ephemera | articles
theory & politics in organization

ISSN 1473-2866
www.ephemeraweb.org
volume 5(3): 499-518

Confrontations of Philosophy, Management and Politics*

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> *The intellectual is the eternal irritant*. (Fuller, 2005b: 163)

Introduction

Appeals concerning the value of philosophy are increasingly well documented. We are, after all, only a few years past the call by Gadamer, Derrida, Ricœur, Rorty and Putnam for the introduction and underwriting of philosophy by government as a way to stimulate cultural and civic consciousness (Feyerabend, 1994). While I feel less secure about the value of government sponsored philosophy into education given the philosophical myopia stimulated by the support for 'positivism' in the mid 1950s by the big three philanthropic foundations. The idea that management scholars are continuing to come into closer contact with philosophy does *seem* to be moving us to question the usefulness of the frameworks through which we all work. Given that an intellectual peccadillo of my own is the relationship between these disciplines I was looking forward to the possibilities that this meeting of philosophy and management might hold. What follows then is a discussion of my own experience of the practicing philosophy of management conference held from the 7th to the 11th of July 2004, at St. Anne's college, Oxford based on notes taken at the conference and informed by my interpretation of the papers distributed prior to the conference.

Consuming Philosophy

I find myself frequently pausing to reflect on how philosophy, management and academic capitalism have become so tightly entwined. Where once people brought the

* I would like to thank the extensive guidance offered by the editors and reviewers on previous drafts of this paper. This paper has benefited from the comments of Armin Beverungen, Campbell Jones, Simon Lilley and Martin Parker. Thanks to Nigel Laurie for putting considerable effort into organising the conference. The usual disclaimers apply. This paper was written while the author was a doctoral student at the University of Leicester management centre.

latest multivariate methods from psychology, we now see such intellectual beachcombing from philosophy. This philosophic turn can be found throughout the conference program I have in front of me which reads to my romantic eye like a mental random walk through the Accademia del Cimento where the motto '*probvando e riprovando*[1]' reverberates throughout the various papers that pique my interest with their concern to 'reprove' or 'reject' that which cannot be "maintained in the light of reason and experience" (Eco, 2004: 7). Of course, these terms are heavily loaded, but the central tenet appearing to guide those who want to bring philosophy into closer conjunction with management is the rigorous questioning of extant opinion, whether this means returning to now forgotten literatures, questioning particular readings of established texts, using philosophy in consultancy work or, to otherwise, make sense of empirical data. Certainly the movement of philosophy into management looks to hold great promise for management research and no doubt, provides those involved in promoting this cross fertilization with the kinds of intellectual differentiation tactics that make the respective participants stand out from the academic herd (Desmond, 1999).

Indeed we may even be the old, asthmatic wildebeest that trails behind this particular herd, for as Žižek reminds us, an old thesis formulated by Claude Levi Strauss "affirms that every philosopher, every theoretician, had another profession at which he failed and that marked his entire being" (Žižek and Daly, 2004: 23). Is the marketplace for philosophy in management populated by failed producers of ideas who regurgitate other people's work simply to put a spin on what would otherwise be classified as detritus, unworthy of publication, even in books by the Haworth Press, had it not received its gloss of philosophy (see, Brown, 1998: 201)? Perhaps. What we can say without fear of contradiction is that there is a market demand for these types of intellectual products and the mechanics of publication support such changes. Maybe I've started this essay being too negative – I'm all for the will to thought triumphing any will to docility. Like Kristeva (1986) I see the former as a central component in intellectual dissidence; a will to heresy, a will to be interesting, a will to perversion if you want. What better way to stimulate dissident thought in this otherwise managerialist enclave than to push management research/research on management into the space where philosophy and social science meet, since to "confront a professional philosopher is to confront one's own ignorance" (Burrell, 1994: 15).

Arrival

The Saïd Business School with its Illuminati style architecture greets the excited traveller. First thoughts, as ever, revolve around finding the accommodation and depositing the luggage. The accommodation was nice (*en-suite*) but the external structure of the college looked like a multi-story car park; although the smell that usually accompanies such structures was notably absent, to my relief. Despite the aesthetic deficiencies of the outer shell of the College, it is after all, only one part of the fabric of a city and Oxford has an exceptionally rich canvas to traverse. Moving around the city mid-afternoon experiencing architectural superlatives including the spire of St.

1 To try and try again.

Mary's, the Bodelian library and the intellectually magisterial and aesthetically pleasing All Souls College, it is hard not to begin to be overawed. Oxford, of course, is well known as a centre for scholarly 'excellence' and has provided the scenic backdrop to numerous books and movies that I have consumed recently. Alas time had not stood still as I had hoped it might. This was not the Oxford as the old books represent it. There were few bespectacled boffins riding bicycles with their long scarves trailing behind them and more of the usual – commodification *writ large*. Where street corners would later support the sexual economy, there are now hordes of American students buying sweatshirts with the University of Oxford emblazoned across them – perhaps this is a more honest way of procuring the identity we desire. It certainly appears to be the way that things are headed.

Ruminating on what might be a manifestation of the consumerist syndrome Bauman likes to talk about (e.g. Rojek, 2004), I wonder what impact this syndrome might have on the practice of philosophy in management? This was one question I was trying to grope toward in my mental preparation for this conference. My engagement with the literature did not lead me to hold a positive view of the interaction between philosophy and management scholarship; a view that was reinforced by the book I was reading while my colleagues made themselves at home in the conference venue. The particular text discussed (among other things) the epistemological stance of Paul Feyerabend. Despite being quite faithful to his intellectual thought at the time of *Against Method* (1975), an otherwise functional analysis concluded by suggesting that Feyerabend finished his lectures by jumping out the window on to a motorbike. Not bad for someone whose legs were partly paralysed in WWII. The source of this misinformation; that font of wisdom: *The Bluffers Guide to Philosophy* aka *Bluff Your Way in Philosophy* (see, Hankinson, 1985: 42).

Poaching

Standing in the hallway waiting to enter the lecture theatre where a keynote speaker is scheduled to speak, it seems to me that a more appropriate name for a philosophy and management conference would be poaching philosophy into management. The hunting metaphor is entirely apt given that management scholars routinely hunt through the forests of history, trapping strange things discovered in a past literature, to sell in the marketplace of ideas. After all, academic careers are made from the poaching of philosophy and the pounding and slicing of the material into ever thinner products evincing, on occasion, little concern for the heritage of these ideas (Jones, 2002a, 2004a). Maybe this is the real reason I am here: to poach the ideas of others and use them to my own ends, most likely in a future paper. This, I should quickly add, is no bad thing. For Certeau poaching is an act that we should embrace in our consumption habits. We live, he writes, by poaching in countless ways '*using* the products of the dominant economic order' in (very, very occasionally) ingenious ways (Certeau, 1984: xii-xiii; emphasis in original). It seems strange that this practice is actively encouraged within certain spheres of intellectual activity while poaching in the management literature is usually disingenuously labelled borrowing, as if one discipline owns the content of their ideas.

This said philosophy and social theory provide us with suitably legitimate vocabularies to engage in those activities that might otherwise be denied the support of the current socio-economic order that delineates what is and what is not an appropriate object of management theory. Judging by the content of the conference program, there would appear to be a niche market for making the corpuses of philosophers, economists and psychoanalysts bend and groan, with all the usual suspects including Freud, Hayek, Kuhn, Popper, Bergson and Spinoza (among others) represented. While these were novel readings in their own respects, sometimes it feels as if we are unwilling to refuse the advances of philosophers because they allow us to remain immature at heart. It is, as Kant (1996) pointed out, often convenient to be immature and our immaturity is sometimes manifested in our drafting in professional philosophers to buttress, otherwise obvious commentary. Philosophy, in other words, provides us with the branding needed to negotiate the marketplace of ideas; it breathes authority. Far from encouraging the kinds of transgressive acts that Foucault (1997) saw as desirable, we are seen so often to be quoting the same limited number of people in the same way that they were introduced to the community at large. The enrolment of philosophy into management can, if we let it, have the potential to become a limiting function where we become "dominated by someone else's vocabulary" (Phillips, 2002: xiii).

In our secular academic environment the philosopher takes the place of the spiritual adviser and from whom it is difficult to move beyond. And where Kant bemoans those who fail to strive for his ideal of human life and submit to the authority of reason rather than remain constricted by the irrational forces of religious fact, we now find the idea that the incorporation of philosophy into management is inherently a good thing frequently touted, and maybe it is. Certainly as I wander from seminar room to seminar room on my first evening here, the monologues that emanate from these scholarly environs are peppered with quotations from the likes of Hegel and Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari, and the spectres of these writers continue to haunt the various discussion throughout the night.

Perversion

While poaching of philosophy into management causes management scholars little concern, the perversion of philosophical thought is an issue that troubles Campbell Jones. In his presentation on the first evening he offers us some indication of what 'perversions of philosophy' might look like. Following the Oxford English Dictionary perversion is defined as: "To turn (a person or thing) aside from its proper use or nature; to misapply or misconstrue (words, etc.); and to lead astray (a person, a person's mind etc.) from the right opinion or conduct)" (Jones, 2004b). And at the most basic level, Jones argues, we might see perversion ranging from "minor mistakes and technical errors" to, at the other end of his continuum, "wholesale misunderstandings of philosophers and philosophical concepts". Now none of this is new and Jones would be the last to claim so. What he does contribute to the current discussion is he exposes some far wider and more complex issues relating to the way our readings decide themselves in the face of what we can call, if we assume some distance from 'positivism', undecidable texts.

In outlining his argument Jones draws from two prominent theorists of perversion, namely Freud and Foucault. Jones, unlike Freud, seems to move away from the idea that there is some content criterion regarding what is and what is not going to count as perverse. While he remarks that the two examples he cites, one from Catherine Casey and the other from Richard Elliott, can 'perhaps' be seen respectively as 'a simple blunder' and 'a seriously questionable interpretation', he is not arguing for one correct interpretation of a text. There are indeed numerous criteria of what constitutes 'perversion' in Freud's work. It is only when we have some idea of normal, sexual development and maturation that we can decide what is perverse or not. In short, we need some rule or convention that signals when we cross a boundary from the normal into the perverse, where we move from the conventionally sanctioned philosophical cunnilingus to the apparent perversity of digging up corpses in the cemetery and using them for an unconventional puppet show.

Bringing Freud and Foucault together, perversion, says Jones (2004b), "is a matter of pleasure, it is a matter of knowing when there is a rule, but breaking it anyway"; when this desire to transgress finds its outlet in the critical philosopher, she 'acknowledges that the limit has been breached, but that this was the intention, the goal of their philosophical activity'. This checking of *doxa* aside for the moment, what some may find troubling in this call for perversion is whether this transgressive ethos will be 'useful' for the pursuit of the mantle of science in relation to management, organization studies or marketing. Doubtless Pfeffer (1993) would sniff at Jones's proposal, seeing it as tantamount to inviting economists or some such imperialistic force to over run organization studies. This aside, the value of transgression and perversion seems to offer such promise because it can, in the right hands, open discursive space for alternative forms of thought that offer a counterpoint to the kind of dogmatism and normalising force that are apparent in the recent calls for Popperian rationalism and falsificationism (see below). However before this begins to sound excessively idealistic, we must recall Foucault's comments on power/knowledge; talking about perversion and transgression within the interstices of power relations cannot allow us to forget that this transgression has to be sanctioned by the academic community. As the limited number of published cases show us, if material is to negotiate the gate-keeping parties, it frequently has to be diluted to socially acceptable levels as a condition for publication (e.g. Weaver and Gioia, 1994). As John Shotter affirms, intellectual debate is usually subject to both implicit and explicit strictures and academics

> must function within a culture of domination, of hierarchy, a Cartesian culture of mastery and possession, and we experience a certain anxiety when we begin to speak out against it, to "speak the truth to power." As such, it tends to disorient us, to distract us from the words we need, we find ourselves saying what we know will be acceptable, rewarded; it is an anxiety that tends differentially, to silence us, we tend to speak of some things but not others, in certain styles but not others. (Shotter, 1997: 18)

What is worth considering here is whether a line can be drawn between what might be considered 'good' or 'bad' perversion, although Jones might not want to draw absolute lines here. We could nonetheless suggest that a 'good' perversion is one that opens discursive space rather than close it down – it works to reveal bullshit, rather than clothe and support it in the academic marketplace (Frankfort, 2005).

Naturally the attachment that academics feel toward their respective positions is something that should not be underestimated and most academic debate, it is said, simply ends up with academics talking past or remaining "staunchly bellicose" towards each other (Case, 2004: 61). This is not unexpected. Freud, in one of his more extreme moments, offers us some insight into the human condition. Men (sic), he suggests are not the most gentle creatures but are prone to use their neighbours as punching bags, as forced sexual objects, in short, they like to torment and cause pain (Freud, 2003). Given Freud's predilection for introspection, this may reveal more of him than other people. What is clear is that the games we play when entering into intellectual debate reveal a considerable amount about our intellectual virtues and vanities and, heaven forfend, we may even be more intolerant of others beliefs than we would like to acknowledge. It is not simply that people lack the intelligence to engage in productive academic debate since "intelligence is not itself enough for understanding: one must *want* to understand, and try and be willing to sustain that effort" (Magee, 1998: 511; emphasis in original). We may say we are willing to enter into dialogue with other communities but on the other hand what we say we are willing to counternance and what we actually do in practice are usually far from consistent with each other as the sociology of science serves to reiterate.

Like science, the practice of philosophy is context dependent in a variety of senses. On the one hand, individual philosophers will pursue questions that they find particularly interesting and this pursuit will be dependent on the local environment (i.e. the availability of research funding, time limitations and cognitive abilities of the researcher and so forth); which, in turn, is subject to the exigencies of the political, economic and social environment. Reflecting the vitality of the emerging interest in the practice of philosophy in and for management, participants at this conference will necessarily have divergent research interests but as the conference website indicate that the aim of this conference was to bring together those interested in the meeting of philosophy and management in order to encourage stimulating discussion, by providing "an opportunity for theorists and practitioners to present new work in the philosophy of management, engage with philosophical and practical issues…*and experience the power of philosophical skills and methods in practice*" (Oxford, 2004; emphasis added). With this discursive openness in mind I was somewhat dismayed to see practicing, practical philosophers (for want of a better label) drawing from secondary sources in order to support their arguments. The exemplar here being the use of interpretations and quotations from Sokal and Bricmont's notorious (1999) *Intellectual Impostures*, otherwise known as *Fashionable Nonsense* (Sokal and Bricmont, 1999).

Now using a secondary reading of a text is perhaps more understandable if the material has not been translated into a language that the reader can understand, or if the material is extremely hard to procure, but where the material is comparatively easy to obtain as is the case with much of the philosophical content currently used by management scholars, (although, of course, there is material that falls into the categories indicated above) the use of secondary sources rather than the primary text is questionable.

Turning to secondary sources while not entirely desirable might nonetheless be a contemporary manifestation of the demands that, for example, the Research Assessment Exercise, tenure tracking or other institutional constraints place on academic labour.

Such strictures are not, however, new. They are simply another modified form of intellectual policing that forces intellectual products to operate within certain bounds that have been present since time immemorial. We would do well to recall that within the academy it is coercion that is the natural state of affairs with academic freedom socially engineered (Menand, 1996). Here I might gesture towards the impact of McCarthyism on philosophy which led to greater importance placed on analytic philosophy since "one way to indicate that one was not Communist, or fellow traveller, or a sympathizer (and do so) was to engage in a quasi-scientific search for the truth" (McCumber, 2001: 46). Apparently because it was not possible to "simultaneously give allegiance both to Communism and to the search for truth" (*ibid.*). Whatever. While the dragging of philosophers before various un-American Committees is far removed from having to manufacture four publishable papers every few years or so, it is this willingness to place oneself in the firing line, so to speak, that has characterised the greatest intellectuals from "Jesus to Galileo, Voltaire, Zola and Bertrand Russell, all stood trial, and most of the rest courted lawsuits" (Fuller, 2005a: 17).

In the academy today we might presume constraints on the seeable and sayable are long gone (assuming Vice Chancellors, Dean, Heads of Department, research committees are benevolent souls which, of course, they are). We must however remain aware that it is all too easy for people to try to squash the "free-ranging and reckless spirit" that makes academic debate so interesting. This can be achieved through the invocation of "rules and standards that you know – and in other contexts would admit – are arbitrarily imposed for the sake of administrative convenience" (Fuller, 2005b: 4). Or, we might add, for intellectual convenience. But equally I wonder whether there is something in Burrell's suggestion that despite claims otherwise, disciplines in academia are not about dialogue, "Conversation and gossip possibly, but dialogue is eschewed" (Burrell, 2001: 18). Now while I am not convinced that any incommensurability between paradigms necessarily results in wholesale translation failure between paradigmatic specialities (Tadajewski, 2004a), I remain sceptical with regard to the extent to which dialogue does take place, and the implications of attempting to subject knowledge claims to empirical test based on the critical tenants of Popperian rationalism. These and related issues were highlighted in one particular paper at the conference and deserve close attention precisely because subjecting knowledge claims to evaluation seems so reasonable and this is what makes it dangerous.

Falsificationism

Responding to a paper previously published in the journal *Philosophy in Management* which proposed that management theory needed Popperian falsificationism because the "openness and [criticality of] Popper's approach…should perhaps make us more critical of the claims raised [by management theorists] rather than reject them outright" (Moss, 2003), Loughlin argues that whether management needs Popper is a more "tricky question" than Moss acknowledges. So that I do not distort his main argument it is worth using his own précis of his response to Moss:

> To recap, there are problems for falsification (a) as a methodology of science and (b) as a model for management theorists. In summary they are: a) Its conservatism: better, but newer theories can

> be killed off when they come into conflict with older, well-established theories which colour the 'horizon of expectations'. Observation statements rooted in entrenched, but false theories are allowed to count against newly emergent theories. (Conclusion: strict falsificationism holds up scientific progress and so could hold up progress in management theory.) b) No conclusive testing is possible because too many theories are implicated in every test situation. Any bit of the structure could be amended following falsification…(Conclusion: in the end, respectable science is in the same predicament as the bulk of management theory, with no decisive falsification really possible.) (Loughlin, 2004)

Loughlin presents his paper as a counterpoint for the "anti-rationalism (including postmodernism and relativism) [that] threaten to provide a rationale for the worst excesses of management theory" and against the views of those "on the left, including those who pride themselves on being 'critical'". In the place of such epistemological positions Loughlin demands that management researchers "approach their work with a fallibalist 'mindset and self-critical spirit' in order to militate against the "worst excesses of management theory". These excesses, he adds, are symptomatic "*of a broader intellectual malaise: debate is increasingly characterised by the exchange of persuasive rhetoric, making it difficult to hold those in positions of power to accountable for rationally justifying the positions they espouse*" (Loughlin, 2004; emphasis in original). Continuing in this vein, he bemoans the extent to which management theory has failed to be subject to careful, rational debate, while it nonetheless remains widely marketed throughout the academic and practitioner communities. Rational debate and the ability of management theorists to systematically question the value of producing particular theory leads Loughlin to propose that the realism and rationalism which underpins Popper's falsificationist philosophy of science is something that needs "to be preserved".

The claim that Loughlin makes about academic debate being 'increasingly characterised by the exchange of rhetoric' is perfectly plausible. Whether or not it is desirable for those involved in the production of theory to *rationally* justify the positions they espouse as Loughlin would like, is an issue worth examining in some detail. As a gesture in this direction let us now turn first to falsificationism and following this to Galileo's propagandist tactics for de-positioning the Aristotelian theory of perception.

Popper

Since Popper's reception by management scholars has been called into question (Jones, 2002b), it is worthwhile outlining what we mean by falsificationism. Registering Hume's argument that induction can never verify a hypothesis, Popper rejects the principle of verificationism and adopted the criterion of falsificationism according to which, if a statement is to speak about reality, it must be falsifiable, and if it is not falsifiable, it will not speak about reality (Popper, 1980; 1988). For Popper theories cannot be conclusively verified, but they can be confirmed. These confirming instances will never be sufficient to verify a theory because a finite number of confirming instances cannot verify a universal claim to truth, although one piece of evidence may serve to falsify a theory with science seen to progress through the trial and error of conjecture and refutation (Popper, 1963). Popper was, it should be recalled, no naïve empiricist. Falsificationism did accept the theory-laden nature of observation with empirical, experimental results always seen to involve some degree of interpretation of the facts observed in light of the underlying theory. Falsificationism, however, presents us with a number of difficulties. On the one hand it is clear that Popper lays down overly strict guidelines for adjudicating 'scientific' claims to knowledge by suggesting that they must be falsifiable. As Chalmers (1999) notes, when we turn to history of science the idea that falsificationism is actively undertaken borders on laughable – we need only cite examples such as the serious experimental evidence against special relativity theory and the disinterest of the physics community to question this theory (see, Feyerabend, 1975; Kuhn, 1970a, 1970b; Polyani, 1958). Not only do scientists evince an extreme reluctance to falsify their work, but if falsification had been followed as a strict methodology then many of the theories generated by some of the best minds in science would never have progressed beyond their infancy, that is, these scientists exhibited varying degrees of adherence to what is called the principle of tenacity. Commensurate with Popper (1963: 312n1) Feyerabend thinks that this 'principle of tenacity' is a desirable feature of scientific practice as it allows scientists to develop and improve their theories. And as the following case study highlights, it is often of greater benefit for the long-term development of science if this principle of tenacity is occasionally, and irrationally, subscribed to whether or not one's contemporaries agree.

Galileo, Galileo Here We Go…[2]

As an example of the desirability of the principle of tenacity Feyerabend presents the tower experiment that was used by the Aristotelians' to demonstrate that the Earth did not rotate on its axis, as Galileo argued. According to an Aristotelian position, if a rock is dropped from the side of a tower and the earth rotated, then it would fall some distance from the tower itself. This is because the earth was rotating while the rock was descending to earth and this interpretation, Feyerabend, tells us, was so convincing because of the naïve realism that underpins an Aristotelian theory of perception where "apparent [motion] is identical with real (absolute) motion" (Feyerabend, 1975: 74). Here perception "is a process in which the object perceived enters the percipient as precisely as the same form that characterized the object so that the percipient, in a sense, assumes the properties of the object" (Feyerabend, 1975: 148). According to this worldview, perception is untainted, in that it does not allow room for any form of optical illusion or deception. In empirical terms this means that the perception that the rock does not fall far from the building will substantiate the Aristotelian thesis and, in turn, serves to falsify the Copernican thesis that the earth revolves. In this case, the experimental data were incontrovertible and from the point of view of 17th century thought the thesis that the earth was not in motion was "impeccable and quite forceful" (Feyerabend, 1975: 75). So rather than trying to refute the Aristotelian thesis Galileo adopted a different strategy and tried to 'defuse' their arguments by attempting to change their conceptual system by introducing a new interpretation of what was happening to the rock while falling: "Galileo at once admits the correctness of the sensory content of the observation made assuming that heavy bodies such as rocks,

2 Note that the demonstration and rhetoric used do not express any "deep convictions of mine. They merely show how easy it is to lead people by the nose in a rational way" (Feyerabend, 1975: 32).

when falling from the height of the tower will as a matter of course, fall perpendicularly to the earth" (Feyerabend, 1975: 71). Rather than directly question this assumption, Galileo found it more practical to bracket the appearance of the rock falling perpendicularly from the tower as something 'on which we all agree'. The task remains that "the power of reason [is used] either to confirm its reality or to reveal its fallacy" (Galileo in Feyerabend, 1975: 71). In his attempt to question the "natural assumption"[3] in Aristotelian theory that sense data were foundational and uncontaminated by extraneous influence, Galileo sought to problematise their theory/observation distinction by introducing the equivocation that we might somehow be deceived by our sensory experiences:

> The event is the appearance to those who travel along a street by night being followed by the moon, with steps equal to theirs, when they see it go gliding along the eaves of the roofs. There it looks to them just as would a cat really running along the tiles and putting them behind it; an appearance which if reason did not intervene, would only too obviously deceive the senses. (Galileo in Feyerabend, 1975: 71)

The task of reason in relation to this example is to interfere where the natural interpretations lead us to make erroneous conclusions about sensory experience. In the example above, real motion and relative motion are conflated. Nonetheless Galileo continued to support a falsified position questioning the veracity of the interpretations of sensory experiences (not the sensory impressions themselves but the interpretation made of them) that empirical experiment at the time supported. And it is here that Galileo adopts Plato's theory of *anamnesis* to surreptitiously introduce new 'natural interpretations' to replace the Aristotelian theory of perception. Providing additional empirical interpretations would have been simple had Galileo subscribed to the theory/observation distinction of the Aristotelians, but he did not. So in this context he had to carefully market his theory reminding the Aristotelian reader "that there are situations in which the non-operative character of shared motion is just as evident as firmly believed as the idea of the operative character of all motion in other circumstances" (Feyerabend, 1975: 81): "The interpretation which Galileo uses restores the senses to their positions as instruments of exploration, *but only with respect to relative motion*. Motion "among things which share it in common" is "non-operative", that is, "it remains imperceptible, and without any effect whatsoever" (Feyerabend, 1975: 78; emphasis in original).

What Galileo is arguing here is that if Aristotelians' have always, to some extent, accepted the relativity of motion then why can they not accept that what occurs at the terrestrial will also hold at the celestial level. This, of course, is a major problem for Copernican theory and frustrated by the lack of recourse to a theory/observation distinction[4] Galileo has no option but to avoid questioning the assumption base of his potential interlocutors.

Galileo's problems did not end here. The Copernican theory was not simply refuted terrestrially but was fundamentally problematic at a celestial level. Apart from the

3 A natural interpretation represents the '*a priori* presuppositions of science or else…prejudices' that frame all observation (Feyerabend, 1975: 73).

4 Since this did not exist in the extant Aristotelian epistemology (Feyerabend, 1975: 72).

difficulties Galileo faced regarding the continued support of the Aristotelian natural interpretations he runs into further problems in relation to his attempts to observe celestial events concerning the sizes of Mars and Venus over successive stages of their orbits. "Mars, when it is close to us…would have to look sixty times as large as when it is most distant. Yet no such distance is seen" (Galileo in Feyerabend, 1975: 101). Venus poses similar difficulties: "which, if it circulates around the sun, as Copernicus says…ought to appear to us a little less than forty times as large when it is beyond the sun and near conjunction. Yet the difference is almost imperceptible" (Galileo in Feyerabend, 1975: 102). In addition to these empirical difficulties, Feyerabend offers us a number of examples that suggest that Galileo's activities run counter to falsificationism and 'rationality', in this historical context. Let us briefly consider two more points to substantiate the argument that falsification and rational debate are not necessarily qualities we should place on a pedestal. The first relates to the use of the telescope and the second to the content of Copernican over Aristotelian theory.

Telescopic Observation

When we examine the above analysis it seems clear that supporting Copernicanism in the absence of any corroborating evidence was to subscribe to an irrational position. Certainly prior to the invention of the telescope this was the case. We should not, however, rush to assume that Galileo's use of the telescope would corroborate the Copernican theory of perception and motion, as early telescopes were notoriously unreliable. Not only were optical theories at the time underdeveloped, but Galileo himself was far from versed in the latest theory. He was, to put it mildly, an enthusiastic DIY telescope builder. Even Kepler with his superior knowledge of optical theory refrained from building a telescope since he had 'misgivings'. Galileo however had none of these because he was 'totally ignorant of the science of optics'. This was, Kepler writes, "a most happy accident both for him and for humanity at large" (Feyerabend, 1975: 105n21). While the telescope was an undoubted commercial success, allowing further terrestrial sight than was previously possible, it nevertheless remained that its "application to the *stars*, however, was another matter" (Feyerabend, 1975: 108; emphasis in original).

It was far from certain that what worked terrestrially would function celestially, because of the contemporary view that terrestrial and celestial objects were made of different materials and thereby obeyed different laws. Outside of this domain of sensory experience the data gleaned from telescopic observations was likely to 'give misleading reports'. As an example, Feyerabend draws attention to the view of the moon reported by Galileo, which gave "us an entirely false idea of its distance and size" (Feyerabend, 1975: 122n2; see 1975: 131, 148-149). These difficulties were further compounded since the empirical evidence derived from "even the best observers were either plainly *false* and capable of being shown at the time, or else *self-contradictory*" (Feyerabend, 1975: 127; emphasis in original). In spite of these difficulties, the observations Galileo made using the telescope did have one advantage over the naked eye which supported Copernican theory in that it was now possible to observe the changes in brightness of

Mars and Venus that Galileo had expected to see, but which, remained imperceptible to the naked eye:

> Compared with the total performance of the telescope this change is still quite puzzling. It is just as puzzling as is the Copernican theory when compared to pre-telescopic evidence. But this change is in harmony with the predictions of Copernicus. *It is this harmony* rather than any deep understanding of cosmology and optics *which for Galileo proves Copernicus and the veracity of the telescope* in terrestrial as well as celestial matters. And it is on this harmony that he builds an entirely new view of the universe. (Feyerabend, 1975: 142; emphasis in original)

Here we have one refuted view, the idea of planetary motion, partly supported by another similarly tenuous proposal empirically derived from an apparatus that was known to produce optical illusions. While Popper might be body-popping in his grave now, his torment is not yet over. Since Galileo's development of an entirely new view of the universe certainly did not conform to Popper's objective ideal of a better theory, that is, one that came closer to finding out the truth. Nor did it explain or predict "all that the earlier hypothesis explained and predicted successfully" or succeed "at those points which found the old hypothesis to be at fault" (Popper, 1988: 262). What we have is a theory that does the opposite. The Aristotelian world-view, its astronomy, psychology, physics and epistemology all "collaborate in the Aristotelian philosophy to create a system that is coherent, rational, and in agreement with the laws of observation" (Feyerabend, 1975: 149). All of these facts combined to make Aristotelianism a very powerful system. Compared to this Galileo's view was fragmentary and incomplete, replacing a comprehensive theory of motion, by a much narrower theory which reduced a wealth of empirical evidence to "an experience that contains speculative elements" (Feyerabend, 1975: 100). This shift backwards was, as we now know, a huge advance for science. In this case, the "method of conjectures and refutations – would have had disastrous consequences" (Feyerabend, 1975: 143). It is only because these ideas survived, however irrational they may have appeared to Galileo's contemporaries, that they can now be said to "be in agreement with reason" and rationality (Feyerabend, 1975: 155). Or to express it slightly differently, "Copernicanism and other '*rational*' *views exist today only because reason was overruled in the past*" (Feyerabend, 1975: 155; emphasis in original).

The use of rhetoric, propaganda and persuasion by Galileo in this example, and which Loughlin so dislikes, reveals that in this case Galileo's 'persuasible proof' was a rational move (Moss, 1993). Loughlin on the other hand would, on his own criteria of requiring management researchers to engage in 'rational' debate to produce inter-subjectively certified 'objective' knowledge, have to argue *ceteris paribus* that Galileo was being irrational, a trait Loughlin would not apparently admire. This was because Copernican theory was "inconsistent, not just with other theories, but even with *experiments*, *facts*, *observations*" and current inter-subjective convention at the time[5] (Feyerabend, 1975:

5 Other notable examples include Bohr's atomic model, special relativity theory and general relativity theory, Newton's theory of colours, classical mechanics and the propensity towards the "renormalization" of results (crossing our calculations and replacing them with a description of empirical observation) (Feyerabend, 1975: 56, 57, 59, 60). In addition, we might consider, Darwin's theory of evolution, since despite gaps in the fossil record, Darwin refused to acquiesce to the view that he might be wrong; something that subscribers to creationism continue to point out now (Bird, 2000).

55; emphasis in original). It was, Feyerabend concludes, “philosophically absurd” (1975: 64), “outlandish and… obviously false” (1975: 77). And its “invention, defence, and partial vindication runs counter to every methodological rule one might care to think of today” (Feyerabend, 1975: 66-67). And we might add only became accepted by the wider scientific community by virtue of Galileo practicing supposedly irrational means of persuasion, including propaganda, *ad hoc* hypotheses and appeals to emotion, all amplified “by tricks and jokes” (Feyerabend, 1975: 154). Galileo was not the only theorist to engage in such practices and neither have thinkers today eschewed such practices. If anything, Feyerabend suggests, “modern science is more opaque, and more deceptive, than its 16th and 17th century ancestors have been” (Feyerabend, 1975: 64). The same might also be said for management research.

Politics and the Marketplace of Ideas

Galileo was well aware of the politics of the marketplace of ideas to which he targeted Copernican theory and was a major supporter of the use of persuasion and propaganda in his communication with influential scientific and religious communities alike. In all his propagandist activities he was “guided by the insight that established institutions, social conditions, prejudices may hinder the acceptance of new ideas and that new ideas may have to be introduced in an ‘indirect’ manner, by forging links between the circumstances of their origin and the forces that might engender their survival” (Feyerabend, 1975: 106n22). The idea that it would be beneficial if we had more Popperian rationalism and realism in management theory is either less aware of the politics of academic debate or prefers to refrain from passing comment upon it. And it is here that Loughlin’s (and Popper’s) demand that we refrain from the use of rhetoric in academic debate and engage in attempts to inter-subjectively certify our knowledge thereby producing ‘objective’, third world theory which he appears to argue is “a truth independent of one’s language and belief system” runs into difficulties.

Somewhat paradoxically it is here that Loughlin is at his most convincing and likely to enrol third parties into his vision of the current state of philosophy in management. Taking philosophically loaded terms such as realism, truth and other technical philosophical terms he is, I assume, acutely aware that these also carry everyday meanings that any reasonable reader of the journal organizing this conference would be sympathetic to: “Neutrals, undecideds and those who prefer empirical action to philosophical talk are more inclined *certeris parabus*, to cheer for hooray words and jeer at “boo words” such as “relativism”, “subjectivism”, or “anti-realism”” (Brown, forthcoming). Loughlin’s discursive strategy is, in spite of this, perfectly in keeping with what is now viewed as the second scientific revolution in science; a revolution characterised by the rise of the importance attributed to rhetorical moves in establishing scientific credibility. Unsurprisingly Galileo is seen as the figurehead of this discursive shift – the “supporters and opponents of Copernicus invoked “persuasible” proof to tip the balance created by dialectical arguments that seemed equally probable” (Moss, 1993: vii). In this context Galileo is heralded as leading the way for rhetoric to be used in a scientific domain in order to advance the cause of science. And whether he likes it or not, Loughlin, engages in the same games. He is consequently not what Popper would see as a rationalist, that is, someone who engages in reasonable discussion and "who attempts to reach decisions by argument and perhaps, in certain cases, by compromise, rather than by violence" (Popper, 1963: 356). Nor is he "a man who would rather be unsuccessful in convincing another man by argument than successful in crushing him by force, by intimidation and threats, or even by persuasive propaganda" (Popper, 1963: 356) since he appeals to the "emotional make-up of the man and not his reason"[6] (Popper, 1945: 228). Of course the reasons why such appeals are made are clear. Since as Kuhn has pointed out a falsificationist position underpinned by rationalism is 'extremely odd' because "where a whole theory or often even a scientific law is at stake, arguments are seldom so apodictic" (Kuhn, 1970b: 13). Furthermore the requirement that a theory is held to be 'truthful' when it is inter-subjectively corroborated raises a number of problems that again highlight the way that philosophy can be used selectively to present a rational argument, while at the same time, effectively shutting down debate. Here is one brief example taken from the marketing literature.

In an unusually honest paper we are told that the development of knowledge in marketing is subject to 'certain rules and conventions' that determine what contributions are to be admitted "as *bone fide* knowledge by those working within and outside the domain" (Greenley, 1995: 665; emphasis in original). These rules and conventions, Greenley reminds us (as if we could forget), are based on the conventions of 'positivism' which presuppose underlying uniformities in the subject matter that can yield law-like generalizations. Controversial and new research Greenley argues, must adhere to the rules and conventions deemed acceptable by this paradigm: "if they do not build-on existing knowledge in a justifiable manner then they are outside the doctrine of criticality" (Greenley, 1995: 668). In this case, "persons who violate the rules do not enter a new territory; they leave the domain of meaningful discourse" (Feyerabend, 1994b: 17). The language used by Greenley along with that of Lakatos (1970), Popper (1963) and Loughlin (2004) is indicative of the distain in which they hold forms of knowledge that deviate from either the 'rationality' demanded by the latter three commentators or the subscription to his personal cosmology (and that of many others) demanded by the former.

Where we have commentators proposing that it is reasonable and rational to work through academic debate in a rationalist fashion, their actions say otherwise. For example, either we are rational, reasonable Popperian's or we are violent: "I frankly confess that I choose rationalism because I hate violence" (Popper, 1963: 357). The production of knowledge, whatever the philosophical tradition we work in, has more similarity to power-games than any of the above authors are likely to admit and yet they freely provide us with examples of where, if a researcher is not rational, reasonable and refuses to play by the rules that they outline, it is likely that their work will be confined to the margins of academic debate, if it is admissible at all. Lakatos is most explicit here, pre-empting many of the later debates in management, marketing and organization studies when he admits not only that science is rule governed but that this is a good thing: "Editors of scientific journals should refuse to publish…papers which will…either contain solemn reassertions of their position or absorption…by ad hoc,

6 As Popper himself does.

linguistic adjustments. Research foundations, too, should refuse money" (Lakatos, 1971: 105). Here Lakatos is quite willing to act as a policing force for science, refereeing the methodological rules of the game, as it were. As Phillips acknowledges: "whether they are rule-makers or referees, they too have and use power in enforcing their views. This is often lost sight of where 'reason' is contrasted with violence as Popper is prone to do" (Phillips, 1977: 159).

Both Popper and Loughlin argue that the persuasive force of an argument should be detached from the reputation of the individual, their power or accumulated authority – it is the argument itself which must be evaluated, not the producer, "it is the rules and the players' ability to follow them correctly which are important" (Phillips, 1977: 160). What we have to remember here is contrary to the individualistic position Feyerabend (1999) is prone to take, those participating in scientific 'games' are in competition with one another and this necessarily brings such debate into the realm of marketing and politics. Whether Loughlin would like to acknowledge it or not, individual management researchers have to sell their ideas to their intended audience, they have to *persuade* their marketplace, they have to use *rhetoric and propaganda.*

Incommensurability and Related Matters

In science, as distinct from theology, Popper opines "a critical comparison of frameworks is always possible" (Popper, 1970: 57). If it is not, then one community of thinkers is likely to be so different from another, "that no intellectual bridge may exist and no compromise be possible between these two systems" (Popper, 1945: 213). Popper clearly finds this incommensurability unappealing since it effectively destroys any basis for rational discussion between the two communities: "I do admit that at any moment we are prisoners caught in the framework of our own theories; our expectations; our past experiences; our language. But we are prisoners in a Pickwickian sense: *if we try*, we can break out of our framework at anytime. Admittedly, we shall find ourselves again in a framework, but it will be a bigger and roomier one: and we can at any moment break out of it again" (Popper, 1970: 56; emphasis added). Popper's argument is less than convincing, although resistance from dominating epistemic structures, those frameworks in to which we are schooled, can be found. This is an important point and motivated me into writing my own presentation at the conference (Tadajewski, 2004b).

Looking at the translation of the paradigm concept from Kuhn by Burrell and Morgan I suggested that Burrell and Morgan might be better thought of as 'tempered radicals'. Tracing how the marketing strategy they used broaden the paradigmatic basis for organization theory I argued that their tempered, somewhat deferential approach towards functionalism enabled them to assuage the potential criticism that could have been expected from the functionalist quarter. While Burrell and Morgan's text was only a tentative sketch, it appears to have had the effect of reinforcing a paradigm mentality far removed from the kind of Proteus style scholarly activity that Foucault (1997) supported and Burrell and Morgan showed through their own journey across all four paradigms. Certainly far from their text encouraging the intellectual malleability that they obviously saw value in, it is clear that those players in the paradigm debate do not change their ideas and paradigms but instead academic positions rapidly solidify into a form of intellectual branding that is hard to discard and the reasoning behind this is easy to fathom. Producing knowledge is a roman gamble, where the intellectual rich get richer and the poor get poorer (Simon, 1991). Our academic selves are, unsurprisingly, more likely to be characterised by an easy immutability reinforced by the structural conditions of a pressurised academic environment that delimits knowledge production within certain bounds and demands “more scholar per dollar” (Wernick, 2003: 142):

> One can argue that after tenure, scholars should no longer have to care about such pressures. Although tenure does bring freedom for some…it may be unrealistic to believe that pressure for quantity decline with tenure. Not only do tenured associate professors face a similar review on promotion to full professor, but by the time scholars achieve tenure, their identity is often tied to their publication record…The retooling required to address [alternative paradigm styles and associated research questions]…is more than most are willing to risk. (Stern and Barley, 1996: 156)

These institutional constraints deal what I think is a relatively decisive blow for the ideas marketed by Popper and taken up by Loughlin. The idea that we are likely to falsify, critique or otherwise throw our own research positions and intellectual capital into doubt bears little resemblance to actual scientific and management research. This, however, should be expected whether we like it or not; where Feyerabend writes physics we could substitute management theory:

> Methodologists may point to the importance of falsifications – but they blithely use falsified theories; they may sermonize how important it is to consider all the relevant evidence, and never mention those big and drastic facts which show that the theories they admire and accept, like the theory of relativity or the quantum theory, may be as badly off as those they reject. In *practice* they slavishly repeat the most recent pronouncements of the top dogs in physics, though in doing so they must violate some of the most basic rules of their trade. (Feyerabend, 1975: 65; emphasis in original)

This where I think the advice of Diderot is useful for thinking about the practice of philosophy in management. His suggestion is that we should strive to be more eclectic[7] in our everyday lives: “The eclectic is a philosopher who…[tramples] under foot prejudice, tradition, venerability, universal assent, authority – in a word, everything that overawes the crowd” (Diderot in Wilson 1957: 237). The eclectic must *strive* “to think for himself, to attend to the clearest general principles, to examine them, to discuss them, to admit nothing save on the testimony of his own reason and experience; and from all of the philosophers he has analyzed without favor and without partiality, to make one for himself, individual and personal, belonging to him” (Diderot in Wilson, 1957: 237) We must reserve the right to “…remain unconvinced, to perceive a contradiction, to require more information, to emphasize different postulates, to point out faulty reasoning, etc. As for the person answering the questions, he too exercises a right that does not go beyond the discussion itself; by the logic of his own discourse he

7 The extent to which it may be expedient for the eclectic to hide their eclecticism is something that remains debated within the management literature (cf. Avital and Gormonperez, 2004; Gabriel, 2002; Sutton, 1997; Tadajewski, 2004a).

is tied to the questioning of the other" (Foucault, 1984: 381). And that goes for whoever is speaking.

Of course I am not advocating that all approaches are equally valuable or that we should simply blend various strands of social theory together. Rather greater benefit may be derived from the tensions that each creates. Perhaps this might result in the kinds of schizophrenic research projects that Lincoln (1985) is concerned about. Perhaps not. I'm more inclined to think that the kind of tension created will function to push the discursive limits of whatever discipline we happen to operate in. This will naturally require that we package our ideas in a way that negotiates the appropriate gatekeepers. But once that first citation is planted a thousand lovely flowers can bloom (or not). Here we might gesture towards the work of Spivak as an inspiration (see, Jones, in press). Certainly her work highlights the extent to which we must take responsibility for what we say and do – whether as academic researchers or in trying to negotiate our everyday lives. What philosophy can offer us in this context is a way to reflect upon and think about our beliefs rather than uncritically perform them. The reader should however not be fooled that in writing about philosophy my own objectives were any less self-interested than those who I may have implicated via omnibus citation. At the moment though, simply thinking about my beliefs, rather than thinking with them, is enough of a project in itself. Like philosophy into management it is an exercise that I can see continuing into the far distant future.

Post Philosophy in Management

By now it has become clear that this note on my attendance at the philosophy in management conference has evolved into something more than a brief recitation of this experience. I make no apologies for this. Practicing philosophy in management takes time and requires that we cover a wealth of often complex, theoretical material. Here I have taken some time to examine a number of papers that are loosely linked by their willingness to look at the practice of philosophy in management and state whether or not this is a 'good' direction for it to be headed; this has required me to read a great deal of the output of both Popper and Freud. If we recall the quotation from Magee above that we must try to understand what other people are saying if we are to continue the debate that surrounds philosophy in management, then it seems reasonable to say that there was no real way I could legitimately have sidestepped such intellectual work, even if it was too time consuming. This paper has taken time to write, read, redraft, redraft and redraft again and so it is with the practice of philosophy – it takes time, but it is time well spent. As I hope I have illustrated by my own practice of 'doing' philosophy.

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