bumping into a number of people. Other characters likewise tend to wander around, get lost, and find themselves again. Waves of tourists, pumped in and out by the transportation system from the nearby modern airport, primarily occupy the space. The space has its own dynamics and functions as an entropy machine, dispersing everything and everyone around in a similarly efficient and evenly distributed mode. However, in the evening, this “smart dynamics” of spatial gravity takes Monsieur Hulot, the tourists, and other people to a place intended as a spot for evening pastime. It, too, is perfectly designed and organized, and each guest gets their own designated table, served by super-efficient waiters. A modern band plays on the podium. Everything goes according to plan until a fragment of the interior decoration breaks off and falls onto the room. More and more installation elements break down, all the too-optimized, too-perfect architectural solutions start to fail, as nothing except the linear ordering holds them together. The imperfection of this fortress of perfection is now revealed, and the linear order falls apart. A pianist enters the podium and starts playing spontaneously. This person turns out to be one of the guests, not meant to perform in that role. People start dancing chaotically, talking to each other regardless of their assigned tables, and drinking much more than the menu suggests. Even the waiters

look less and less fresh. At some point, amidst the aura of spontaneous play and dance, something emerges that has never been seen before in the super-modern district, taking over the definition of place and time completely: life and communityship. It happens then and there, in a glass modern skyscraper with gigantic windows through which a random passerby can observe the district's life in all its details. It does not matter that the space is perfectly planned. By playing music and dancing, people create their own space despite the received linear order: shared and alive.

Social science is not music and dance, but it also serves as a way of sharing and communicating that has its own traditions, rules, and rhythms. It, too, creates a "playtime," like Monsieur Hulot demonstrated in 1967: the gravity of communityship constitutes the most powerful antidote to the growing entropy.

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We are happy and proud to present *On the Shoulders of Giants* as the first special issue under our collaborative editorship – a tribute to those who have shaped not only the landscape of organization and management theory but also the ethos of *Tamara* itself. The authors of the articles in this special issue are giants themselves. Future generations will write about them, continuing the cycle of inspiration and academic legacy.

In this special issue, we both honor the intellectual giants of the past and recognize that our authors stand as giants in their own right.

The special issue includes six contributions:

- 1) *Letting Things Happen: John Cage as a Giant of Organizational Studies* by Luigi Maria Sicca, Davide Bizjak, and Domenico Napolitano;
- 2) *George Kelly's Legacy: Exploring the Impact of Personal Construct Psychology* by Dorota Joanna Bourne and Devi Jankowicz;
- 3) *Echoes of Wisdom: Inspirations from Management and Organizational Theorist Dr. David M. Boje* by Yue Cai Hillon;
- 4) *Organization Theory, Dystopian Imagination, and Richard Rorty* by Tommy Jensen;
- 5) *Duch's Mediated Beings: The Human Condition and Symbolic Anthropology* by Joan Francisco Matamoros Sanin;
- 6) *Cezaria Baudouin de Courtenay Ehrenkreutz-Jędrzejewiczowa – Scholar and Organizer* by Zofia Sokolewicz.

Each author in this special issue had a different giant in mind, drawing upon diverse intellectual traditions, personal encounters, and scholarly influences to reflect on the figures who have shaped their work. Some of our contributors share deeply personal accounts of meeting and working with their mentors, while others knew their giants only through their works but felt their lasting impact across time and disciplines.

Luigi Maria Sicca, Davide Bizjak, and Domenico Napolitano turn to an unexpected yet profoundly influential figure – John Cage, an avant-garde composer whose radical notions of indeterminacy, silence, and process orientation reframe music. They argue that Cage's legacy extends far beyond music, offering an alternative lens for understanding organizational dynamics through experimentation and fluidity, which invites us to embrace uncertainty rather than control it. Challenging conventional paradigms in a similar way, Tommy Jensen finds his inspiration in

Richard Rorty, positioning himself as an anti-essentialist who insists that the world must be redescribed time and again. Drawing from the world of art, music, and philosophy, Jensen sees hope in the ironists, the misfits, and the outcasts, as he describes them, illustrating his point through the musician Miland “Mille” Petrozza and the documentary *To Stay Alive*.

Others offer more personal reflections on their intellectual predecessors. Dorota Joanna Bourne and Devi Jankowicz provide a deeply personal tribute to George Kelly, whose Personal Construct Psychology not only shaped their theoretical perspectives but also transformed their very way of engaging with the world. Their article moves between biography and self-reflection, showing how Kelly’s work continues to resonate, both in academia and in the lived experiences of those who adopt his philosophical stance.

Yue Cai Hillon presents a similarly personal tribute to David Boje, a foundational figure in critical postmodern storytelling and, significantly, the founder of *Tamara*. Hillon’s article reflects on Boje’s contributions to organization studies. It also tells a story of mentorship – of how Boje’s guidance shaped the field and those within it, including herself.

Joan Francisco Matamoros Sanin honors Lluís Duch, a Catalan philosopher and anthropologist whose work on mediation, ambiguity, and relationality continues to influence contemporary social sciences. Matamoros Sanin weaves together personal engagement with Duch’s ideas, interdisciplinary critiques, and reflections on his relevance to health anthropology, gender studies, and symbolic anthropology.

Zofia Sokolewicz brings to light the pioneering yet often overlooked contributions of Cezaria Baudouin de Courtenay Ehrenkreutz-Jędrzejewiczowa, both highlighting her ethnographic work and showcasing her as a resilient organizer.

However, this special issue does not just focus on the giants of the past. It also centers around those who continue their legacy, sharing their personal accounts and perspectives. Of particular significance is the contribution of Professor Zofia Sokolewicz, whose passing before the publication of her article makes her presence in this issue especially important. A notable figure in Polish ethnography, Sokolewicz herself is a giant. To honor her legacy, Paweł Krzyworzeka has written a dedicated section below.

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This issue’s article written by Zofia Sokolewicz, though entirely devoted to a single prominent scientist, in fact concerns two giants: the eponymous Cezaria Anna Baudouin de Courtenay Ehrenkreutz-Jędrzejewiczowa and, indirectly, the author, Zofia Sokolewicz herself. Reading between the lines, we learn much about Sokolewicz. Like Cezaria, Sokolewicz served as an academic not only through her scientific research but also through her dedication to educating the next generation and, most notably, through her role in founding and fostering institutions. The article, a translation of which we present here, was the final work published by Professor Sokolewicz (2019) before her passing in 2020. As her last contribution, and because it highlights what she deemed significant in another researcher’s life – values we believe also reflect her own – it stands out as particularly meaningful. We consider it an essential piece that deserves international recognition.

Cezaria Anna Baudouin de Courtenay Ehrenkreutz-Jędrzejewiczowa constitutes one of the most important, if not the most important, figures in Polish anthropology. This does not include those who worked in British or American universities, for example, Bronisław Malinowski, Maria

Antonina Czaplicka, and Józef Obrębski. Unlike these scholars, who are relatively well-known in the West, Cezaria focused on developing local ethnography in difficult historical conditions. She is remembered not only as a researcher and thinker but also as an organizer. She helped establish the Department of Ethnography at the University of Warsaw in 1933 and became its first director. For this reason, she is considered the founder of ethnography in Warsaw. We are glad that *Tamara Journal* readers will have the opportunity to learn about the remarkable figure of Cezaria.

Scientists from many countries often have to adapt their work to meet the expectations of a broad international audience and fit the conventions of academic journals. There are relatively few journals that allow publications to take truly different forms. Sokolewicz's article might prove challenging for some readers, as the author originally wrote it in Polish for the Polish audience, assuming familiarity with certain historical, geographical, and political contexts that are not explained in detail. However, I see this potential difficulty as one of the article's strengths. Not only does the content bring Polish academic heritage closer to an international audience, but the form also provides insight into how such texts are typically created in Poland.

For many decades, nearly until her passing, Zofia Sokolewicz, the author of this article, played a pivotal role in shaping Polish anthropology, particularly in Warsaw. She served as the director of the Department and later the Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Warsaw, known as the Department of Ethnography until 1982. Even after stepping down from her formal leadership role, she maintained a deep sense of responsibility for the academic community and actively participated in key decisions and discussions about its future direction. Intellectually, despite being the Institute's oldest member when we met her, she remained at the forefront of contemporary thought.

In the late 1990s, Zofia Sokolewicz warmly welcomed the first doctoral students who approached her with ideas of pursuing feminist anthropology and gender studies – fields that many considered exotic and incomprehensible at the time. Similarly, she embraced innovative research topics, such as studies on the elites of the European Union and Polish society before Poland joined the EU. Moreover, she supported Paweł Krzyworzeka's research on organizations, offering her advice and later consulting with him to understand concepts unfamiliar to her. Remarkably, she remained open to new perspectives, despite having taught classes on corporate culture many years before Paweł took an interest in the field.

Although she was undoubtedly an unparalleled intellectual mentor to us and many others, Sokolewicz listened and learned from us with genuine curiosity and dedication. Much like those of Cezaria – the subject of her article – Sokolewicz's most significant scholarly achievements lie in the institutions that she founded and managed and the generations of researchers whom she inspired. She nurtured young scholars, generously supporting their innovative research and theoretical explorations. Even when initially skeptical of new trends, she valued her students' passion above all.

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