



Institutionalizing Critique: A Problem of Critical Management Studies*

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abstract

This paper has as its starting point calls for critical management studies (CMS) to engage more actively with the public. CMS has been relatively successful in gaining an institutional foothold within university business schools, but is criticised from within for a lack of influence outside the institution. We argue that while closer relationships with the public is assumed to be the next phase in the institutional development of CMS, strengthening its position within university business schools is likely only to exacerbate the present lack of public engagement, since this becomes an end in itself. Bigger and better conferences and a proliferation of journals dedicated to the publishing of CMS research takes us further from the everyday world of workplace politics. As part of creating a space in which we can think differently about CMS and the university, we draw on Foucault's analysis of *parrhesia*, or fearless speech, which emphasises critique as a personal quality.

Introduction

We approach this topic from two quite different places. We share a passion for the critique of management and organization but we pursue different strategies in practising this critique. One of us represents a CMS¹ 'insider', whose efforts have, in some small way, helped to strengthen the institutional foundations of CMS – by writing research articles, organising conferences activities and introducing critical management education in his classroom. The other is more an 'outsider' to CMS, who does not attend the conferences or write much for the journals, but instead works with activists and writes for a wider public. This paper represents something of a compromise – a paper in an academic journal on the subject of critique and CMS' political engagement with the public.

The university is in crises over its crises. The university is unsure of even its crises, like the skeptic who is unsure of their agnosticism. But the university runs on, powered by all those things that make the world go around. For Readings (1996), the university is in a state of destruction. If we are to sift through the ruins of the university what would we seek to salvage? For us, it would be 'critique'. Our starting point is Kant, in whom we

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1 We use this cautiously, in the knowledge that it is a contested term, both in terms of what it stands for and whom it includes.

see not so much the architect of the modern university as the one who helped lay its foundation.

We are sympathetic to Kant's articulation of the university as the site of the institutionalization of critique and of reason, given the extension of sovereign power and censorship which he faced at the time of his writing two centuries ago. We are also cognisant of the influence of his thinking on the development of the university since that time. Kant's impassioned plea for the protection of freedom of expression within the university has its legacy in conceptions of academic freedom and the university as a critic of society. Those who fight for the preservation of such privileges – and we have done this at various times ourselves – do so with the best of intentions. Unfortunately, a potential side-effect of institutionalizing critique within the university is that academics become removed from the very locations which their critique concerns – be it the workplace, the hospital, parliament or wherever. We see this as a problem, and we are not the only ones. Within CMS, it is the subject of countless conference streams, papers, committee meetings and conversations, typically expressed as 'how can CMS engage more actively with the public?'

To address this 'problem' we turn to Foucault. There is a growing interest in the deployment of Foucault's later works in organization studies (Chan and Garrick, 2002; Jack, 2004; Starkey and Hatchuel, 2002; Wray-Bliss, 2004). Here, Foucault's attention is directed towards the possibilities for transformation through the reinvigoration of critical thinking and the reinvention of the political, together with an analysis of its limitations and constraints. This later work can be seen as Foucault recanting on or mitigating the effects of his earlier work which was seen to delimit the space for individual action through a conception of power which challenged the notion of an autonomous, sovereign individual.

Our focus here is his analysis of parrhesia, which, although not written as a blueprint for intellectual practice, does provide us with alternative ways of thinking about the relationship between critical management scholars and the people. It calls upon us to recognize critique more as a personal quality than as an institutional right and urges us to engage with not just our students and academic colleagues, but with the targets of our critique.

A Problem for Critical Management Studies

The success of CMS is well documented by Adler et al. (2008), including a thriving group of the Academy of Management which has now achieved division status, a large biannual conference in the UK and regional groupings of scholars around the world. Despite these successes, there is also a level of questioning and concern about its future direction, particularly with regard to the form, content and extent of communication with a wider public. Grey and Sinclair (2006: 445), for instance, criticise CMS for writing that it "is too often pretentious, obscurantist and dull". The effect of such writing is to render it meaningless to anyone outside CMS, thereby making it politically useless, in the sense of having any impact on the world of practice.

CMS might appear to provide an ideal home for academics keen to take on activist roles. The domain statement for the Academy of Management's CMS division lists the ambitious goal of "the creation of better organizations, more humane societies, and a viable world system" (CMS Division, 2008). However, critical management scholars are routinely and vigorously criticised for their efforts in the public arena, often by those sympathetic to the CMS agenda. Böhm and Spoelstra (2004: 98) ask: "has the CMS project even come close to starting to have a real impact in the academy and wider spheres of society?" Their answer: "a clear No".

These observations about a lack of external engagement will come as no surprise to those who have attended CMS conferences, where this is a recurring topic of discussion. Perhaps more surprising is that even in academic publications, critical management scholars are neglecting the issues that are supposedly of concern to them. Dunne et al.'s (2008) analysis of articles published in top business and management journals found that little attention is paid to political issues such as war, exploitation or international migration. While one might expect critically-oriented journals to buck the trend the results were underwhelming, leading the authors to conclude that "management academics want to claim power, but not responsibility" (*ibid.*: 276).

Do we expect too much from CMS? Is it reasonable to expect more from critical management studies than the critical study of management, disseminated amongst academic colleagues through seminars, conferences, books and journals? Certainly, central figures in CMS believe that is not too much to ask. In their overview of CMS for the *Academy of Management Annals*, Adler et al. (2008: 156-157) conclude that:

Those committed to advancing critical studies of management will doubtless continue to refine their theories and to debate the merits of their different approaches; the bigger challenge, however, and the one that provides the warrant for this internal debate, is to contribute more forcefully to shaping public agendas.

This, then, is a problem for CMS. The voice of CMS grows louder in its location of the university business school, but remains almost inaudible to those outside. In this paper we argue that while we too would wish to see critical management scholars engaging more vigorously with the politics of the workplace, we see CMS more as the reason for a lack of engagement than the vehicle for the realization of this goal. In making our case we turn to Kant's argument for the university as the site for the institutionalization of critique and consider what it means in the university we inhabit today.

The Institutionalization of Critique and its Consequences

Kant (2007) answers the question of 'What is enlightenment?' using the motto '*Sapere Aude*' or 'Dare to know!' It is, he argues, a comfortable existence to take direction from others and there are always authority figures ready and willing to direct. In the age of enlightenment, however, people have the courage to free themselves from tutelage and "the freedom to make public one's use of reason at every point" (2007: 31). In *Conflict of the Faculties* (1992), Kant articulates a distinctive role for the university as the institutional location for the progressive use of reason. The 'lower' faculty of philosophy acts in the name of reason to oversee the more practical 'higher' faculties of

medicine, theology and law, which teach practitioners in line with government-approved doctrine. The lower faculty analyses these teachings and instigates conflicts aimed at keeping them aligned with reason and away from dogma. Upholding the freedom of expression of the lower faculty is in the interests not just of the government, but of the higher faculties themselves, since only then can their teaching be aligned with reason. Kant proposes, therefore, a strict division of labour within the university: the higher faculties, whose teachings interest the government and which they can sanction; and the lower faculty, which pursues the interests of science based on reason (Kant, 1992).

Kant's locating of critique in the institute of the university needs to be understood within the context of censorship in which he wrote *Conflict of the Faculties*. Frederick the Great ruled with the dictum 'argue all you will, but obey', which at least allowed for free discussion through which Kant believed reason would triumph. The limits of arguing were cut short under Frederick William II who imposed an edict which censored all writing that strayed too far from religious doctrine. Kant ran foul of the censorship commission with *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason* and starts *Conflict of the Faculties* with the letter he received from Minister of Justice Woellner, which accuses him of using philosophy to denigrate the scriptures. Woellner urges Kant to discharge his duty to the State – "failing this, you must expect unpleasant measures for your continuing obstinacy" (*ibid.*: 11).

In this hostile environment, *Conflict of the Faculties* can be read simultaneously as an assertion of the rights of philosophers to speak out and a reassurance that such activity will not threaten the sovereign. To make the case, Kant invokes a distinction between the people and the learned community of scholars. Kant (1992: 15) denies that in *Religion within the Limits of Mere Reason* he has offended the State, since "the book in question is not suitable for the public: to them it is an unintelligible, closed book, only a debate among scholars of the faculty, of which the people take no notice."

While Kant talks often of the public and of the philosophy faculty as having the responsibility for publicly presenting truth, the definition of public is narrow. The higher faculties must answer to the government because their teachings "circulate among the people as a *civil* community" (*ibid.*: 57, emphasis in original), whereas the scholarly debates of the lower faculties "are directed to a different kind of public – a learned community" to which "the people are resigned to understanding nothing about" (*ibid.*).

The legacy of Kant continues in many universities of the present, where the freedom of expression is not just the preserve of the philosophy department, but is generalised across all faculties. In New Zealand, for instance, under the Education Act (1989), universities are required, amongst other things, to accept a role as critic and conscience of society. The critic and conscience role extends to state-funded polytechnics and colleges of education (which specialise in the training of teachers) but not to private educational providers. These critic and conscience responsibilities, in turn, rely on the protection of academic freedom, defined as "the freedom of academic staff and students to question and test received wisdom, to put forward new ideas and to state controversial or unpopular opinions" (Education Act, 1989).

The formal assignment of the role of critique to universities and the legal protection of this through academic freedom offers comfort for those who assert the university's role in a democratic society as an independent source of social criticism (Tasker and Packham, 1990). There are, however, reasons to be concerned about its manifestations in our commercialised, professionalised universities of the early twenty-first century. We will deal briefly with three: the 'misuse' of academic freedom; a narrowing of the definition of what constitutes critique; and a reluctance to view critique as a personal ethic. We then suggest that Foucault's analysis of parrhesia might offer us a way of addressing these consequences.

A perceived lack of engagement with the people is a critique that extends beyond CMS to business schools as a whole. There is no shortage of intellectuals conducting research in universities and no shortage of public commentators offering an opinion of the major issues of the day. However, there are very few public intellectuals – academics who write for a non-specialist audience on matters of public interest. Business and management is deeply implicated in major issues of public debate (e.g. climate change, globalisation and public ethics), yet business school academics are conspicuously absent from the public sphere. In the past, universities have been a central institution providing these public intellectuals. Yet increasingly think tanks, consultants, journalists and the proliferating 'blogosphere' have supplanted them, with academics blamed for retreating into a private and self-referential world of specialist publications and arcane debates. Jacoby (1987) is critical of academics for accepting the security offered by the profession and neglecting their role of addressing a wider public, arguing that academic freedom not only loses its relevance, but is partly to blame for making the intellectual's existence in the university a safe and comfortable one.

Along with the institutional protections of 'academic freedom' come constraints and responsibilities which reinforce a tendency towards the proliferation of 'safe specialists' in universities (Posner, 2001: 6). Academic freedom is personal in the sense of permitting freedom of speech within the law, yet it is a freedom only gained through membership of the institution, justified on the grounds that it is to be exercised by academics for the good of society. Typically, academic freedom only extends to some activities performed by academics, with a distinction made between speaking as a private individual and speaking as an academic or professional expert. Freedom becomes linked to the academic's area of expertise, so if they comment on areas outside their expertise they speak as private individuals, not as members of the institution, with the University not obliged to defend their right to speak. In theory, there is nothing to prevent academics from speaking out on matters of public concern which fall outside their expertise. In practice, however, self-censorship can become the norm, with academics reluctant to make political interventions in the public sphere because of a fear their careers will be inhibited (Bridgman, 2007).

A related concern is that we rest comfortably in the knowledge that universities will safeguard the role of critique because it is their legal obligation. In doing so, we abdicate our own sense of ethic or responsibility and leave the task of engaging with the public to an organization which faces pressures towards conservatism because of its range of competing stakeholder demands. At our university, the 'critic and conscience' role is one of the university's strategic goals, with administrators keen to gather data on

academics' interactions in the public sphere. A key issue is what constitutes 'critique' and given the definition of academic freedom described above, this tends to be interpreted narrowly as evidenced-based policy analysis, or similar. There are parallels here with Bauman's (1989: 163) argument that "the organization as a whole is an instrument to obliterate responsibility". The effect of organizations' attempts to control the behaviour of their employees is that individual ethical responsibility is suppressed. Applying Bauman's thinking to business ethics, Wray-Bliss (2007: 520) states that "by promoting the idea that management should take responsibility for deciding and enforcing 'ethics', business ethics can be argued to be further *removing* ethical responsibility from individual organizational members" (emphasis in original).

If we are dissatisfied with what passes as critique in contemporary universities, what then, do we want from critique and from the university? We are not advocating that we abandon the institution. By being in the university, whether as a student or member of the academic or general staff, we are all committed to the university to some degree. Unsurprisingly, we would like to see a university that is less obsessed by debates amongst the community of scholars. As Derrida notes, the idea of the Kantian university in which faculty speak publicly "but only *inside* the university" is now outdated (2002: 220, emphasis in original). While acknowledging that Kant's assertion of an essence in the form of an absolute free space deserves symbolic protection, Derrida believes this must be claimed "not only in a verbal and declarative fashion, but in work, in act, and in what we make happen with events" (*ibid.*).

Derrida's (2002) conception of a 'university without condition' is an appealing one, where there is the "right to say everything" and "the right to say it publicly, to publish it" (2002: 205). Derrida's unconditional university represents a utopia, but it can be approached through rigorous deconstruction in which nothing is immune from critique. We can think of this as a duty of the university and being part of it therefore requires working within the institution to explore its limits, as well as the possibilities of escaping them – 'to be in not of' the modern university (Moten and Harney, 2004: 102).

The merits of a deconstruction-based pedagogy for critical management education have been explored elsewhere (Dey and Steyaert, 2007). An alternative way forward is to turn to Foucault (2007a; 2007b), who, like Derrida (2004), sees a dual role for critique, both as an historical analysis of how we come to be constituted as subjects, as well as an exploration of the possibilities of moving beyond those limits. This approach is reflected in Foucault's own forays into political debate, where he used historical analysis as the foundation for specific interventions on issues such as gender relations, authority, and how we conceive of mental illness. While we acknowledge the merits of these contributions to a critical pedagogy, our interest here is on Foucault's analysis of parrhesia. Foucault does not connect this explicitly to the position of the intellectual and of the university, but it can provide a novel way of considering possibilities for countering the effects of institutionalized critique.

Parrhesia and Its Relevance for CMS

Parrhesia has gained attention since the last of a series of lectures delivered on the topic at University of California, Berkeley and Collège de France by Foucault, in the two years prior to his death. Interest in the term gained momentum when Semiotext(e) released *Fearless Speech* (2001), an edited script of the six 1983 Berkeley lectures. In classical Greece, parrhesia was an attitude and practice that extended to all spheres of life. The parrhesiastic act was singular, and not a vocation, but its speaker was required to possess certain characteristics which allowed him to be considered to be speaking the truth.²

It is a verbal activity in which a speaker expresses his personal relationship to truth, and risks his life because he recognises truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In parrhesia, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery, and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy... (Foucault, 2001: 19-20)

The parrhesiastes says everything and hides nothing, using the most direct words possible. Parrhesia, as speaking the truth, and rhetoric, as speaking artfully, are held as strict opposites. A pre-condition for being able to speak with parrhesia is the coherence between ones' beliefs and actions. The parrhesiastes "says what he knows to be true" (*ibid.*: 14). To speak the truth requires courage but to be considered parrhesia, it is also necessary that there is a risk or danger involved. Parrhesia takes place "in a situation where the speaker or confessor is in a position of inferiority with respect to the interlocutor". (*ibid.*: 18). Finally, the parrhesiastes speaks because he feels it his moral duty to do so, rather than because someone forces him to speak. In describing the characteristics of the parrhesiastes, Foucault wants to make it clear that "parrhesia is usually spoken of as a personal quality, and not as an institutional right" (*ibid.*: 85).

The Kynic can be considered as the parrhesiastes *par excellence*, as the ideal emphasised in Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy* as both the happiest and freest man due to his 'self-sufficiency'. Boethius' emphasis on the importance of not only lacking a master to report to, but also to be without slaves to depend on, catches the Kynic attitude to freedom. The most infamous Kynic is Diogenes of Sinope,³ who was not a 'born' truth teller, but emerged through a number of circumstances from his defacing of the currency, through to his surfacing in Athens as a 'dog philosopher'. The Kynic lived in public and engaged in an embodied critique – "the Kynic farts, shits, pisses, masturbates on the street, before the eyes of the Athenian market" (Sloterdijk, 1987: 103). Diogenes' home was a barrel in the street – he lived not only *for* the public, but *of* the public. His criticisms were never private challenges but were issued in the market, on the street, and in the assembly. Diogenes was able to speak truly in these locations as they were public; as a resident of the city they were every bit as much his as anyone else's.

2 The parrhesiastes was always a 'he' since participation in Athenian democracy was not open to women.

3 See Diogenes as the focus in Sloterdijk (1988) and an analysis of the papers in Branham and Goulet-Cazé (1996).

What are the implications of parrhesia for our practice? Teaching would seem to be one aspect of our academic lives amenable to the practice of parrhesia. Jack (2004), for instance, deploys parrhesia to think about how we engage with students in the classroom, “to encourage them to reflect on their own moralities and their own lives” (2004: 133). If, however, we apply the criteria of parrhesia strictly, the criterion of criticism requires that the speaker be in a position of inferiority with respect to the interlocutor. Perhaps we might claim this to be the case where our students are managers, but otherwise, it would not seem that we are in a less powerful position than our students. While parrhesia could conceivably be part of a critical management education (Grey, 2004), approaches such as Derrida’s deconstruction (Dey and Steyaert, 2007), involving both a critical questioning and an invention of possibilities might have greater applicability in the classroom than fearless speech.

We also question the extent to which it is possible to practise parrhesia with our academic colleagues, at conferences for example. Whilst we are probably not alone in approaching conference presentations with some trepidation, it is not altogether clear who the interlocutor might be or if indeed there is a risk that we might lose our privilege to speak. Whilst we are of the opinion that many academic presentations would benefit from a dose of straight-talking, the abrasive nature of the parrhesiastes’ intervention is not altogether consistent with the image of a community of scholars, to which we remain attracted.

If there are limited opportunities to practice parrhesia through our teaching and research, what is left? We have in mind activity that engages directly with the ‘enemy’. That might be the senior management of the largest or most influential corporations in our localities. It might be civil servants with the responsibility for policy analysis in our areas of interest. It might be the politicians who drive such initiatives. It might be our own heads of faculties, or vice-chancellors. It might be our colleagues from the ‘mainstream’ of management within business schools.

In our experience of academic life, these opportunities present themselves even if we do not actively go in search of them. For example, when an invitation to address a breakfast meeting of managers arrives in our email inbox, it is tempting to delete it. Why would I want to spend my precious time talking to these people? They probably won’t understand what I have to say, and even if they do, what will they care? If I accept, that gives me less time for writing that academic paper, so what incentive is there for me to say yes? It is seemingly mundane engagements such as this that present opportunities for provocative dialogue. We should not delude ourselves that our interventions will convert these people to our ‘truth’, but it might be possible to “lead the interlocutor to internalize this parrhesiastic struggle – to fight within himself against his own faults” (Foucault, 2001: 133).

We are not the first to have turned to parrhesia to intervene in the debate about the practical politics of CMS (Barratt, 2003; Barratt, 2004). The most comprehensive treatment is provided by Jack (2004), who juxtaposes the ideas of free speech and fearless speech. Jack asks whether critical management scholars are prepared to engage in fearless speech and concludes they are probably not, because of the potential negative

material consequences. Whilst we might all stand for the principle of fearless speech, “its material enactment is something of a bigger challenge” (2004: 132).

A more conservative reading is offered by Barrett (2008), who believes that the familiar narrative of CMS’ unfulfilled potential of political activism or practical criticism, which we re-tell in this paper, is somewhat ignorant of the constraining effects of the power relations through which CMS is constituted. Barrett appears swayed by commentary on the positioning of CMS within business schools which sees CMS as marginal and always under threat. On this hostile landscape, the acts of naming CMS, organizing conferences and launching journals devoted to critical work are themselves political acts. Barrett (*ibid.*: 532) concludes that “tactical images of manoeuvres on inhospitable terrain” better describes the contemporary location of CMS than the straight-talking and risk-taking critic. Here, we have a reaffirmation of the boundary between the university and the people which Kant constructs, with critical scholars playing their part “by furnishing sympathetic political actors with instruments of analysis for a possible struggle” (*ibid.*: 533).

We are in agreement with Barrett that carving out a space for CMS within business schools where mainstream discourses of management and organization are hegemonic is not an easy task. We are fortunate to be located in a business school in which CMS represents more than a marginal endeavour, but accept that in many business schools, the bridgehead which critical management scholars have gained remains tenuous. However, as relative newcomers to CMS, we get the feeling that in some contexts at least, the life of the critical management scholar within the institution has become a relatively comfortable one.

Much critical management scholarship offers a penetrating critique of capitalism from within an institution, the business school, which, we are told, “extorts fees from the middle and upper classes so it can stamp their offspring with a passport into corporate sleaze” (O’Doherty and Jones, 2005: 1). For people unfamiliar with the world of business schools, this might seem an untenable position, yet to us it seems not only possible, but quite common. One explanation for this is that the critique offered by CMS is relatively tightly contained within the community of scholars. The exploiters and the exploited in our capitalist societies pay little or no attention to the writings of critical management scholars, either because they are not aware that they exist (being largely confined to academic journals which are difficult and costly to access) or do not understand them (being written in a language that they do not comprehend). As a result, the writings of critical management scholars are unlikely to give business school deans and university vice-chancellors sleepless nights because they can rest safe in the knowledge that such knowledge is highly unlikely to seep through the cracks of the ivory tower.⁴ It is, of course, unfair to lay the blame for this state of affairs solely at the feet of critical management scholars. There are strong pressures from the state, which are fed through to university administrators, to communicate with other scholars rather than the people and as Parker (2002: 129) notes, “writing unread scholarship counts,

4 In making this criticism, we do not pretend to be immune from it. In a very act of writing this paper, we are spending time to communicate with primarily an academic audience – time which could otherwise be spent with engaging with corporate elites, policymakers, activists etc.

organizing activism does not”.⁵ As new outlets for CMS research emerge and as CMS research finds its way increasingly into ‘mainstream’ journals, critical scholars become greater assets to the schools which employ them. It is almost as if the content of their critique becomes irrelevant.

Those solely concerned with CMS achieving academic credibility within universities might not see the low level of public engagement as a problem. As we have shown earlier, influential figures within CMS do see it as a problem. The common response is that CMS, as a collective, must do more to reach out to the people.⁶ We feel however, that these increasing calls for a politically-engaged CMS might be well-intentioned but misdirected. Rather than looking to the ‘community’ to co-ordinate the action, we have argued that it might be better if we look more at ourselves, considering our own sense of responsibility and duty and figuring out where and how we can intervene to make a difference.

The critical management scholar as parrhesiastes might be idealistic, but idealism is about ideas and about setting challenging goals, neither of which we consider to be negatives. We concur with Jack (2004) that there is still value in using parrhesia as a principle that might guide action, however pragmatic and limited it might be. Of course, there are many reasons for shying away from fearless speech. There would seem to be few institutional rewards on offer and sharing our critiques with those outside the university carries risks. When we attempt to communicate our ideas for consumption by the public, there is a risk that we appear simplistic or sensational, causing colleagues to accuse us of undermining our discipline. In a university environment where autocratic management styles are replacing more collegial approaches and where universities are becoming increasingly sensitive about how they are perceived by stakeholders, there is also the risk that we get offside with our employers.

Conclusion: A Problem of Critical Management Studies

Kant answers the question of ‘What is enlightenment?’ using the motto ‘*Sapere Aude*’ or ‘Dare to know!’ In this paper we have dared to question Kant’s articulation of critique. We have interrogated Kant’s distinction between the public and the people in *Conflict of the Faculties*, being sympathetic to this isolationism given the threats of the censors and his desire to create a space for the expression of freedom yet raising concern at some of its consequences for the present. For an exemplar of fearless speech, we need look no further than Kant himself. There are similarities between Kant’s letter to his King and parrhesia as enacted in not only speaking the truth, but asking to be allowed to speak the truth.

5 One of us must admit to feelings of disappointment that *ephemera* does not appear on the list of Australian Research Council rankings of journals, which has been adopted by our university as a mechanism for measuring research performance and which led to the realization that this publication would not ‘count’ as evidence that we are fulfilling our responsibilities for furthering knowledge.

6 This was an agenda item at the 2008 business meeting for the CMS Interest Group at the Academy of Management. Out of 900 members, only approximated 50 were at the meeting.

Trying to place the Kynics on Kant's schema of the university and the process of critique and progress is difficult. Diogenes seems to have forsaken all of the benefits of a private life, living as he did in a barrel, for a perpetual position in the public. But his method of discoursing with the public was not the learned books, but a biting rhetoric. For Kant there was the reading public who were interested in these esoteric arguments, and the people who would find these discussions boring or unsettling. The faculties and public forums were tools for ensuring that individuals lived in a system in which they would be happy to obey, or simply did not have to think about whether obedience was good. In Kant's schema it seems that the Kynics eschewed the private and the public in favour of direct dialogue with the people. To Kant the Kynics seem to be inviting anarchy and rebellion against the government.

In this paper, we have used Foucault's analysis of parrhesia and its expression by the Kynics as a mirror to cast a reflective light on CMS. Although Foucault does not advocate parrhesia as an intellectual practice, it might usefully contribute to rethinking the challenges facing CMS, by encouraging us to view critique more as a personal ethic than as something located within institutions such as CMS or the modern university. If we are to take the concerns about the future of CMS at face value, then there seems a genuine desire to invigorate critique. The development of CMS has been largely driven, until now, by a desire to be regarded as a legitimate perspective on organization studies, within business schools which have themselves been preoccupied with a quest for academic legitimacy within universities. With that institutional location now relatively strong, at least in the UK, Europe and Australasia, there is now a desire to connect better with those outside the university and this is assumed to be the next stage in CMS' development. This argument has intuitive appeal, but we are not convinced. We started out with the idea that CMS *has* a problem – its lack of engagement in the politics of the workplace. While we share that concern, our conclusion is that CMS, as an institution within the business school, *is* a problem. With every effort that goes into strengthening the position of CMS within university business schools, CMS becomes more professionalized and increasingly isolated from life outside the institution.

The juxtaposition of parrhesia with critical management scholars shows the limits of institutionalized critique. Freedom of speech, as represented by 'academic freedom' is granted by the institution of the university, subject to certain constraints. Fearless speech, on the other hand, encourages us to reflect on our engagement of critique at an intensely personal level. It is, we suggest, fundamentally about the personal rather than the institutional. It is analogous to walking the tightrope without the safety net below. Those in the modern university wanting to learn from the parrhesiastes need to consider the medium of transmission that the university provides, and, in line with Giroux (2003), find it necessary to defend these public spaces as one of the first acts that will allow free speaking to flourish. One requirement of securing public space may be to consider in more depth the particular relations to the public which may seem distasteful to some critical management scholars: perhaps public acceptance of the necessity for protection of public spaces in the university is of more importance than the strict styling of academic discourse. In short, some may need to pull their heads out of their arses, put aside their obsessions over language and start making sense as a political act. If we were more frank by writing with greater clarity, if we were more willing to speak directly to those in power and if we were willing to risk the privileges that come through our

membership of the university, we might come closer to fulfilling the emancipatory potential of CMS.

While we have been preoccupied with critique as practised within universities, we would like to finish by pointing to alternative forms of 'education' in our broader communities, and in particular to those in our home city of Wellington, that go under the name 'anarchists', but more specifically to those fighting for animal rights, environmental protection, an end to institutionalised racism, direct representation in politics and for/against an array of associated causes. We would like to point to loosely affiliated groups who are able to analyse the basis of their own common membership without blushing, who work as many hours as many employed people, but do so as unpaid volunteers, and those who aim to establish non-corporate media. Those with traction, without contracts.

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