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At a time when organizational scholarship has become 'boxed-in' (Alvesson and Sandberg, 2014) by narrow over-specialization, conformity and risk-aversion this book is a 'box-breaker'. This is not an accident but the conscious attempt by the authors to defy classification – '[t]his is an interdisciplinary book, in the sense that it lies between categories that are normally assumed to be discrete, comprehensible and solid. We want to show that they are actually rather dubious, puny boundaries that we have made, not things that are there in the world' (p. 2).

The work is a scholarly debut for Valerie Hamilton, previously a teacher, English literature lecturer, and HR consultant. The text is based on her PhD thesis (Hamilton, 2013) which was supervised by critical organizational theorist and second author of the book, Martin Parker. Since *Against Management* (2002), Parker has been productively building up an 'alternative' catalogue of anti-managerialist polemic, including *Utopia and Organization* (2003), *The Dictionary of Alternatives* (2007), *Alternative Business: Outlaws, Crime and Culture* (2011), and most recently the *Routledge Companion to Reinventing Management Education* (2016). This book flows out, or is perhaps 'thrown out', from the vitality of this unruly scholarly project.

The two hundred pages of text are organized into six chapters. Chapter one – 'Novels, and Banks, and Disciplines' – is the closest we are given to a thesis-framing chapter. Setting the scene in the 'age of projects' at the turn of the eighteenth century we are introduced to the central protagonist, Daniel Defoe (1660-1731) – inventor, businessman, writer, politician, and secret agent. The narrative is based on his pioneering life and publishing career, both as one of the first English authors to write about business and economics (the non-fiction work *The Complete English Tradesman* (1726) being described as the first management textbook) and, more importantly, being identified as the founder of the novel with *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Moll Flanders* (1722) becoming the classic examples of the genre. *Moll Flanders* is chosen as the more formative and suggestive of Defoe's work, and is used throughout the book as a comparative case study.

We should note here that Defoe is barely acknowledged in the management and organization literature. A search suggests there is only a single reference to his work in the archive of *Organization Studies*, so it is worthwhile introducing him as an organizational scholar with much to offer. A supporting role in the book is given to William Paterson (1658-1719), the founder of the Bank of England and a contemporary of Defoe. We are informed that the project to create the Bank can be considered similar, both in its speculative 'projecting' emergence and in its form, to writing a novel. The thesis which emerges here is that there are no necessary boundaries between the institutional structures of the organization (or corporation) and the novel; or in its most stark

formulation, between fact and fiction; 'corporation can be approached as a genre of organizing in a similar vein to the novel' (p. 15). This has been argued elsewhere by Czarniawska (1998), who suggests there are no fundamental structural differences between fictional and factual narratives. We could therefore tentatively situate the book amongst interdisciplinary scholarship on storytelling in organizations (Gabriel, 2000), the literary turn in organization theory (De Cock and Land, 2006) and historical perspectives on business and organizational culture (Rowlinson and Procter, 1999).

Chapters two to four – 'The Space of Composition', 'Revolutions', and 'Invisible Hands' – examine different perspectives showing how *Moll Flanders* and the Bank of England reflect and create the projecting age through transformations in the public imagination. By drawing richly on literary theory and literary criticism these chapters weave together many themes – cultural, economic and political – which institutionalize the corporation and the novel. An important development is the urbanisation of late seventeenth century England which transforms and enlarges democratic and market structures. Defoe captures the tenor of urban modernisation with his rejection of traditional elitist scholars, who sought to ridicule his writing:

I think our meer scholars are a kind of mechanicks in the schools, for they deal in words and syllables as haberdashers deal in small ware. They trade in measure, quantities, dactyls, and spondaes, as instrument-makers do in quadrants, rules, squares, and compasses; etymologies, and derivations, prepositions and terminations, points, commas, colons and semi-colons, etc. are the product of their brain, just as gods and devils are made in Italy by every carver and painters; and they fix them in their proper stations in perspectives, just as they do in nitches and glass windows (p. 89)

Taking risks and enjoying the unplanned journey, characteristics of both Defoe and Paterson, are recurrent themes running throughout the plot. The corporation and the novel represent possibilities of urban life driven by the risky adventures of individuals operating outside of the power of state and church. A section about the production process of early novels describes Defoe as a feverish labourer, hacking through his prose in an attempt to get the word count up, which was paid at something like a piece rate. This reminds us that commercial concerns of productivity have overridden aesthetics and other values since the earliest days of capitalism. Chapter five – 'The Projectors' – offers more of a biographical account of the lives of Defoe and Paterson, who became intertwined through social encounters and their wider influence as projectors.

So far I have depicted the book in fairly conventional terms, summarising its organising structure and themes. On a first reading, the book can be seen as a boundary-spanning jaunt across a range of literary topics. However, this reading is inadequate. On sitting down to write this review I struggled with the book as a coherent whole, and I felt increasingly uneasy about its positioning as organizational scholarship. This is not a surprise given its 'interdisciplinary' character, and therefore ambiguous boundaries, but I sensed a deeper struggle and a haunting subtext. After reflecting about this from the perspective of an *Organization Studies* audience I was particularly underwhelmed by the coverage of organization theory.

One of the aims of the book is the search for the origins of the 'modern English organization' to mirror the search for the origins of the 'early English novel'; 'it is difficult to say when the first organization was formed' (p. 15). This endeavour struck me as naive, and more worryingly, lacking immersion in the literature on either economic/business history or organization theory. A series of

potential synonyms for 'organization' are identified – corporation, company, institution and so on – but these are moved over within a few pages. We are led to the Weberian bureaucracy as a default image of organization in contemporary culture. This seems to be suggesting that a search for the origins of 'bureaucracy' would be a more fruitful task, and this is plausible, but it is not pursued any further. For example, the technical side of bureaucracy is almost completely ignored. This section is subtitled arbitrarily 'The corporation' (p. 13-24), and given the uneven coverage here, I felt there was a lack of detailed acquaintance with the literature and/or a lack of scholarly appetite to find out more. This was in contrast to the more skilful commentary on literary theory.

Some organizational scholars may be dismayed to find a 'challenge' to the 'matter-of-fact solidity' of organizations apparently assumed in organization theory, like D.H Robertson's delicious metaphor of 'lumps of butter coagulating in a pail of buttermilk' to depict bureaucracies (p. 16). I like this analogy but I do not know many organizational scholars who limit their understanding of organizational forms to fixed or reified objects; most accept dimensions of process, flux and change – temporal as well as spatial dimensions – and multiple modes of reality, encompassing discursive consciousness, socially constructed language and text, social and culture structures, and physical and technological artefacts. Perhaps this straw man is necessary to create tension between fact and fiction, but the claim for novelty of the 'projecting' image of organizational becoming is overdone. The use of the Bank of England as a case study to represent modern organizational forms is also dangerous given the immaterial nature of money in contrast to the production process of most corporate products and services.

If I became increasingly uneasy about the contribution to organization theory and historical analysis it is in the final section that a subtext emerged. The concluding chapter – 'The Projected and Projecting Reader' – makes an attempt to bring together the parts of the journey and offer an outcome of the enquiry, for those that demand a bottom line. We are reminded of the message that 'organizations are projections' (p. 158) and moreover that social reality is constituted through acts of imagination, pretending and believing. However, the conclusion then shifts into a more critical, perhaps polemical, stance about the power entailed in academic disciplines and scholarship:

This book is bad literary theory, bad organization theory, and probably bad history too, because it crosses too many academic boundaries. It might also be bad for the publisher and the bookseller, if they can't find a way to classify it as one thing or another, and hence sell it into a market that will recognise it. Writing always imagines an audience, whether investor, subscriber, purchaser or critic. The same is true within universities, despite much bluster about interdisciplinary (p. 164)

I'm not sure if I am part of the 'imagined' audience or market for this book. In all honesty I came to know of it because a jungle-themed online book retailer recommended it to me, assuming I would enjoy it (and would also buy it). My recent purchase of several copies of *A Plan of the English Commerce* (1728) by Daniel Defoe, a little-known work of pre-Smithian political economy, no doubt fed the recommendation algorithm, amongst other purchases. But putting aside the publisher's concern for market demand, the question of judging the quality of the book against the standards of academic disciplines is serious, complex and hazardous. How can anything which purports to be 'interdisciplinary' ever be fairly judged according to the standards and rules of isolated disciplines? We are given a quote from Cooper (1989) about the disciplining process of academic writing:

The key issue here is the status of writing (including representing) and how it is dealt with in the academic system. The function of the academic division of labour and its representational discourse is to police the effects of writing – undecidability, metaphorization – by maintaining the distinctions between disciplines and the order within them. It is this moral economy of good behaviour that is taught and reproduced in research rather than the quest for enlightenment and truth with which the university is traditionally associated (p. 495)

This closing passage made sense when I turned to the text of Hamilton's (2013) PhD thesis, on which this book is closely based. The thesis has a similar structure to the book, although in addition to the main theoretical body, the text is interwoven with diary entries reflecting on the doctoral process. These form something like field notes of university research cultures and autoethnographic vignettes. It transpired that Hamilton started the process of writing the thesis within an English literature department but then passed through various universities and disciplines until she ended up in a business school. This explains the depth of coverage in literary theory and the relative shallowness in organization theory – one note acknowledges the supervisory advice from Parker to focus on the 'corporation' rather than the more general 'organization'. It also explains the inconsistency in style between playful storytelling and plodding literature review. Hamilton (2013) reflects:

This thesis was originally positioned as interdisciplinary, situated between the disciplines of English Literature and Organization Studies, drawing on both. This has proved to be impractical and naive. To begin a Ph.D. it is necessary to register in one discipline, to end the Ph.D. it is necessary to be examined according to the dictats of one discipline. I have repeatedly been advised to stick to one discipline or risk failing. (p. 22)

My first supervisor [...] made it clear to me that I risked failing if I pursued this thesis in the English Department because I would be expected to write and present in literary terminology and a literary register, an expectation I was resisting. (p. 86)

For me the subtext of the book is not then about the dark arts of 'projecting', the distinction between 'fact and fiction', and whether Defoe is mysteriously moving the pen, but about the institutionalization (or professionalization) of academic knowledge through the doctoral production line. 'Box-breaking' begins in the education credentialing process, not in the positioning of publications. This is why it is subtly suggested on page two without any explanation that the book is also about the boundaries between literature departments and business schools. It is uncharitable, but probably accurate, to describe the book as a "tarted up" PhD thesis (in honour of Moll Flanders the prostitute); but that is all it could ever hope to be given the boxes it has broken through along the way. Stylistically the book often feels constrained and frustrated, between the lively and nonchalant introduction, and the more gravely considerate tones of many other sections. I would argue that a stylistic tension between gravitas and play is more central to the work than between fact and fiction. Should organizational theorists ever be frivolous and entertaining? Or as De Cock and Land (2005) warn, does this inevitably lead to the danger of a 'non-serious reading of the text, which thus may be safely ignored'; and thus 'persistently raises issues of credibility' (p. 5).

In the *Routledge Companion to Reinventing Management Education*, a guide to the recent international movement to incorporate humanities and social science into business schools, Parker (2016) revisits the question of boundaries and distinctions, this time from the perspective of

business education. He argues that the central organizing principle of a university is not about core ideas or questions, but as a 'machine for generating division and distinctions'. He then reaches a fatalistic conclusion:

After a consideration of the relationship between the practical and the liberal justifications for education, I conclude by rejecting (with a certain sadness) the idea that the humanities can either civilize or radicalize the business school. I think the problem is the classification that produces the business school, and it is that which needs to be dissolved in order that any interdisciplinary project can flourish.

Parker brings Defoe into this discussion and repeats the quote mentioned earlier about 'meer scholars' to describe the 'labour of division' in academic departments and the pedantic nature of academic disciplines. But Parker seems to undermine his own argument, by at once arguing the business school has now been institutionalized, 'it solidifies and becomes a distinctive place concerned with its own continuation', but also that 'there is often enough disagreement concerning what should go in which box, or what counts as learning within a particular discipline.' Like the discussion of the 'matter-of-fact solidity' of organizations Parker here is overstating the disciplinary rigidity of business schools as knowledge boxes.

The final and central message of the Hamilton and Parker's book becomes clear. 'Box-breaking' is possible and it is essential; boundaries are dubious and puny, and they should always be challenged. The value of bringing diverse literature into organization theory lies in its capacity to provoke and encourage critical reflection, not in offering rigid frameworks or methodological procedures (Czarniawska, 1999). This interdisciplinary 'box-breaking' book demands much of the author and reader. Although the book is relatively short it motivated me to read further in all directions – fiction, non-fiction; cultural history, economic history; literary theory, organization theory. If I need to summarise the 'projection' of this book I would describe it as a form of textual *détournement* – a form of 'rerouting or hijacking' making an important political point about academic knowledge. Here the rerouting is a move to re-construct the potentialities of organization theory, academic disciplines, and the PhD process. It is a book which elevates the rebels and derides the pedants working in higher education. I found discovering Hamilton's scholarly journey behind the writing of the book to be as rewarding as the historical storytelling itself. If you are concerned about the future of organization studies, business schools, and universities more generally, I recommend you read this book and reflect on its subtext. My response to 'disciplinary' fatalism is that we might follow D.H Robertson in thinking of our universities as 'lumps of butter coagulating in a pail of buttermilk', but give butter a little heat and it will start to melt.

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