



# Organizational Creativity, Play and Entrepreneurship: Introduction and Framing

Organization Studies  
2018, Vol. 39(2-3) 155–168  
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DOI: 10.1177/0170840617752748  
www.egosnet.org/os  


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## Introduction

With our call for this Special Issue, we wanted to summon the themes of organizational creativity, play and entrepreneurship so that people responding to the call would be inclined to combine them in various forms and ways. The call gives heed to streams of research on collective creativity (Austin & Devin, 2003; Catmull, 2008; Hessel, 2013) and process studies (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Langley, Smallman, Tsoukas, & van de Ven, 2013; Helin, Hernes, Hjorth, & Holt, 2014; Hernes, 2014), on play, aesthetics and performativity (Åkerstrøm-Andersen, 2009; Beyes & Steyaert, 2011; Gherardi & Strati, 2012; Höpfl, 2002; Hjorth, 2005; Sørensen & Spoelstra, 2012), and on the organizational conditions of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship as organization-creation (Gartner, 2012; Hjorth, 2012). Importantly, we also wanted to give space to play as an ethics in the Spinozian-Levinasian sense, i.e. as a grounding condition for us as relational-organizational bodies and subjectivities (Huizinga, 1949; Rhodes, 2009; Winnicott, 1971). We wanted to invite potential contributors to think there is a virtual fringe for thinking opened up by those three themes. What if they were thought together, what would it mean to have thought move in the freedom of a juvenile conceptual space delimited by organizational creativity, play and entrepreneurship? What would one do with such a space – ask new questions, bring in new empirical material for analysis, and/or perform in it?

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With the generous contributions from Chris Steyaert's and Anna Scalfi's keynote speeches/performances, the OS Workshop became a space for play performatively, and – we believe – a stimulus for novel discussions and questions. Hundreds of people joined us at the OS Summer Workshop on lovely Crete and some of those discussions moved into the paper-writing process, while other contributions were submitted independently to this special issue, and we are happy to be able to present a selection of those articles in this special issue. Almost a hundred submissions we received for this special issue, which not only meant a great response, a huge amount of work, but also that many difficult choices had to be made. We hasten to commend the great work that has been done by contributing authors and all the reviewers who have helped to make this special issue special. The point of organizing a process around a special issue theme or set of themes is of course that you seek to achieve a particular concentration on a limited problem domain. That also explains why we paid great attention at the international quality of the reviewing process, by contacting for each paper colleagues from universities located in different countries and therefore used to working in different languages and in contact with diverse international cultures.

However, *Organization Studies* is also a journal that has distinguished itself as one where authors are welcome to creatively extend the range of problems that have historically been associated with a particular domain (Courpasson, Arellano-Gault, Brown, & Lounsbury, 2008; Tsoukas, Garud, & Hardy, 2003). We believe this is the case with *this* special issue, which is why we confidently can say that it achieved this basic aim – to become special.

## Where Organization Studies is Moving

In the call we connected tendencies in streams of thinking in the broader 'business literature' that have talked for a while about open innovation (Chesbrough, 2006) and crowdsourcing (Chanal, 2010), apart from the more 'well-established' themes on creativity (Amabile, 1998) and entrepreneurship (Stevenson & Gumpert, 1985). Play has continued to have a guest-visitor's status in management and organization studies (as indeed in social sciences more broadly; Huizinga, 1949), but when it has more recently made an appearance it is often in connection with art and aesthetics in organizational life (Linstead & Höpfl, 2000; Strati, 2016; Strati & Guillet de Monthoux, 2002) and with studies of innovation (Styhre, 2008). However, we did not want to rehearse innovation as a theme but rather, in the spirit of *OS* as journal, inquire into the organizational conditions for invention processes that may or may not result in what users would confirm as innovation. There is something more challenging about the elusive concepts of creativity (Moeran & Christensen, 2014; Sternberg & Krauss, 2014), play (Masters, 2008) and entrepreneurship (Jones & Spicer, 2009). Bringing them together in the call, we invited students and scholars of organization to work with at least two of them in their papers. We believe the results are rich studies from which we can learn how these concepts, and the practices that they describe, share something at the same time as they are distinct and different. We return to short introductions to the papers below.

Excluding this call, there are only four (4!) previous papers published in *Organization Studies* that have 'play' in their title. Creativity appears in around 20 paper titles (again excluding calls and book reviews), which is also about the number of papers with entrepreneurship in their title. This will of course be only a very rough indication since many papers on these topics will not necessarily include them in their titles. What remains interesting, as noted above, is that play is the most infrequent one, which of course says something about play as phenomenon and concept. Huizinga (1949) shows, in his inquiry into the linguistic roots of play in various languages, that it is intimately related to free movement, dance and children, and also with risk and competition (and even battle; Huizinga, 1949, p. 41).

In process thinking, play can be described as an affirmation of chance (Deleuze, 2006), a speculative movement towards the future, and a pragmatic action-event (play lives in playing, like lightning lives in the flash) that embraces becoming (cf. Manning & Massumi, 2014) and invites the reader to engage in a multiple language experience that provides knowledge that is rich and not just representational (Gherardi & Strati, 2017; Thrift, 2007). As Steyaert and Scalfi both showed in their keynote performances, play is also producing and a product of openness and affect. Play can thus be understood as a free movement; movement that is not regulated by concepts of how to move or ideas specifying the goal of movement. Spaces for play, e.g. a white canvas, or an empty dance floor, affect us in their overspilling of potentiality. You anticipate playing in those spaces, by seeing not only what it is but, above all, what it might become. For many of us, listening to Chris Steyaert's and Anna Scalfi's open/invitational and affective presentations at the Workshop generated these images of what might become. We were lured into playing, to 'jump in', to move freely – in thinking, in sensing, in writing, in acting. We wanted to say that organizational creativity, play and entrepreneurship could potentialize a new 'white canvas', an open 'dance-floor' for us all to playfully enter.

## **The Organizational Conditions for Creativity, Play and Entrepreneurship**

The literature on the organizational conditions for creativity, entrepreneurship and play has made it evident that heterogeneity and openness are important (Austin & Devin, 2003; Amabile & Pillemer, 2012; Florida & Goodnight, 2005; Gotsi, Andriopoulos, Lewis, & Ingram, 2010; O'Donnell, 2013). For thought to move in new ways, new relationships with concepts or the formation of new relationships to new concepts need to happen (Massumi, 2002). For this to happen more often, heterogeneity and openness help, simply because new in-betweens will result from increased heterogeneity (Hjorth, 2014). In-betweens mean opportunities can be created in openings and gaps. You can deal with gaps by imposing a template, picked from practice or habit, and in this way cement over the crack, or you can relate to it affirmatively by bending open the crack, to move into the open and embrace playing. The tension between habit and playing is not uncommon in the life of organizations. It holds the seeds of the problems of politics as well as economy. There are advantages with using an established habit and its templates. It does not upset the ruling order, and it will often mean an efficient use of existing resources, but comes at the 'cost' of losing sight of play (Deleuze, 2006; Nietzsche, 1974).

However, the conditions for organizations and organizing have radically changed during the last few decades. After the quality revolution of the 1980s, what used to be a long-term strategy – namely to focus on efficiency and control, and see short periods of creativity in-between – suddenly became the short-term exception. Entrepreneurship is the new management (properly described as enterprise rather than entrepreneurship; Hjorth & Holt, 2016) and the biggest risk is to not create new value. Shorter periods of stability in-between the changes are the new normal. Consequently, researchers in organization studies have started to focus on processes as much as structures, becomings as much as beings, and the problem of the new as much as maintenance and management of what is (Chia, 1996; Deleuze, 1991; Hernes, 2014; Tsoukas & Chia, 2002).

For the purpose of this special issue, we placed focus on the implications of these tendencies – the urge to master creativity (and innovation), openness and heterogeneity as organizational conditions for collective creation – and said that this means we have to look again to creativity, play and entrepreneurship. More importantly, we have to think of them together, we have to inquire into what the relationships between play, creativity and entrepreneurship look like. How are they related? What are the organizational conditions for their emergence? What does it mean

for how we presently understand what organization, organizing, and the organizational conditions of creation processes are? If you excuse the somewhat dramatic use of metaphor, we would say that this corresponds to a dramatic climate change in the study of organization. It is as if we come from an era of the solid state and are rapidly moving into a liquid one. The metaphor – which should not be understood as a dichotomy between solid and liquid - has been used many times before by Bauman (first time 2000) to describe a Heraclitean theme of flow and processuality, disengagement and elusiveness (Bauman, 2000, p. 120). We cannot not know water as liquid, but if it was only known to us in the form we call ice, it would have been rather dramatic to see it melt, to understand how it could melt and figure out the consequences. The history of studying, analysing and theorizing organizations has predominantly known organizations as that, as stable structure, as something that remained as you left it (cf. Chia, 1996). Creativity, play and entrepreneurship would then be outside of organizations and organizing. Only when process thinking provides us with a language and concepts for describing a world becoming is organization-creation seen as immanent to organization, and creativity, play and entrepreneurship are now at the core (Hjorth, 2014; Katz & Gartner, 1988).

### Processually Relevant

When the ‘climate conditions’ have changed, making creativity, play and entrepreneurship into the primary drivers of a temperature rise, it has dramatic consequences for what we understand organization to be. It becomes increasingly awkward to see organization from its steady state side, as *organum*, as an instrument designed for an interest. Rather, it is precisely when it flows, in the light, liquid, moving state, that we have to understand what directs its becoming. There is always a differential element of force, which Nietzsche called ‘will’; and the sense and value of something is always a question of forces and hierarchy of forces (Deleuze, 2006, pp. 7–8). Structures are of course not unimportant for the question of what directs the becoming of organization. But it is when it overflows, when it breaches, when organizational life is rolling the already-more it holds into a ‘nextness’ (as Massumi, 2002, p. 271 describes process) that structures are revealed as ossified sediments of previous acts, or traces of the reproduction of institutional endurance (Weik, 2015). When process thinking is not only accepted but also absorbed, we are inclined to ask questions about how organizations are created, how the emerging organization is directed and achieves being, and also how experiments in new organizational forms are achieved (Beyes & Steyaert, 2012; Hjorth, Holt, & Steyaert, 2015). If the virtually new becomes actually new through entrepreneurial actualization, understood as organization-creation (Hjorth, 2012), how can the concepts of play and organizational creativity help us analyse and understand such processes? Those are central questions for this special issue and we will find that the various papers, in their diversity and multiplicity, provide exciting investigations of various parts of such questions in the way they are animating organizational life and organization studies.

Michel de Certeau said creativity is everywhere, tactically making use of cracks, gaps, in-betweens, fissures, wherever they are found, and swarms and throbs, forming into ‘polymorphous carnivals’ that ‘infiltrates everywhere’ (de Certeau, 1997, pp. 139–40). For a long time this has been the problem that organization tries to solve – to put a lid on this, to prevent it from moving, to impose control, a *contra-rotulus*, an ‘against what is rolling’. When movement, speed, flexibility and creativity become necessary as an ‘environmental requirement’, and the desire to play, to create organization where it is lacking (entrepreneurship) can no longer be legitimately resisted with reference to a hierarchy of the higher need for control, the carnivalesque breaks through. We cannot listen to another ‘strategy speech’ about the importance of creativity and entrepreneurship and pretend that it didn’t mean just that; creativity and entrepreneurship ... in practice. This special

issue has had the good fortune to be able to gather a number of papers that in various ways start with this reality of rapidly evolving, morphing, transforming organizations and asks – how does it happen, how are play, creativity and entrepreneurship part of it? There is an argument here for the special issue making a contribution to a heretofore understudied area in organization studies, one that is centred on the becoming organization, organizing the already more (potential), making room for the nextness of what already is (actualized), organization-creation processes that playfully open up (increase the connective capacity) to the possibility of affirming speculations on the future. Organization studies, this special issue remarks, must learn from the tactical practices of making use of openings and learn from process thinking, saying that ‘the in-between, as such, is not a middling being but rather the being *of* the middle – the being of a relation’ (Massumi, 2002, p. 70). The relation is where the event-dimension of potential emerges out of the constant mix of forces that can be affirmed or negated (Massumi, 2002), controlled or ‘prorolled’ (pro-rotulus, *for* what is rolling; Hjorth, 2012).

### **Artfully In-Between, Sense, Affect**

Whether driven by competition in a market or pressure to more efficiently handle public budgets, innovation is more generally part of any slogan of today’s organizations. This means that an interest in the organizational conditions for creativity, play and entrepreneurship has grown (Amabile, 1998; Amabile & Khaire, 2008; Florida & Goodnight, 2005; Gotsi et al., 2010; Hjorth, 2005). It seems difficult, however, to organize *for* or managerially urge forth the creative/playful/entrepreneurial. Like telling someone to take initiative, you foreclose the possibility by performative contradiction. For sure, the tight place, the rigid regulation, the deeply ingrained practices are all sources of creativity, play and entrepreneurship (Hernes, 2004; Winnicott, 1971). However, and more at the centre of everyday organizational life, it is the blandness (Julien, 2007), this grey zone of the indeterminate, the openness of the vague that is the darling condition for entrepreneurship (Katz & Gartner, 1988; Gartner, Bird, & Starr, 1992; Hjorth, 2003). The in-between (the entre-) can be understood as the condition for entre-preneurship to emerge. It is like the only interesting light is the yellow light: green is just ‘go!’, red is just ‘stop!’, but yellow is ‘what?’ An intervention, an analysis, a decision and an act are required. And perhaps more than anything else, sense needs to anticipate what something could become. Affect, the body, our sensorial capacity (to be affected and to affect) is engaged. Imagination, the playful movement of thought in the postinstrumental and preoperative (Massumi, 2002, p. 134) is the most appropriate way to respond to this vagueness. And imagination is, as Brian Massumi puts: ‘the mode of thought most precisely suited to the differentiating vagueness of the virtual.’ (2002, p. 134). This is why the call for the special issue declared that there are good reasons to assume we can learn something from art and aesthetics (cf. Drakopoulou Dodd, 2014).

This is not a new idea in organization studies (Gagliardi & Czarniawska, 2006; Guillet de Monthoux, 2004; King & Vickery, 2013; Strati, 2008). More specifically, however, Austin and Devin (2003) have pointed out that the way creation is organized as a collective process in artful making – such as in theatre ensemble rehearsal, or in string quartet rehearsal (Hessel, 2013) – points to a new conversation between organization studies and art. The capacity to keep the process open, the reliance on distributed or collective leadership, the relinquishing of any individual sovereignty over the creation (Austin & Devin, 2003), and the courage and generosity to give (Austin, Hjorth, & Hessel, 2017), the gratuitousness of action (Gagliardi, 2005), therefore, as well as the passion-mobilizing practices (Landri, 2007), all seem resonant with the conditions for organizational creativity, play and entrepreneurship to happen. In many ways, Anna Scalfi brought this into her keynote speech-performance at the Workshop (on Crete). She showed her artwork as being interested both in the conditions

for play in places already tightly configured – by spatial, cultural or administrative reasons – for something else, and in playing as a processually, open, dynamic event with transformative powers. How could a museum place become a space for playing of a game yet to be invented? How could an old city square be recreated as a space for public meetings and conversations, using a historical practice – washing – as the organizing centre? Scalfi realized that washing had moved into the private home following the invention of the washing machine, which means that placing modern washing machines on the old square (where, at the fountain, there used to be public washing) would destabilize a ruling order, bring in vagueness, show the ‘yellow light’ and, thus, invite imaginations of ‘play’. This is beautiful more than anything else. It is also deeply political and ethical, and profoundly organizational in its clever way to make organization-creation incipient. But beautiful like a fabula that cuddles up in a long enduring smile around your lips.

## What a Special Issue Can Hope For

Organization studies is still short of empirical studies that have analysed the ‘knowing-in-practice’ (Gherardi & Strati, 2012) that characterize the dynamics between entrepreneurship, play and creativity. Even more rare are studies based on the embodied and/or material, on the relational and aesthetic nature of everyday organizational life (Strati, 1999). The various forms of embodiment of organizational life (special issue, *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 29(4), 2013) resound the aesthetic and intellectual richness of studies on managing creativity (Paris, 2007), aesthetics, art and entrepreneurship (Beyes, 2009; Meisiek & Barry, 2014), or work and play (Sørensen & Spoelstra, 2012).

This special issue will not only add to this literature, but will do so in a creative, playful and entrepreneurial way. When the call said the aims of the special issue were to: (a) advance studies of creativity, play and entrepreneurship in organizations and in contexts of everyday life’s organized conditions; (b) stimulate innovative theorizing on creativity/play/entrepreneurship in a variety of organizational, spatial and cultural settings; (c) facilitate discussion and connections with creativity/play/entrepreneurship studies from diverse disciplines; and (d) develop understandings of performative scholarship and possibilities for making a difference through creative/playful/entrepreneurial participation – we actually think a lot of this, if not most or all, has been achieved.

To the extent that the special issue is performative, does what it addresses, it will ‘proroll’ organization studies – if ever so little – in the direction of a more comprehensive, capable-of-grasping-movement, joyful, creative and entrepreneurial organization studies theory and research. And, yes, if you understand organizations as social objects of knowledge (Chia, 2000), and thus language as not merely an epistemological medium of representation, but as making the world (also a world where it is assigned a representational function), this becomes a tautology: you cannot not intervene somehow in the world as you write. ‘What this extends to is the ethical notion that knowledge be regarded not as an object, but as an activity located in time – a promise of ethics in the doing rather than the done’ (Rhodes, 2009, p. 660). When we take the risk of opening up writing performatively, to the undecidable, to the ‘yellow light’ of the in-between, we realize that this freedom has its corresponding intensification of responsibility. A responsibility to writing/knowledge and the world it adds to. We thus hope this special issue will add something to your understanding of organization(s) and your way of researching organizations/the organized, organizing and organization-creation processes.

## Short Notes on Contributing Papers

There are many ways in which we could have arranged the order of articles in this double special issue. We have opted for a rather simple and straightforward one: we have followed the order

suggested in the call – creativity, play and entrepreneurship. To open it all, and to respect the full keynote quality of the piece, we start with Anna Scalfi's essay. It provided an important keynote function as it tuned the Workshop around the beautifully delivered notes on playfulness, creativity and entrepreneurship. It makes a lot of sense to also let it tune the reading of this special issue. It starts from silence, i.e. without a summarizing introduction (beyond what is already said here).

Several of the contributing articles deal with more than one of the special issue themes. This is indeed what we urged Workshop participants and submitting authors to do. This makes it difficult to cluster them in the order of creativity, play and entrepreneurship. We are happy to have this problem since it means we have been successful with our call. Suffice to note that the third part of this special issue, where the focus is mainly on entrepreneurship, includes some pieces that could also have been located in the parts where the main focus is on creativity or play. One article (Pallesen, 2018), following immediately upon Scalfi's opening, is a good example of when all three themes are enacted in the writing.

Artist and researcher Anna Scalfi opens this special issue (Scalfi, 2018), following upon this editorial introduction and framing, by reflecting on her keynote address at the Workshop where it was initially 'performed'. We write 'performed' within inverted commas as she herself, when giving the keynote address, hesitated to call it a performance, only to almost immediately revise that to instead start to play with the keynote format 'that has been assigned to me', as she said. In Scalfi's work, art and research are brought into a generative dialogue. She investigates, using art as tool, and her research methods training (sociology, PhD in management) to systematically study her own process. Her art quite precisely resonates with the themes of organizational creativity, play and entrepreneurship, wherefore she is indeed an evident keynote for this double special issue as she was for the Workshop. Playing, as an artistic practice, is Scalfi's way of making the implicit game in everyday life, hidden by tradition habit and convention, overt and thereby to draw the field-rules-players assemblage that makes everything possible again. It is as though she loosens the soil of everyday life, stomped hard by the many feet of everyday practices, and makes it fertile for the unexpected.

### *Creativity, play and entrepreneurship*

Eva Pallesen suggests that we have limited our conceptualization of discovery to what the eye can see or spot. This is certainly true for entrepreneurship research, and also for organizational creativity more broadly. The ear is indeed an opening that generously stays open, without the eye's privilege of having a lid that shuts. Pallesen suggests that an ear-body-sensitive conceptualization of entrepreneurship opens up our understanding of entrepreneurship to new practices, new domains of inquiry. It reminds us of the Nietzschean claim that thoughts that guide the world come on doves' feet – we need to listen carefully. Pallesen does so as she seeks entrepreneurship in places where we would perhaps not think we would observe it or study it – in the playful event in a public sector pre-school organization. With a musician's ear Pallesen works with rhythm, crescendo and composing as she provides a relational-processual re-conceptualization of creatively playful entrepreneurship in the public sector (Pallesen, 2018).

Rolland Munro brings something like a genre invention to us via this creatively composed analysis and discussion of how organization – in the wake of having been reconfigured around budgets, targets and metrics, now in the name of enterprise – can still be opened to passion, carnival and play. Are there still spaces for play in organization that survives the ecological press of money-orientation associated with entrepreneurship, Munro asks. Paradigmatic cases of innovation, central in the history of shaping the present-day enterprising organization – Edison's supply of electricity, Sloan's use of ROI to grant autonomy, and JIT's turn towards the flexible factory

– are analysed and discussed by engaging concepts provided from process philosophical thinkers. Munro shows how reverse thinking gives us ways to challenge managerial power over organizational places so as to open spaces for play in spite of the ecological press that a money-oriented control means. In a refreshingly surprising way, this article (Munro, 2018) shows how expecting the surprise of the unpredictable unleashing of the virtually new is itself a well-grounded (in time and space) and playful way of resisting the institutionalized ecological press of money.

### *Creativity and...*

Neil Thompson's 'Imagination and creativity in organisations' (Thompson, 2018) emphasizes the importance of imagination for creativity, and does so very imaginatively by linking organizational creativity studies with work in aesthetics and the philosophy of imagination. Drawing on English Romantic literature, Thompson shows that despite their celebration of the individual genius, the Romantics had a clear understanding of the shared and collective underlining of imagination and creativity. The paper is bold in making this connection – a connection much needed and much overdue if we want to capture entrepreneurial life in its flows and vagaries. Literature, and reflections produced by writers, are two millennia ahead in their understanding of social life, and it is often nothing but methodological arrogance that prevents us from benefitting from their insights. Thompson's paper is an example of how the twain can meet within the prescriptions of academic (journal) discourse. It is this collaboration that enables him to tackle the ubiquitous, yet notoriously difficult to explicate, concept of imagination.

Is creativity, like beauty, as much in the eye of the beholder, as in its own performance? Koch, Wenzel, Senf and Maibier (2018) argue that creativity is indeed a social construction, a consensual attribution. The dual process of performing creativity, and of being recognized as so doing, is thus an ongoing negotiation between the performer and their audiences (both internal and external). Such creative 'entre-relating' succeeds when audiences perceive an organization, its processes, players and products, to fully enact four practices (Jackson & Messick, 1965). They must be seen to *surprise*, through the genesis of the unusual, the novel, the unexpected. The appropriateness of their creative manifestations should also engender audience *satisfaction*. They must create, too, a transformation of contextual established wisdom, so as to provoke a *stimulation* response from audiences. Fourth, by eliciting recognition that the essence of their creativity has become a celebrated and much needed exemplar to the wider context, players need to evoke audience attributions of *savouring*. Considerable time and multiple manifestations of evolving creativity may be required for organizational performers to adapt themselves to the demands of their audiences in these four regards, and thereby be seen as creative. In their revelatory case study of Berlin's Rutz haute cuisine restaurant, and its trajectory towards such attributions of creativity, Koch et al. playfully illustrate the aesthetics at the heart of creation. They remind us that a part of winning recognition and legitimation as being creative demands acting as if one has already done so. This is in itself an act of entre-relating, of playful creativity. They highlight the relational nature of creativity, and importantly demonstrate the ongoing – even tortuous – route that negotiating such attributions of being creative can demand.

The underground has long provided a play-space, a *Spielraum*, for the avant-garde, whether in art, in music, or in organizational innovation. The clandestine glamour of creating below the radar (even if often quasi-licensed with a wink and a nod) engenders the camaraderie of secrecy, demands trust and builds strong bonds. Communities of occult creativity operate within a self-selected play-space, that is bracketed off from the norms, rules, policies and politics of the wider context. There is evidence that all these inter-relational and interrelated phenomena of the underground also act to stimulate higher levels of creativity. What is less clear, yet, is how this happens. Courpasson and



Younes (2018) take on the task of laying bare the social mechanisms by which secrecy facilitates creativity, through analysis of a detailed case study from the world of pharmaceuticals, which began when several scientists refused to accept a management decision to abandon a promising project. Courpasson and Younes discover a parallel universe where this band of renegades come together to work in secret, reallocating resources, building deep team cohesion and establishing their playrooms in hidden places, both inside and outwith the organization. Simultaneously, however, in the 'real world' of the wider organization, there are meetings to attend, managers to pacify, credible fictions to maintain, and a path to be laid to the eventual revelation of the secretly developed new product. The excitement of such exceptional circumstances, and the growing vulnerability of sharing secrets, accompanies a disruption of workplace time and space norms. Social interaction, physical co-location and emotional attachment stand at the thrilling heart of such underground processes. Even the decision to pursue this covert innovation emerged through several late-night, off-site discussions, in a social and processual fashion, rather than through individualized leadership. Commitment, cohesion, creativity and competency were all enhanced through these clandestine interactions, which nevertheless remained focused on achieving benefit for the very organization from which the band of outlaws was hiding, in their parallel universe.

### *Play and...*

In their article, 'Playing to dissent: The aesthetics and politics of playful office design', Anna Alexandersson and Viktorija Kalonaityte (2018) address the issue of the increasing aestheticization of working life in organization and explore the sense of play in relation to work. Their focus goes on the playful office design, that is, the office décor where work is integrated with play, and that can promote aesthetic sensibilities at work, envision organizational creativity, make work practices imaginative, and enhance entrepreneurial attitudes and skills. This office interior design shows the importance of art in entrepreneurship and reveals the increased attention on the aesthetic quality that the space dimension of organizational life receives from managers, architects, design magazines and blogs, and corporations. But, what are the characteristics of this aesthetic quality? What is the visual, imaginative and cognitive sense of play – and of art playfulness – in its relation to working life? Alexandersson and Kalonaityte conducted an empirical study based on an accurate and methodologically complex analysis of photographs of playful office design posted online. An important result, among several others, of their research is that, in the playful office décor, play operates by evoking non-working topics, that is, that the artistic and the aesthetic qualities do not constitute an intrinsic side of working life.

'Feeling the reel of the real: Framing the play of critically affective organizational research between art and the everyday' (Linstead, 2018) is the article through which Stephen Linstead raises the issue of art-based research methods in organization studies and proposes a new challenge to organizational research. This challenge highlights the relevance of the creation of texts in doing research, and focusing on the topics of the playful, of the artistic and of the performative in order to stimulate new awareness, sensitivity and learning in their readership. Linstead proposes a frame that provides organization students and scholars with a number of landmarks that can set a playful in-between, one that relate artistic humanities and organization studies. This frame is meant to facilitate the production of 'critically affective performative texts' that are inspired and formed by play and mystery, and it is articulated in four intertwined moments which stress the movement towards a non-representational and non-orthodox research in organizational life. These moments are constituted by the aesthetic – aesthetics of direct or relived experience, of representation, of relationality, of affectivity, the poetic – when the playful highlights the tension of knowing/not-knowing, the ethical – the inescapable sentiment of responsibility for the

other, and the political – that is, when the playful is power play and brings together the making, the creation, in a word, the *poiēsis*, and humanity.

### *Entrepreneurship and...*

Sara Elias, Todd Chiles, Carrie Duncan and Denise Vultee (2018) write the article ‘The aesthetics of entrepreneurship: How arts entrepreneurs and their customers co-create aesthetic value’, where they emphasize the importance of the customer to the point that entrepreneurship in art settings comprehends the client’s engagement in the organizational creation of a value that, rather than being merely economic, has an aesthetic quality. They consider the aesthetic value to be intersubjective – that is neither subjective, nor objective – and conceptualize the organizational creation in terms of a process where relationality and materiality interweave, where the experiences are embodied, and where the artwork is still in progress and has not reached the status of final artefact. The findings emerged from their micro-ethnographies showed that customers co-create with entrepreneurs by engaging themselves in the spaces that are in-between along the processes to imagine the work of art, to contemplate and reflect on it, and to persuade and build consensus regarding its evolving status. Aesthetic entrepreneurship results are characterized by co-creations grounded in imaginative sensing and empathic understanding, in embodied conversations and tacit understanding, and in interplays that generate and support sense and significance of the aesthetic value. A novel understanding of the creation of aesthetic value can be generated by situating the customer within – rather than external to – the process of organizational creation and entrepreneurship.

The concept of liminality lends itself to studies of such an in-between phenomenon as entrepreneurship. In their article, Lucia Garcia-Lorenzo, Paul Donnelly, Lucia Sell-Trujillo and Miguel Imas (2018) put it to a novel use by engaging it in the study of entrepreneuring as a creative everyday practice of individuals (in Ireland, Spain and the UK) living in conditions where they need to imagine and experiment with how life could be lived differently. Understanding nascent entrepreneurship processually, Garcia-Lorenzo et al. show how the study of everyday entrepreneurship in conditions of crisis makes attention to liminality necessary. Individuals in this situation, creatively insisting on finding new ways to make a living as liminal entrepreneurs, had to renew themselves as well as the contexts and institutional conditions for their entrepreneurial creativity. The authors bring us a fascinating narrative on the basis of an analysis of fieldwork in three national contexts after the global financial crisis, from which we learn to understand the process of entrepreneuring in new (and empirically substantiated) ways through the use of the concept of liminality.

Entrepreneurship has only too often been lauded as the (market-driven) panacea for all the world’s wicked problems (Sørensen, 2008). Soteriologies of enterprise castigate the marginalized for failing to seize control of their own destiny through start-up, while envisioning futures where epic entrepreneurs innovate creative solutions to complex socio-economic threats. Johnsen, Olaison and Sørensen (2018) demonstrate that dominant articulations of environmental sustainability have tended to be bedevilled by ‘an inherent heroism, a dogmatic optimism and a neoliberal ideology’. To combat this, Johnsen et al. build upon Spinosa, Flores and Dreyfus’s (1997) theorization of style, understood here as modes of social comportment and cognition. Organizations tend to stabilize style, making it durable through isomorphism of social practice (and meaning) among producers and consumer alike. Play is the practice through which such disturbing incongruities become perceived, as organizations put their style at risk. Entrepreneurship acts to question, challenge and disrupt style, most particularly where constellations of practice have become dissonant, faltering and riven with anomalies. Novel co-enacted practices and meanings of style can only become persistent and enduring if the collective assemblage adopt and enact them. All are required, if the need for style change is to be recognized (in play), for disruptions to emerge and be ‘tested’

(through entrepreneurship), and then for successful disruptions to become an enacted network of practices (through collective assemblage), made durable (via organization). Using an illustrative example of sustainable entrepreneurship – Fairphone – the authors show that sustainable entrepreneurship is in itself a style, the anomalies of which demand playful exposure and entrepreneurial disruption: ‘Sustainable entrepreneurship consists of disrupting current understandings of sustainability, thereby creating new environmentally friendly and socially conscious styles’ (Johnsen et al., 2018).

## Moving On

Given what we hoped to achieve with this double special issue, launching it as a Summer Workshop in 2015, our final words here are also of the more performative – ‘dear reader, take the plunge!’ We think this is an exciting number of studies that will move you. Not all will move all of you, but multiplicity and variation are important elements in every manifestation of the creative, playful and entrepreneurial. We have perhaps come to a place where we no longer see creativity, play and entrepreneurship as marginal or exceptional topics in organization studies. This would mean we have made organization studies more ‘realistic’ in the sense that it has acquired greater capacity to ‘converse’ everyday organizational life, in which the creative, playful and entrepreneurial rapidly have become the new normal. Have we also come to a place where writing organization studies has itself become a more creative, playful and entrepreneurial act? We venture to suggest that there are evidences of this in this special issue. If so, we would say we have moved organization studies, if ever so slightly, which is perhaps more than we could have hoped for. See for yourself, move on to reading!

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