

Other, Hospitality, Researching, and Writing

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Abstract

In this essay on research and writing, the non-intentionality of “hospitality” is highlighted. Grounded in Emmanuel Levinas’ ethics and Jacques Derrida’s response to that ethics, “Other” as the first philosophy is explored as the ground for doing research. Research is explored here as the “I” gazed upon by the “Other” rather than as an action implemented by the researcher’s will. The author describes how Bob Cooper inspired him to question the organization/disorganization relationship. However, the encounter with Levinas’ ethics caused me to subsume critique of Organization Studies to an even more radical research ethics, wherein investigation is not based on authorial intentionality but on a hospitality-based perspective. The ethics of writing-Other, wherein Other gazes upon one’s efforts, is juxtaposed with the contemporary norms of university research. *Tamara* is embraced as a source of hospitality.

Keywords

Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, hospitality, Other, research ethics, Robert Cooper.

Introduction

In the 1990’s Bob Cooper formed my intellectual compass (Cooper, 1976; 1986; 1993; Cooper & Burrell, 1988; Cooper & Law, 1995; Chia, 1998; Spoelstra *et al.*, 2023). Back then, travel was still a “big deal.” I could afford one conference per year and not much more.² Annually, I would attend when Bob was giving a keynote. As his exploration of Foucault, Derrida, and Deleuze progressed, my reading followed. From year to year, the effort to think through the ontology necessary for understanding organizing proceeded under his guidance. Occasion by occasion, I heard that my own reading was following a similar trajectory to Bob’s. I felt confirmed and sustained by the directions he took.

Cooper differentiated qua academic ethics strongly between one field and the Other. He identified subjugation with some persons and fields and not with other ones. He thought there

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² There was a period in the late twenty and early twenty-first centuries that conference travel and attendance was close to a “free good” but austerity politics have for many ended that.

was an outside to management studies to be inhabited as an escape from tyranny. He could endlessly rail against Frank Blackler (Blackler, 1988; Blackler & Brown, 1985), his ex-boss at Lancaster University, as if one man had control over a repressive episteme. He believed in the ontological truthfulness of his own oeuvre. The forms of “being” he embraced supposedly possessed proximal qualities that ought to be appreciated. He assumed that it was possible to write human “being” by reacting, apperceiving, and creating concepts. Thought and human “being” could be brought close enough to one another that text could be true to the human possibilities of understanding and awareness. A philosophy of social existence or organizing, conscious of thought’s possibilities and nature, was possible. Knowing could be embedded in real relatedness and situations. The study of organizing was not just theoretical and certainly not a matter of any formula. The truth of thought was possible, including the thought of organizing and cooperative activity. I was inspired by the way Bob included ontology in his research; the “being” of the object of research required defining, reflection, and questioning. There is no procedural “trick” of “objectivity” that can guarantee the “truth” of the written. Escape into “logocentrism” gives no guarantee of validity.

However, my actual relationship with Bob was troubled and not terribly realistic. At first, I was (in my opinion) excessively complemented and exalted and later totally ignored and dismissed. I think what went wrong was my attitude to repressive power. From +/- 1995 onwards, Bob scorned the business school, its students, and everything having to do with management while celebrating philosophical social thought, and sociology as untainted. Hereby, he embraced an idealistic concept of the relationships between the written, the writer, and the reader. Beginning with the written, i.e., the text, he seemed to be accrediting the writers he chose with an ethical status of “truthfulness.” As the reader, he disappeared from responsibility for the ethics. Could he, Bob Cooper, really be the justified judge of the “Truth”? What granted him this privileged status? The proprietorship of texts to be critiqued and employed in one’s own work raises for me a series of ethical dilemmas having to do with the possession of Other. If you will, Emmanuel Levinas (1963; 1989) came between me and Bob.

Supplement³

For many readers, Robert (Bob) Cooper (1931–2013) will be an unknown figure and his intellectual sources are most definitely not taught or debated in contemporary programs of organization studies. His work, I believe, mirrors the best of critical thought of the late twentieth century. This “supplement” or addition to my essay thus situates and describes its primary source. I am writing it on the day of the festival of Samhein (now called Halloween), when devilish spirits of the dead manifest themselves. I feel surrounded by such spectra in the form of a return of rampant racism, fascism, ethnic cleansing, and warfare, as if the 1920’s and 30’s were returning to haunt us. You, the reader, will probably know (at least more than I can now) about how the phenomena just pointed to have developed. To what degree has “liberal democracy” or “authoritarian hyper-capitalism” prevailed?

³ The “supplement” in Derrida is what is not included in the primary text but enables the distinctions or divisions upon which that text is based.

Is “accountability” flourishing or repressed? Bob Cooper was the champion of accountability for Organization Studies on two levels. He framed Org. Studies as text. It is something spoken, written, and grounded in a set of definitions, with the criteria for creating and sustaining those definitions demanding our attention. Org. Studies portion the world into an inside and outside, which it defines; that is, into organization and disorganization, and into a realm of value and one of worthlessness. On both levels, that of form and that of content, Cooper had an enormous influence on me.

Qua textuality: it is only while preparing this “supplement” that I learned that Bob had had an active correspondence with the poet Robert Creeley in the 1950s (Spoelstra *et al.*, 2023). In 1968, I faced the choice of continuing as a graduate student under Creeley or coming to the UK; I chose the latter. Creeley created poetic text where a severe limiting of his means of expression makes modern-being feelable and visible. He found form to fit the emerging human condition of post-Second-World-War existence. Expression is not just ideation; how one writes and uses words and form is important. Many social studies researchers refuse to acknowledge the importance of expression; Cooper (often inspired by Derrida) understood (see below) that how text is formed and structured is crucial to what can be “thought” or “known.”

Qua key ideas: Cooper saw how when an “organization” is taken to be a self-evident “good” that “disorganization” is reduced to negation. However, complexity, emergence and dynamism are all inherent and “disorganized.” The rationalist foreground of “organization” threatens to disqualify life itself and becomes a destructive force. The target of Cooper’s reflection is nothing less than “organization,” which is for him a very debatable and suspect concept.

After the Second World War, there was a rapid ideological Americanization of Europe with management studies and business schools rolled out across Europe. It was assumed that raw human (social) existence was dangerous, chaotic, and unproductive; and that society required organization in the form of the rational imposition of economic and social structure. The “degree zero” of ethical social order was identified with Nazi Germany’s seemingly total embrace of violence in terms of the holocaust and in the war. Bauman (1991) asserted that the violence was inherent to bureaucratic control and repressive social rationalization; but it was a voice in the wilderness. Parsons (1951) had successfully translated American hegemony into sociological theory. A well-run prosperous society needed to be “organized;” which meant rationally goal directed and bureaucratically administered. Europe needed a cadre of university-trained technicians to achieve, maintain and rule its economic and social organization. Business schools were created to fill this need.

There was some opposition to technocratic managerialism, but it came mainly from labor process sociologists; Marxist and/or social democratic. Their protest concerned who would gain the most in the scenario. They argued that the “working class” was to be subjected to an ever-growing cadre of technocrats who were not themselves productive at all, but actually much more exploitive than beneficial. The concept of some sort of top-down rational rule was not of itself rejected; but it was insisted that how such rule was organized under capitalism was unjust and in the long run counter-productive. The

necessity of imposing order on unruliness, and the principle of organization as a social necessity, was not really challenged.

There was a minoritarian movement that questioned the identification of organization with rational social-economic necessity and called for attention to the hidden assumption of “disorganization” that made the dominant position possible. They demanded to know what is it really that “organization” was meant to surpass and/or repress? Bob Cooper was in organization theory a (if not THE) leading figure in this movement. His conceptual sources were Continental: especially Simmel (1950) and Derrida (1978; 1981; 1982).

Basically, Cooper argued that ideation in support of “rational-instrumental behavior” defines an inside belonging to the powerful and an outside that is less organized and is devalued. “Organization” thus is a term used to assert a boundary between what is assumed to be inside and outside the business system. Inside is ordered, purposeful, and logical; outside is thus characterized by “disorganization.” Ambiguity and possibility are “ordered” by being defined as “disorganization.” Who creates, why, and how, the definitional order, is not questioned or specified. Cooper asserts that “organization” is a binary structure imposing an inside and outside, with the creation and nature of the difference more hidden than revealed. Negation of the outside, i.e. externals or environment, is necessary for the selection of the state of “organization” over all alternatives. Cooper turned to Derrida’s concept of *différance* to indicate how “organization” can only exist as the negation of “disorganization,” but must always refer to it, to exist. What is repressed and denied is always present as a negation and as deferred. “Organization” creates decidability or meaning by hiding its “Other” and its principle of being.

“Organization” as a concept or as a priori is thus a creation of the “ideology of form.” Organization Studies maps the social world based on the assumption that there must be a privileged stable center. However, the map (as always) is not the territory. The “zero degree” of observation, i.e., one without pre-judgments is only possible without the principles of inclusion and exclusion. “Zero degree” or genuine openness is undecidable.

Order/organization is imposed by “‘force’ or ‘power’ in one or more of its thousand guises” (Cooper, 1986, p. 321); it is “the forcible transformation of undecidability into decidability” (323) that is here crucial. Acts of inclusion and exclusion produce what is presented as ‘facts’ and ‘meaning,’ without a willingness or ability for self-reflexivity. How “organization” as a concept and assumption is produced, is abjected.

Administrative centralization, social standardization, and the dominance of what is claimed to be “rational planning” are characteristic of the late twentieth century. Organization as “instrumental order” is assumed as if “effective goal attainment” can be uncontroversial. Cooper insisted that organizational researchers have proceeded by excluding themselves and their assumptions from their work. The “organization of organization” has remained hidden; the frame has been imposed without awareness. The assumptions were (Cooper referring to Derrida) “supplementary,” i.e., kept outside so that “organization” could be thought of as “complete” or self-evident and empirically researchable.

The Research and Other

Writing is all about “Othering.” There are Others one researches; there are Others who you intend to read what you have written; there are Others in your vocabulary and style of writing. If you are writing for an academic journal, there are Others who review your work; and if you work in a university, there are Others who do or do not give you a promotion based on what you have published. There may be Others, where the writer hopes to make some difference. That may be to increase efficiency and raise profits; it may be in pursuit of justice and solidarity. When writing for management journals, you may be expected to focus on modes of action and control in work organization as if the individual or particular Other does not exist. Writing about forms of work such as gig work, remote and virtual work, the digital workplace and their disciplinary as well as self-disciplinary characteristics, mostly prevails above thick descriptions or explorations of affect. Economic and social relations are more relevant than lived experience. Struggles for sensitivity and affect are probably not appreciated.

I identify relational truthfulness with ethical research. My perspective on Other is gleaned from Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida, especially as developed in Derrida’s *Adieu* (FR 1997; ENG 1999), a book containing Derrida’s graveside eulogy to Levinas, and a long analysis of thinking with/from/and apart from Levinas, which Derrida contributed a year thereafter to a colloque dedicated to Levinas. I believe that relational truth is possible and that it is crucial to research. However, as Levinas has insisted, ethics as the appreciation of the existence of Other is the first philosophy. All the rest comes or does not come from the relationship with Other.

There are now two crucial points resulting from what I have written that I wish to explore: (i) the researched Other is not intentionally ethically achievable; and (ii) research entails writing Other.

Intentionality

From Plato to Heidegger, it has been assumed that the subject (here, the researcher) can take action to achieve authentic awareness or knowledge of Other. Other somehow exists “out there” and it is up to the subject/researcher to find a way to know that Other. Writing, especially philosophy, addresses the audience that is to be instructed in what it needs to know, assume, do, and be; so as to achieve knowledge of self, world and Other. Other is to be intentionally reached. By understanding the right way of being and/or of action, the reader should be able to take the necessary steps to know, discover and appreciate Other. Levinas rejects this assumption of intentionality (1991). He argues that the subject cannot will its way to knowledge of Other; Other is not to be intentionally reached. The vision of the philosopher as “midwife” is rejected. It is not that truth intrinsically exists somewhere in “being” and that someone (the philosopher) can unlock access to that truth. Truth or “Being” is not “within,” but a product of researcher address, i.e. of the approach by Other. The structure of action is hereby reversed. It is Other’s appearance to one, that triggers the process of knowing; one must receive Other and not define or think one’s way to Other.

For Levinas, Other as the “Gaze” appears to one. One is looked upon; I am seen. And I have to accommodate myself to the status of being seen. The ethical response is to acknowledge that

one is seen. Other has appeared to One and one must deal with this reality. One has to become responsible for one's response. One cannot, not respond: one can ignore, reject, refuse Other; one can accept that one is to-an-Other. Accepting being-to-Other means acknowledging one's inevitable responsiveness and response-ability. Hereby an unending (as long as one lives) and unlimited principle of responsiveness is established. Levinas calls this first principle of relatedness, the "first philosophy," i.e., it establishes the interact upon which all thought or reflection on responsibility is to be based. Other's gaze triggers the development of the subject's "being," which individuates the subject into an ethical being. Ethical individuation is the prerequisite to any further thematization of thought, awareness and/or ethics. The individuated "self" has to be generated before any further awareness can be possible. Subjectless philosophy is impossible.

Derrida entitled his speech and essay "Adieu" (1997/1999). This is an expression of "Farewell" but also of metaphysics or (à dieu) which is "to god." Since Derrida was a declared atheist, the title demands investigation. The Derridean subject is always already turned to God, in the sense that subject-being is born of relatedness and "hospitality." But this is a "God" that has nothing to do with Christian Platonism; or as Caputo (2000) puts it: "One does not vanquish death by way of eternal life ... but by way of the relation with Other ... there is no invisible world hidden behind the visible one" (p. 301). Levinas always rejected Sartrean "freedom" and Heideggerian "Dasein" for how they proposed a principle of Truth or Being outside of lived time, and the possibilities of ontic concrete relatedness or relationship. "God" is not a higher principle or a transcendent "Truth" above and beyond relatedness. "God" is equated with "hospitality;" that is, with the principle of welcoming, attending to, caring for, and being with Other: "everything about the relationship to God that cannot be led back to an interhuman relation is a myth" (Levinas quoted in Caputo, 2000, p. 301).

Thus, my hospitality to Other as the praxis and ground to my research defines the ethics (or not) of my research. Research for me entails practices of hospitality, i.e. of concrete relatedness; or if not, it flees ethical relatedness and betrays Other. Therefore, in my practice of ethnography "self" exists as generated by relationship to the "Other." And my repeated theme of "accountability" that follows directly from the ethics. Indeed, I am ill-at-ease with this essay because it does not sufficiently engage in relatedness to Other. My justification is that I am writing for the relaunch of *Tamara* in an effort to co-define the research ethics appropriate to this project.

Writing Other

Writing without empathy is empty and sterile. The written account is a sort of "third." It is not me or Other but an artefact. To be ethical, the "third" needs to entail "care" and to achieve affective integrity of awareness in one's writing. Research is writing all the way down and up again: it is not served by dehumanized "objective truth" discovered by eliminating humanity from investigation.

To choose for a metaphor, many articles resemble manufactured madeleines full of preservatives and chemical coloring, more than anything Proust could champion. It is writing that seems to avoid the pain of failure, the frustration of mediocrity, and the anxiety of power and conflict. Hereby, we the readers, are emotionally lost. Research articles seem to have entered a dissociative state, splitting rationality from emotion and success from risk. Far too often, the

researcher is absent and portrayed as disengaged and emotionless. Supposedly, one understands the object of research at first sight. The researched is portrayed as simple, logical, and causal. The bewildering, frightening and meaningless, are banished. Researchers supposedly can take any organization apart and tell the reader how it works. “Optimal solutions” are found; the complex, contradictory and uncertain and made to vanish. The myth of a master fiction of (Godly) rationality and order looms over us.

When I write, I am convinced that my primary responsibility is to provide hospitality to Other. This entails Other of the researched but also of my “third” or audience. I am being looked at, and I know that I am seen. Normal research methodology is all about how the researcher sees; I insist here it needs to be about how the researcher (and the research) is seen. The task is to do justice to these many Others. They may not agree with what I say, but the integrity of the relationship nonetheless remains crucial. When what is described has been experienced; interaction has taken place; prejudices have been bracketed and normalcy is deconstructed. The researched have been rendered; researcher response has been explored and examined. Such a research ethics is fundamentally autobiographical. To quote Anne Carson, from “Merry Christmas from Hegel” in *Float* (2016):

You will forgive me if you are someone who knows a lot about Hegel or understands it ... he was fed up with popular criticism of his terrible prose and [was] claiming that conventional ... clumsy dichotomy of subject and verb, was in conflict with what he called “speculation” ... Speculation being the effort to grasp reality in its interactive entirety. The function of a sentence ... was not to assert a fact (he said) but to lay Reason side by side with Spirit and allow their meanings to tenderly mingle in speculation. I was overjoyed by this notion of ... a space where words drift in gentle mutual redefinition of one another ... so I put on big boots and coat and went out ... if I hadn’t been trying on the mood of Hegel’s ... indignation ... I would never have gone out to stand in the snow, or stayed to speculate with it, or had the patience to sit down and make a record of speculation for myself as if it were a worthy way to spend an afternoon, a plausible way to change the icy horror of [a lonely] holiday into a sort of homecoming.

I suppose that we all have (implicitly or explicitly) been instructed not to create poetic texts; language supposedly has to be impersonal and emotionless. The researcher reports what has been seen and understood in a neutral and detached manner. I earned my way as an academic by commenting on the inconsistencies and distortions of the view from nowhere. However, I was not allowed to be an essayist, let alone a novelist. Autoethnography refuses many of the dominant strictures, producing texts with plots and characterization (Ellis, 2004; Ellis & Bochner, 1996). However, the plot of “no plot” and the characterization of “no character” make it all too easily into print as “objective” or “scientific.” “Neutral text” or depersonalized and emotionless text denies its Other, and in terms of this essay, is not ethical. Appearances of data explaining itself and statistics producing causality are sophisticated tricks of denial.

Research without a researcher does not exist. (I leave what AI produces outside of consideration.). Articles (and books) are text, and text is inherently authorial. If there is no author, there is no text. The “death of the author” would be the death of text. Indeed, text is mortal; it could die. There is no assurance that in fifty or a hundred years there will still be production of (social studies) texts. Most people cannot write and very many cannot read. By “write,” I do

not mean the physical ability to type at a keyboard or even to take pen to paper. By “write,” I mean the ability to create a text-based account that offers hospitality or recognition to an Other. Such text can stick around, lurk in one’s awareness, get commented on, and have meaning. The “cannot read” is to a significant degree unable to let an Other into oneself, to echo, vibrate, and even to be able to annoy one.

Text production that offers hospitality welcomes Other; whomever or whatever Other may be, or where Other may come from. Derrida’s politics of hospitality was very radical. It rejected exclusion, ethnocentrism and discrimination (1997). The gaze of the human Other can come at any time, from any place, and in a great variety of forms. Derrida’s politics most certainly does not match up with the current drive to exclusion, border closure, and immigrant hatred.

I realize that experiences of confusion and disorder produce panic; persons, groups or societies that have lost their way suffer from profound pain. The breakdown of meaning and the failure of text can be terrifying. While most research is trivial and will not be read or make any difference; the loss of understanding and of social awareness in the twenty-first century is frightfully significant. Social meaning creation is needed to maintain purpose, coordination, and order. If it breaks down, the consequences can be dramatic with forces of racism, hatred, fear, and unruliness threatening to become overwhelming. Most social studies research may be inconsequential; but without social meaning creation, we may be conquered by primitivism and violence.

On Methodologies and Researching

Whether we are writers or readers, articles, book chapters, papers, and theses can take possession of us or haunt us. It is in a way amazing that the written traces can have such a living presence. People talking to one another are often boring and banal. Texts can be more alive. Writing can be magical. An (almost) inexplicable thread can connect the researched, the researcher, and the reader. Other can be made to seem intelligible. The threat of boundarilessness can be tamed; the danger of being swallowed up in chaos can be made to recede. Written text can interconnect, pacify and provide hospitality. Our social organization depends on the success of texts to assure orderliness, produce welfare, and provide meaning.

However, research methods can seem to be out to kill the text, forcing research to produce some deadly Other. Prescribed data sets and the questions posed to them can seem irrelevant and cliched. Instructed to read “the literature” and define a “research question,” based on some gap to be found in existing work, does not invite “hospitality,” or bring Other closer to one. Not your own question, but some crack in the wall of the social science edifice, becomes determinant.

Management research that avoids all contact with the business Other does require technical skill. It demands consistency, data collection, observation and interviewing, and credible comparisons between data and theory, to frame the conclusions. Matching a “research question” to data collection, and to analysis, discussion and conclusions, is a difficult puzzle. Many cannot keep so many balls successfully in the air for very long. Often the research techniques do not match the questions posed, the theories and abstract terms are inappropriate, the conclusions do not flow from the data or analysis, and/or are trivial. Doing research competently is not easy. Insofar as things that are difficult or challenging are inherently significant, such research counts. If you want to do something that will cause you headaches and will not take care of itself, then

research may be your thing. However, what if such complicated puzzles are neither inherently worth all the work and are less than ethical?

Research organizes. Foucault's theory of disciplining is appropriate as far as it goes. Researchers discipline the researched, themselves, and their readers. What can be seen and understood, as well as what can be proposed as possible actions or problem solutions, is defined and to be delimited. However, the researchers do not actually have all that much control over the process. The meanings that the authors imagine exist are often not the meanings that the readers take away from the text. What the authors think they are saying can be quite different from what the readers think has been said. I am not really in control of your reading. There is a "third" floating in the "of research." The third is addressed to me and to you. The third occupies an elusive and imaginary realm wherein meaning can be unexpected, variable, and indeterminant. What the writer wants of the reader plays a role, as does what the reader experiences in the text's presence.

In this text, what do you think I want from you? What is the hospitality of my text? The text's desire, as launched by the writer and perceived (or not) by the reader, and it is the research's Other. Foucault thought that social science wants to discipline, control, and achieve conformity. As a researcher committed to *Tamara*, I think that text should and can contain very different desires than those.

Of course, research is often a rite of passage. You have to produce a thesis, an article, a book, to prove yourself, to get or keep your job, and to have the social position you want. The research object is of little importance; the social significance of having produced it is what counts. The content counts for far less than the extrinsic rewards. The researcher does not really care about the research object. There is no ethics of care between the researcher and the researched. I met up with an old acquaintance in Nottingham who immediately told me that his book publisher was better than mine and that he had just had an article appear in a journal with one more star than where my article had appeared. He was friendly and said he was glad to see me, perhaps because his greatest pleasure is ultimately in winning at the research game.

Universities do not provide freedom for experimentation or critical thought. Writing for journal publication is often not an example of hospitality. I have had very individualist university experiences where the professors did not work together but left one another to get on with their work; and I have also experienced hyper-competitive situations of extreme jealousy and downright nastiness. I have seen paradigm warfare wherein the most skilled were punished, and I have experienced warmth where hospitality was real. Universities can be fundamentally repressive institutions with enormous power over the people working there. I have witnessed researcher hospitality studying corruption in a Caribbean country, healthcare crises amongst refugees in the Middle East, fear and passion of having a sexual identity not acceptable to (some) others, and/or being a social outsider in your own country. These themes made "accountability" vibrant; as whose account was to be told, to whom, and with what importance or impact was being investigated. Here the ethics of observing, writing, and reflecting were in order. However, I have also been told by senior management that the university was there to make money and not to address or answer existential dilemmas. I have been instructed to focus on solving business problems, preferably without any use of theory. Way back, when writing my PhD thesis, I chose *Hatred for Meaning* (1984) as my theme/title. Welcoming Other as someone with an identity of her own, and Other as a challenge and demand; and Other as his doubt and pain; is not self-evident or easy.

Supplement

Was I seen; have you been seen? I experienced being seen by Bob Cooper as support in the need to radically Other research. But I know that he (ultimately) did not see me. Or at least did not recognize an Other in me that he thought was worth seeing. The last time I saw him, it was unplanned in an airport somewhere; I said “Hello” and he ignored the greeting. What the scholar writes is not necessarily congruent with what the scholar does. Derrida definitely believed that Levinas was consistent in thought and being. Research and researcher can be generous, caring and thoughtful. There is so much written these days about the neoliberal violence of academe and the spiteful culture of jealousy, bullying and hatred. Bob’s hatred of Frank Blackler (cited above) was unworthy of an ethical-existential project in defense of hospitality. Bob attacked the irrational and spiteful imposition of order, organization and rationalization. The terror of organization as the enforcer of violent structuration necessitating war, economic conflict and enormous suffering, seems all the more relevant now. And experiments in writing and research as hospitality are thus all the more needed.

Getting on with *Tamara*

Tamara was a play enacted in different rooms where the spectators wandered between the various sites, creating each their own experience. The idea was that the spectator was invited in to share an experience made both for and by them. As a journal, *Tamara* intends to offer comparable hospitality and welcome as the theatre did. *Tamara* entails being with an Other – both qua the creativity demanded of the spectators/readers and of the actors/writers. The set-up makes self and Other vulnerable. Do I write because of how I am seen; does the gaze of Other really inform my choices? Text production can become an ultimate form of narcissism. Writing that is ethical needs to be about a nearly invisible thread of connection between the researched, the researcher, and the reader. There is a farewell here to imposed orderliness, cleanliness, and discipline of the well-organized and obsessively controlled society. Others at work are disjointed; success and failure are all too often illogical; organization can seem shapeless. Are we going to impose sense-making on the senseless? Does the researcher impose order and produce an illusion of understanding, with research techniques as the organizing force? Concrete circumstances spin around breathlessly, with multiple possibilities, emotions, and results. Can we really invite Other in?

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