Tamara: Invitation to the Academic Conversation

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Writing Differently – a return to meaning

Monika Kostera and Anna M. Górska

Tamara is a journal committed to the *writing differently* epistemology. It is an approach to researching, writing, as well as to academic communityship, prioritizing quality over quantity and knowledge understood as a common good over science regarded as production (Pullen, 2018; Rhodes, 2019; Boncori, 2023; Kociatkiewicz, & Kostera, 2024; Bristow, Robinson, & Ratle, 2025). Following Sarah Gilmore, Nancy Harding, Jenny Helin, and Alison Pullen (2019, p. 3), the journal is committed to academic writing and knowing "concerned with

broadening, widening and deepening knowledge and understanding by giving our ideas space in which they can flourish, create new meanings, help us learn and become human." We wish to counteract the currently dominant trend favouring linearity of writing and understanding, which not only diminishes the communication process, but also distorts knowledge by ignoring its social underpinnings (Kociatkiewicz, & Kostera, 2024).

We are also committed to *doing academia differently* (Bristow, Robinson, & Ratle, 2025), purposefully intending to challenge the ruling neoliberal ruling relations concerned with competition of the market of "world class" universities (Lund, & Tienari, 2019). The current pressure to publish in the "right journals" detracts from genuine engagement with the pursuit of knowledge and distracts academics from serving society. Yet academics engage in writing books and texts "that do not count" demonstrating "unconditional love" for the sense and meaning of their work (p. 110).

Resonating with Heather Höpfl's (2000) call, we recognize and embrace the social, the organizational, and the political as our personal engagement in social sciences. The return to meaning in academic writing and thinking (Alvesson, Gabriel, & Paulsen, 2017) is vital for academics as well as for societies whom we serve. *Tamara* is a collective engagement in this movement toward a return to mission and meaning, presenting a real and existing alternative which we: editors, the editorial board, reviewers, authors, and readers, share the responsibility for.

What follows is a collaborative editorial composed of reflections from members of *Tamara's* community, offered as an invitation to academic conversation. These reflections differ in tone, emphasis, and style of writing: some begin from anecdote, some from theory, some from editorial practice, some from moral or political concern. We have kept the contributors' texts in their original form so that each piece can retain its own voice and vision. The short editorial notes in italics are to connect these reflections. We have kept those differences visible because a journal committed to plurality should not present itself in a single flattened voice.

Why we need alternatives

Alternatives are important not only from the point of view of academia, but they are vital for the larger systems not to lose their complexity and to regenerate. The process of disintegration and erosion, as well as loss of energy is known as entropy. According to Bernard Stiegler (2013), under neoliberalism the entropy processes in social systems have

been intensifying, having regressive effects and excluding reflectivity and long term vision. Fragmentation brings about further disconnection, which is remedied by further centralization and fragmentation resulting from algorithmic management, aimed at replacing strategic vision with metrics. This brings about a loss of learning capability. Academia, whose role is to provide learning and knowledge to the social system, also befalls to intensified entropic processes under neoliberalism. The inability to learn caused bad decision making habits: many important policies are generated without taking into account the consequences. Alternatives can remedy the inevitability of this through the cultivation of negentropic capabilities of complex systems.

Negentropy refers to the regeneration process that allows living systems to preserve its complexity and remain alive (Schrödinger, 2012/1944). Living organisms hold an energetic potential that is able to resist the entropic drift. Negentropy is the dynamic capacity of living systems that enables open systems to resist their loss of energy and increasing entropy (Morin, 1977).

The currently dominating superficial and highly formalised mode of doing social science results in simplified and formulaic output (Alvesson, Gabriel, & Paulsen, 2017). Providing alternatives to this may help to support negentropy in the system of knowledge and in the larger social systems. One place where this narrowing becomes especially visible is in the ordinary ritual of academic publishing: the requirement to cite correctly, position oneself properly, and enter a conversation on terms already set. Martin Parker begins precisely there, with the apparently modest question of what it means to join a conversation, and who gets to start one.

On starting conversations

Martin Parker

It is common, in the responses of journal editors and reviewers, to be told that you haven't paid enough attention to the literature on the area, often by the people who want to be cited, or in the journal that you have submitted to. Sometimes this is called 'joining the conversation,' which makes it sound like an elementary matter of politeness. After all, only a rude person blunders up to people at a party and loudly declaims what they want to say, silencing whatever was going on before. Instead, you listen carefully, and sidle in when you can find a space. That is the art of conversation.

Some time ago, the legendary interactionist sociologist Howard Becker told me that he had been chatting to the then editor of the *American Journal of Sociology* about the work of Erving Goffman. Howie (as he liked to be called) knew Goffman well, and the editor suggested that he write something about him for *AJS* but that, given the status of the journal, it would have to go through a review process. Howie joked that it would probably be rejected, but decided to give it a go anyway. He duly wrote the piece about his friend, and it was rejected by the reviewers on the grounds that it hadn't referenced any of Howard Becker's work. I can't find any record of a piece like that being published in *AJS*, but the date that he told me this story suggests that it was later published as a chapter in his 2007 book *Telling About Society* instead.

A few months ago, I had a piece back from an organization studies journal in which one of the reviewers complained that I had been unduly dismissive of Martin Parker's work, as well as suggesting that I cite a lot of the reviewers' work. The other reviewer suggested that I cite a lot of their work too, on the grounds that I hadn't 'reviewed the literature.' These were good reviews, written by attentive academics, trying to ensure that I joined the conversation, and that I showed that I was doing so by means of extensive referencing, building on what has gone before. Not citing is inattentive and disrespectful, possibly arrogant, as if the author were the first person to ever think that thought, write those words.

Perhaps. But the demand for citations has also become a condition of the data scraping by global companies that produces journal impact factors, the personal h-index and the market competition of university rankings. It tangles ideas into knowledge capitalism by pushing against the new, demanding that everything is chained to that which has come before. It is, in that sense, conservative, a gravitational pull towards what has already been said. My and Howie's little stories (and I'm sure you can think of some of your own) are symptoms of a system in which editors and reviewers add ballast to ideas to prevent them from floating away.

So what if you want to start a conversation, and not just join an existing one? Can we imagine a journal that doesn't assume that authors are chained to the citation machine, and in which the beginning of conversations is encouraged? An article with no references, for example.

If Parker asks whether a journal might make room for starting conversations rather than merely policing entry into existing ones, Tamara*'s own founding image offers one answer. Its imagination of scholarship begins not from a single speaker addressing a passive audience,*

but from a moving, plurivocal scene in which meaning depends on choice, route, sequence and attention. Annette Risberg stays with that problem, but approaches it from another angle: what publishing has done to reading, judgment and the very possibility of saying something worthwhile.

Reflections on academic publishing

Annette Risberg

Having worked in academia for about 30 years, serving as co-editor-in-chief and associate editor for different journals, I have thought a lot about how academic publishing has developed over this period.

Today, for most journals, having something valuable to say is not enough because one needs a contribution. But not any kind of contribution: in particular, there should be a theoretical contribution. But why? Why is empirical validity not enough, or a rich description and interpretive depth? While it is important to contribute to existing conversations, why is it not enough to come up with new radical ideas that are not grounded in extant research if one wants to have one's paper accepted in a journal? And is there not a slight contradiction underlying the demands of new theorising and still connected to existing research? Reviewers routinely ask for more engagement with existing literature and more originality in the same breath. The result is a peculiar genre of academic writing that performs radicalism while remaining thoroughly domesticated by the conversation it claims to disrupt. Is it not enough to say something intelligent about the world we live in, informed by the existing empirical and theoretical knowledge that helps us understand what people do and why?

Amidst all the pressure to publish or perish, what has happened to reading? When did you have the time to read a book from start to finish? When did you not read an article strategically, only to find the arguments you need? When did you last read an academic text, on its own terms, and just for the joy or reading? Since I'm not going to ask my colleagues how much they read, why they read and how they read, I will make a few remarks about citation behaviour, which I believe are grounded in the fact that so many of us do not have time to read, really read. Many times, I have found that a cited text does not say what the citation claims it says. How many times have I and others not been cited in a perfunctory manner? If citation behaviour indicates how people read, my impression is that they do not read carefully very often.

I would argue that this degradation of how we read stems from not giving ourselves enough time to conduct our research, and this is probably not our choice. Many universities have established quantitative standards for how many papers researchers are expected to publish at each stage of their career: 1 paper every three years in journals listed at, for example, AJG level 3 or 4 at an early career stage, 2 at an intermediate career stage, and 3 at an advanced career stage. But what do these requirements have to do with generating authentically interesting knowledge? How do they relate to the ability to dedicate time to research when the list of administrative, pedagogical and communicative duties grows longer every year? Good fieldwork, keeping up to date with developments in one's field, analysing one's material with finesse and crafting elegant academic prose all take time. Let it take time, or let it remain unwritten.

Who will have time to read all the journal articles published each week, each month, each year? The honest answer is that many of us repeat ourselves, or manufacture research problems designed not to illuminate the world but to satisfy publication requirements.

Unless you have taken the time to think about your work sufficiently to have something meaningful to contribute, you should seriously consider refraining from writing, or at least, as I am doing here, remaining brief. Drawing on the US Fifth Amendment protections, I would argue for the right of academics to remain silent from time to time.

Annette Risberg asks what has happened to reading within a publish-or-perish academy and the next reflection, Gosia Ciesielska, returns to Tamara*'s own founding image*.

Polyvocality and storytelling in *Tamara*

Gosia Ciesielska

Tamara is a journal promoting a polyvocal perspective to understand the subjective nature of the social phenomena around us. This could be visualised through the core idea of The *Tamara* play, which embeds plurivocality and multiple interpretations. The play's setup allows the audience to follow particular characters in different orders, moving through locations, conversations, and interactions, revealing new ways of looking at the events and making sense of them. Ultimately, the play cannot be fully grasped in a single visit, as both the choice of character and the sequence of room entry change how the story unfolds and is perceived (Boje, 1995).

Storytelling is central to *Tamara*'s approach and, with this polyvocal perspective, emphasizes the complexity of social interactions, giving voice to underrepresented, marginalised, or disadvantaged groups AND inviting new ways of researching, analysing, and academic writing. In organisational and social settings, not all stories are told; some are in the making, others may dominate, silencing uncomfortable interpretations. The meanings are intertextual, deferred and supplemented (Izak, 2014) and often imposed and hegemonic (Hoffmann, 2020).

There are multiple examples of marginalised stories in texts previously published in *Tamara*, from gender, irrelevant workforce, to migrant entrepreneurs. For example, Irigaray, & Vergara (2011) bring us the stories of gender discrimination in Brazilian organisations and how these are embedded in culture and emphasised by a range of intersectional characteristics such as perceptions of beauty, ethnic backgrounds, social class, and sexual orientation. Foroughi (2014) reveals the 'living stories' of long-standing charity workers whose organisational knowledge, embedded in oral traditions, was rendered irrelevant by management during restructuring and bureaucratisation processes. While papers like Nocker, & Junaid (2011) discuss a fascinating alignment between Pashtun poet Khushal and Afghan entrepreneurs' identity creation in Pakistan, showing the relevance of poetry for understanding minority lived experiences.

Tamara is therefore not simply a venue for unconventional topics. It is a journal built on the assumption that no organizational world can be understood through one story, one path, or one authorized perspective alone. If Gosia Ciesielska places polyvocality at the centre of Tamara's imagination, Carl Rhodes returns us to the journal's name itself. His reflection shows that Tamara's inheritance from theatre and storytelling is not only aesthetic or methodological. It is also political, because it unsettles the fantasy that organizations, journals, or academic fields can be narrated from one sovereign point of view.

The Political Promise of Tamara

Carl Rhodes

Tamara. The clue is in the name. It is the title of a play written by the Canadian playwright John Krizanc, first performed in 1981 in Toronto, before opening for a nine year run in Hollywood in 1984. It was there that David Boje, then a Professor at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, saw the play.

What David would have experienced was no ordinary form of theatrical spectatorship. *Tamara* is experimental in form. Rather than having a single stage, the action unfolds in multiple rooms that simultaneously host different scenes. To watch the play means that you can never see it all, instead having to move from room to room following different characters and storylines. In the end each audience member has seen the same play, but also seen a different play.

Inspired by the play, David used *Tamara* as the conceptual inspiration for his theorisation of the storytelling organization (Boje, 1995). This work, pivotally, saw a democratization of the ways that organizational could be conceived of, understood and researched. Beyond the idea that a singular narrative could define the meaning and purpose of an organizations, David uses *Tamara* to pluralise how we might conceive of what an organization is. The ontology of organization was now reimagined as comprising multiple fragmented, competing stories that are continuously told, performed, and contested.

Such is the inheritance which the journal *Tamara* has received, and the promise it continues to hold. Both the play and the means through which David brought it to bear on management and organizations, prize experimentation, multiplicity and ambiguity. They defy convention with innovative ideas and creative practice. But *Tamara* is not a celebration of doing things differently for its own sake. Difference here is not aesthetic flourish. It is method and it is politics.

Tamara's politics can be read as an invitation to contest the idea of singular or sovereign viewpoint purporting to have a God's eye view. Reality is rendered as personal and positional, with the authority of any unified account both dismantled and exposed as an exercise in power. For organizations this means upsetting the hubris of theoretical and managerial authority and attesting to the political value of that which would have otherwise been marginalised. Ultimately, *Tamara* democratises the very idea of organization, exposing power as the ongoing struggle over which stories get told, heard, and believed. Such is the weight of responsibility that the journal bears.

The success of Tamara both perplexed and embarrassed Krizanc. He once quipped that the play was "a drunken idea that should not have been pursued in the sober light of day" (in Isenberg, 1989). Such, perhaps, are precisely the kinds of reckless, experimentally risky, politically charged, and intellectually unsettling ideas that might be published in *Tamara*, the journal.

Carl Rhodes makes clear that Tamara's experimental inheritance carries a political promise: the democratization of organizational knowledge. Alison Pullen takes this promise into feminist writing, where the refusal of detached authority becomes not only a question of style, but an epistemic and ethical stance. Feminist writing matters because it challenges the very terms on which academic authority, neutrality, and legitimacy are usually established.

Feminist writing in Tamara

Alison Pullen

Tamara is a home for feminist writing and epistemic refusal. Feminist writing is rarely comfortable. It interrupts. It unsettles. It refuses the fantasy that knowledge can be produced without consequence, without bodies, without emotion, without politics. In Management and Organization Studies and Social Sciences more broadly feminist writing continues to matter because it exposes not only what we study, but how and why we study it, and who benefits from the forms of knowledge we reproduce.

Feminist writing is to refuse the dominance of detached, authoritative voices that claim neutrality while obscuring relations of power. It resists the pressure to smooth over difference, contradiction, and vulnerability in the name of clarity or contribution. Feminist writing insists that knowledge is situated, relational, and ethically charged. Writing which foregrounds lived experience not as anecdote but as a vital site of theorizing.

Such writing does not simply add feminist content to existing approaches as it challenges the epistemological foundations upon which those frameworks rest. Feminist writing asks us to attend to silences, to marginalised voices, and to the emotional and embodied labour that sustains organizational life. This is a writing which reveals how academic writing itself is implicated in practices of exclusion, privileging some ways of knowing while dismissing others as insufficiently rigorous or scholarly.

Tamara has long offered a home for feminist writing that refuses these normative expectations; committed to alternative writing forms which create space for feminist scholars to write in ways that are experimental, reflexive, and politically engaged. This is crucial in fields which are increasingly shaped by metrics, rankings, and standardized publishing formats that risk neutralising critique and draining writing of its ethical force.

Feminist writing also involves a refusal of mastery acknowledging uncertainty, doubt, and partiality, recognising that knowing is always an ongoing, unfinished process. This orientation demands care: care in how we represent others, care in how we cite and

acknowledge intellectual labour, and care in how we position ourselves in relation to what we write. Feminist writing is thus as much about responsibility as it is about resistance.

Tamara's openness to feminist refusal matters especially at a moment when visibility and legitimacy within global indexing systems are increasingly valorised. While such recognition is important, it cannot come at the cost of taming the very practices that distinguish *Tamara* as a critical and creative space. Feminist writing needs venues that protect its unruliness – spaces willing to host writing that does not conform, that does not resolve tension, that dares to remain ethically troubled.

In continuing to welcome feminist writing that refuses domination and embraces relationality, *Tamara* sustains an important intellectual and political commitment: the commitment to writing that does not simply describe the world, but seeks to change how we come to know and live within it.

Alison Pullen's reflection insists that writing is never innocent- it is implicated in power, exclusion and the reproduction of scholarly norms. Daniel Ericsson extends that challenge in a different register by asking what happens when writing is no longer treated as a transparent vehicle for results, but as an experiment in reading, sequencing and sensemaking.

Tamara and sardonic humanism

Daniel Ericsson

In my contribution to Monika Kostera and Cezary Woźniak's (2020) edited volume *Aesthetics, organization and humanistic management*, I queried the potentialities of writing about management and organization in a post-positivist manner, beyond the pale habit of "writing up the results" (Ericsson, 2020). What if, I asked, writing was approached as inextricably intertwined with the interpretative practice of reading? What if the relation between writer and reader was approached as epistemological? And more specifically: What if the reader, not the writer, were to be given the opportunity to write the plot, and thus were to be given the authoritative power of, so to speak, worldmaking?

For inspiration, I turned to Raymond Queneau, the French novelist, poet, and member of the Oulipo collective, and his two works *Exercises in Style* (1981/1947) and *One Hundred Thousand Billion Poems* (1983/1961). The former inculcates the precarity of knowledge representation and conveys writing as a matter of making sense in relation to a language

domain whereas the latter displays the haphazard and factorial, perhaps even infinite, nature of storytelling. Bringing these two works together, to showcase the epistemological merits of Queaneau's writings, I presented ten different versions of "the same event" with neither plot nor narrative. This, I argued, was up to the reader to create by reading the different version in a specific sequence out of 3 628 800 possible ones.

In the last paragraph of my contribution, I argued that Queneauan writing to a great extent goes hand in hand with David Boje's (1995) explorations of plurivocality in and through the play *Tamara*. In this play, the audience faces different scenes performed in different rooms at the same time, and depending on the series of choices made by each member of the audience regarding which room to go to, and in what order, they all create a unique and individual understanding of what is going on. *Tamara*, in this sense, could be used as a metaphor for storytelling in organizations, and as such it harbors David Boje's interest in the empirical potentialities of alternative storytelling but also a research agenda set up to destabilize the language-mediated boundaries and practices of (post)modern organizations. "A fruitful avenue for future research within organization and management", I concluded, "would thus be to combine the two, conducting empirical research in *Tamara*-land and writing in Queneau-land" (Ericsson, 2020, p. 201).

Now, a few years later, reflecting upon *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry*, and what the journal means to me, I see the releasing of the potentials marked out by David Boje and Raymond Queneau as (one of) the journal's trademarks. I would however also like to draw attention to a specific *tone* (or *attitude*) which was an integral part of the Oulipo collective, and which I also believe to be part of the *Tamara* community, although not clearly spelt out, and not always present intentionally: the sardonic tone.

At first sight it might look a bit odd, perhaps even unethical, being in favor of a sardonic tone (or attitude) when researching and writing about management and organization. According to the Merriam-Webster online dictionary, synonyms to the word "sardonic" are "showing disrespect or scorn for someone or something: disdainfully or skeptically humorous: derisively mocking" – which of course is a troublesome stance to take out in the empirical field, as well as in writing. There are however two different versions of sardonicism that I believe align very well with *Tamara*'s critical inquiries.

First of all, there is a kind of reflexive version in which the sardonic tone is directed towards the human predicament *from the outside*. On this type of "sardonic humanism," Merleau-Ponty (2008, pp. 89–90) writes: it "is what makes the mind self-critical and keeps it sane. But the aim should not be to suggest that all is absurd, as Voltaire did. It is much more a

question of implying, as Kafka does, that human life is always under threat and of using humor to prepare the ground for those rare and precious moments at which human beings come to recognise, to find, one another."

Secondly, there is the Oulipo version of sardonicism which is directed towards positivist Science with its linearity, strict rules, and stiff rigor. Influenced by Alfred Jarry's pataphysics this type of sardonicism is subversive in character and explores alternative ways of doing science in a playful yet systematic manner.

Daniel Ericsson's reflection widens the question of plurality from storytelling to form, tone, and the active role of the reader. Jean-François Chanlat takes up a related issue from another direction: if writing is never neutral, neither is the language in which it is expected to appear. Questions of style are also questions of power, access, and intellectual legitimacy.

Critical contrastive rhetoric: Style as an intercultural issue for non-native English speakers when they write in English

Jean-François Chanlat

From an anthropological perspective, language is a fundamental aspect of human existence (Chanlat, 2024). Historically, contrastive rhetoric is based on Whorfian ideas concerning the relationship between language and thought, particularly with regard to the culture-specific organisation of written texts (Kaplan, 2005). As this cultural filtering of text logic through language is often unconscious, it is important to raise the issue in the context of contemporary academic publishing, which largely privileges one language: English.

Contrastive rhetoric defends the idea that speakers of different languages will organise the same reality differently. This leads to intercultural rhetoric, defined as the study of written discourse between individuals from different cultural backgrounds (Connor, 2018), and critical contrastive rhetoric, which reconceptualises cultural rhetorical differences in terms of power relations, discursive construction of knowledge, and postcolonial and cultural hybridity perspectives (Kubota, & Lehner, 2004). If texts need to be viewed in their social contexts and cultures need to be complexified, the key idea is that every language and culture has its own style, and what is clear in one language may be confusing in another.

By comparing the structure of texts, rhetorical manner, use of logical connectors and degree of explicitation in French and English, we can observe some differences. While the French text tends to progress gradually and sometimes in a circular manner (in French, we

often introduce nuances and contextualise before presenting the main idea), the English text has a linear and direct structure.

In terms of style, while the French language values nuance and dialectic (thesis, antithesis, synthesis), English favours clear text oriented towards argumentative conclusion, avoiding detours. Furthermore, while the French language can keep some relationships implicit, English requires explicit connectors and prefers to maintain logical structure visible.

While the author guides the reader in English, the reader is required to make an interpretative effort in French. In English, the organisation of a paragraph is usually a topic sentence followed by a development and a conclusion, whereas in French it is often more flexible and less formal.

These distinctions help to explain why French-speaking researchers encounter difficulties with their academic English texts. Contrastive rhetoric, which emphasises the distinct worldviews that shape languages and stem from cultures, literatures, histories and geographies, provides explanations for these difficulties and, consequently, highlights the importance of being open to different ways of thinking and to what we call 'style' in French. In the contemporary context, it would be beneficial to integrate it into any editorial board spirit, particularly those of English-language journals, to maintain intellectual diversity.

Once style is understood as more than surface, the conversation opens further. The next contribution moves from language to sound, and from rhetoric to the arts, asking what becomes possible when organizational knowledge is allowed to emerge from other traditions such as aesthetics and sensory.

Sounding *Tamara*

Luigi Maria Sicca, Davide Bizjak, Domenico Napolitano, Silvio Ripetta

Tamara challenges linear modes of thought and remains open to epistemologies emerging from the humanities and the arts. This orientation makes an important contribution to management and organization studies (MOS). Constructs derived from the arts can indeed serve as sources of organizational knowledge (Sicca, 2022, 2026; Sicca et al., 2026), alongside the economics- and management-based forms of knowledge that have traditionally dominated American business schools. This is so for at least two reasons. First, such constructs often predate those typically adopted within business school traditions and have therefore proved more resistant to obsolescence. Second, the arts are themselves modes of

organizing. To engage with the material and processual dimensions of artworks is to encounter an organizational logic shaped by expressivity rather than by conventional assumptions of economic rationality.

In an article previously published in *Tamara* (Sicca, Bizjak, & Napolitano, 2024), we advanced this argument by drawing on the work of John Cage (1912–1992). Cage's musical practice introduces a range of organizing mechanisms through concepts such as indeterminacy, silent organizing, process orientation, experimentation, attentive listening, and feedback. Building a theory of organizing on the shoulders of a figure initially celebrated within avant-garde artistic circles raises important questions about the sources of organizational knowledge as a research construct.

Approaching organization theory through sound and music is not new, although it remains relatively uncommon. Karl Weick's seminal essay, *Improvisation as a Mindset for Organizational Analysis* (1998), draws on jazz improvisation as a way of understanding and inspiring organizational behaviour.

During the same period, Mary Jo Hatch (1999) used jazz as a metaphor through which to reconceptualize organizational structure. Her work builds on key elements of jazz (such as soloing, comping, trading fours, listening and responding, groove, and feel) to rethink foundational assumptions in organization theory and to introduce ambiguity, emotion, and temporality as structural dimensions of organizing.

A similar approach has been developed in relation to other musical traditions. Sicca (2000) explored chamber music as a setting in which to observe organizational dynamics applicable to many kinds of organizations. Sicca (1997) and Sicca and Zan (2005) identified Italian opera houses as a productive site for understanding managerial rhetoric. Yiannis Gabriel (2017) examined opera as a context for understanding leadership, showing how the chorus can illuminate the dynamics between leaders and followers, as well as the political actions and emotional complexities of large groups.

Popular, rock, and electronic music have also more recently been explored as sources of organizational knowledge. Jensen and Zawadzki (2025) analyse the emancipatory potential of rock music and its energizing effect on critical management studies in their efforts to resist capitalism. Napolitano and Sicca (2021) examine how electronic music raises specific issues related to the organization of space. Bathurst (2010), Corbett (2003), Prichard, Korczynski, & Elmes (2007), and Styhre (2013) further contribute to this field by analysing the organizational effects of music and sound in workplaces. Napolitano, Ripetta, & Sicca (2024)

extend this line of inquiry by highlighting the importance of sonic dimensions in relation to accessibility and the inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Taken together, these examples shows that music and the arts offer alternative modes of thought for organizational knowledge (Bizjak, Calcagno, & Sicca, 2017). They reveal profound dimensions of human relations with space, time, and materiality, thereby contributing to a richer understanding of chance, uncertainty, and creativity; dimensions that are central to organization theory.

Looking further afield, even within organizations apparently distant from the worlds of art and music, one can identify the influence of sound, silence, and indeterminacy in shaping both theories and social practices. Such an orientation may support the development of a reflective and engaged scholarly community; one that recognizes perspectives from the arts not as peripheral, but as integral to organizing.

Looking at organization theory through the lenses of arts is not common and straightforward. It helps to reopen organization theory to uncertainty, feelings, expressivity. Michał Krzykawski asks what such reopening might mean at the level of management and entrepreneurship themselves. His reflection takes the discussion in a more explicitly philosophical direction.

The moral constraints of negentropic entrepreneurship

Michał Krzykawski

I am going to talk about negentropic entrepreneurship although my experience in management is almost nonexistent and in business administration nonexistent altogether. However, if we are to believe Ghislain Deslandes, a French philosopher who seeks to revisit leadership theories from a philosophical perspective, what we are witnessing among all crises unfolding all over the world is the end of management, further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. So, there has perhaps never been a better time than now for combining philosophical inquiry with managerial and entrepreneurial practices. Questions such as ‘what is called managing’ and ‘what is called enterprising’ after the end of management – much like Heidegger’s ‘what is called thinking’ – have the potential to become genuinely philosophical inquiries, yet unlike typical philosophical questions, they demand more practical responses.

For scholars working in the field of contemporary philosophy, dealing with the end or what comes after the end of something – philosophy itself included – is a rather common place. In his famous Paris lecture from 1964, 'The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking,' Heidegger (1977) argued that the end of philosophy was not the end of thinking but, rather, a place whereby the philosophical way of thinking needs to be reopened. The question I would like to address when talking about negentropic entrepreneurship is whether the end of management can be read as an occasion to reopen management and to reconsider the entrepreneurial ethos, beyond a typical philosophical critique of pragmatism as pertaining to business environments, but also beyond management as a techno-scientific project solely focused on a systemic use of resources. Obviously, entrepreneurship and management do not mean the same thing, yet they are inseparable to each other, so let me address these two questions as one.

Michał Krzykawski reopens management as a philosophical question, which returns us to a broader issue running through this editorial as a whole: if knowledge is a conversation, what kinds of conversations are journals able to host, sustain or foreclose?

Science, including social science, is a conversation. It follows certain rules that ensure some consistency and stringency but they change, albeit usually not very rapidly, in time and space (Czarniawska-Joerges, 1995). In the recent past, there used to be the idea of 'progress' and standardization, that shifted its aims and much of the customs. And yet, using a famous phrase attributed to Sir Isaac Newton: "[see] farther, […] by standing on the shoulders of giants" (see Merton, 1965). New contribution is important, but continuity is necessary. This great exchange is larger than any individual or social system, including universities, generations and paradigms. We believe that this conversation is indeed immense, and if its fundamental rules are respected and cherishes, there should be place for diversity – even abundance of valuable voices. Tamara *is a community open to such conversations who wish to contribute with our findings and ideas. Unlike the world of business or media, immediate success or glamour do not matter. The involvement in a serious contribution of this kind is valued and has a cooperative role.* Tamara *is a community open to such conversations and to those who wish to contribute to them with their findings, ideas, and forms of writing. Unlike the worlds of business or media, immediate glamour need not matter here. What matters is serious, generous participation in an ongoing exchange. The next reflection shifts attention from editorial ideals to the journal as lived community.*

Tamara as community: On being the alternative

JF Matamoros Sanin

I would like to reflect on what makes *Tamara* both a compelling journal and a growing international community. As a space open to new perspectives, it offers opportunities for both established and emerging scholars. Its diversity can be observed, for example, in the range of themes, theoretical orientations, and writing styles present in recent issues, as well as in the composition of its editorial team.

Although I focus here on the last two years, the current editorial direction is rooted in earlier interventions, particularly those associated with David Boje. His work brings together critical and postmodern approaches to the study of organizations, while also engaging broader questions about global inequalities and the ethical responsibilities of scholarship. This orientation has, directly or indirectly, shaped the journal's current openness to complexity and plurality.

Looking at the publications from 2024 and 2025, one can identify recurring concerns with subjectivity, lived experience, pedagogy, and epistemology. The journal's style – at times conventional, at times experimental – reflects its interdisciplinary commitments, engaging with fields such as music, psychology, philosophy, and storytelling. It also provides space for critical reflections on academia, politics, and the affective dimensions of human and organizational life.

The editorial team similarly reflects an ongoing, though uneven, process of internationalization. While its core remains based in Poland, it includes members from across Europe (for example Norway or Cyprus), as well as contributors from regions such as Latin America, India, and Iran. As someone born and raised in Mexico, I see this as a meaningful step toward broadening participation, even if important gaps remain. Circling back to Boje's Manifesto (Boje, 2001), and its focus on ethics, responsibility and resistance; and the need to speak out against global inequalities, it is difficult to write these words without acknowledging our valued member, Hoda Jebellie, and the angst it brings us to know that she might be in peril because of a nonsensical war between Israel and the United States against Iran.

In this sense, *Tamara* represents both an achievement and a project in progress. It already offers a space for alternative forms of writing and critical engagement within Management and Organization Studies and the social sciences more broadly. At the same time, there is

clear potential to deepen this commitment by expanding participation from underrepresented regions, including parts of Africa and Latin America (for example, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Ecuador, Argentina or Colombia). Strengthening these connections would further support the development of genuinely plural and globally situated epistemologies. Ultimately, *Tamara* provides a platform where alternative voices and approaches can emerge.

JF Matamoros Sanin reminds us the importance of relations-journals are sustained not only by texts, but by its authors, readers, reviewers, infrastructures. The next reflection returns to Tamara*'s founding manifesto and asks, from the present, what still needs resisting and what kind of scholarly writing remains worth defending.*

Tamara: a space for practising non-violence

Martyna Śliwa

"Instead of more articles on how to increase addictions to stuff and to work with increased performativity" – wrote David Boje (2001, p. 4) in the editorial announcing the creation of this journal – "Tamara invites articles on how to resist addiction, net slavery, and where to find convivia (e.g., the Italian slow food movement to counter fast food, Isthmus, 2000), simplicity (to counter over consumption), and Ahimsa (to counter the factories of terror and the animal slaughterhouses)."

25 years on, this manifesto is no less relevant and, arguably, it has become even more resonant with the current *Zeitgeist* than it used to be back then. Beyond the 'traditional' addictions that drive consumption and, along with it, extraction and degradation of our planet's finite resources, dangerous new ones, also extractive and destructive, have emerged and continue to grow in significance – such as addiction to consuming and generating social media content and AI slop – that require scrutiny in a journal dedicated to critical organization inquiry. For many across the world, precarisation of working conditions and precarisation of lives have deepened, and so there is an urgent need to engage in speaking out about the tragic, pathological and inhumane outcomes of so-called 'progress,' as well as about hope-inducing and life-affirming alternatives that prove the existence and effectiveness of ethical approaches to organising and managing, and show how they are conducive to social justice and to dissecting "the hegemonic powers and exploitative structures that pervade

modern corporations and institutions"[1]. Above all, *Tamara* offers a valuable space for practicing – as researchers, authors, editors, reviewers and readers – and illustrating through our fieldwork and analytical insights – the practice of *ahimsa*, and, through it, resisting violence and transforming it into non-violence.

Martyna Śliwa's reflection also points to a newer form of dehumanized writing. Academic prose has long struggled with detachment, abstraction, and the illusion of objectivity. But today the problem has acquired another meaning as generative AI tools are increasingly used not only for editing, grammar or translation, but sometimes as non-human "co-authors" that begin to take over parts of the "thinking" and writing process itself. As EICs of Tamara*, we strongly oppose the use of AI for that purpose. At the same time, because we believe plurality matters more than editorial comfort, we also wanted to include a clearly different perspective. We do so not to make visible a disagreement that is already unfolding across academic life.*

Tamara: Organizing radical openness to other

Hugo Letiche

My task is to write as short a text as I can that exemplifies *Tamara*. I speculate that "distant writing" (Floridi, 2019) or AI (ChatGPT/Claude) co-generated text can be marshalled against "accomplishing disposal" (Latimer, 1999) or the marginalization of embodied knowledge (Rudge, 2009). Confronted by a repressive AI-assisted registration system in elderly care that reduced relational knowledge into voicelessness, with Other becoming: 'Mrs. Jansen, room 14B. Weight down 3 kg over two months. Albumin 3.2. PHQ-9 score 12, up from 8. Increase Ensure to TID. Psych consult for depression screen. PT eval for ambulation;' I am championing storytelling.

Actually, Maria Jansen was 82, a widow, who had arrived at the nursing home eighteen months ago after a hip fracture made independent living impossible. She had raised four children while running a small bakery that was a community gathering place for immigrant families. She volunteered with resettlement organizations, taught English and helped families navigate bureaucracies. Her garden was legendary in the neighborhood – not just for its vegetables but for how she shared seeds, knowledge, and produce. But three weeks ago, I

[1] See *Tamara: Journal for Critical Organization Inquiry* (2026), *1*. Available form: https://repozytorium.kozminski.edu.pl/entities/journal/648ce774-05ae-47f3-8a1b-62524c23badd/static/about-journal

observed she pushing her food around her plate rather than eating, unusual as she had retained enthusiasm for meals as one of her few remaining pleasures. The following week, soft calls for 'Emma' and 'Peter' – two already deceased children – began punctuating her mealtimes. By the third week, Mrs. Jansen's weight loss was visible in loosening clothes and prominent cheekbones.

More troubling, she had stopped mentioning her garden or asking about the weather, signs of withdrawal. But communicating these observations to the nursing home staff was impossible; as they did not fit the AI supported 'concern forms.' I could not specify the 'nature of the incident' (checkboxes for fall, injury, behavioral issue, other), name 'contributing factors' (environmental, medical, behavioral, unknown), or 'recommended interventions.' The system did not let me document the quality of Mrs. Jansen's silences, the way she now stared at windows rather than through them, or the absence of her usual curiosity.

A week later, finding Mrs. Jansen crying quietly during lunch, I was told that 'anecdotal observations,' while 'appreciated,' couldn't be incorporated into clinical decision-making without 'objective documentation.' I saw that Mrs. Jansen was 'slipping away;' her face no longer brightened at certain topics; her hands had stopped their expressive gestures; silence had replaced engaged conversation. But I was told to: "specify the timeline of nutritional changes? (e.g., 25% reduction over 2 weeks);" or to specify "What percentage of meals show decreased intake?," etc. This was "epistemic violence" (Spivak, 1988).

When I described my concerns to a computer science colleague, he replied: "You know the system can do more than make clinical reports? It's trained on millions of texts – including memoirs, plays, even experimental fiction. The interface constrains it to medical outputs, but the underlying model has other capabilities." He proposed that we become the *hackers* of the system – using prompts to make it produce outputs that subvert repressive functioning. Via a hidden section of the interface – hidden by obscurity as few users explore beyond the main templates, a "Custom Documentation" option allowed free-form prompts. We: "Write a dialogue that captures a Tuesday afternoon visit with Mrs. Jansen. Include not just spoken words but the internal thoughts, sensory details, and emotional undercurrents. Style: intimate autoethnographic narrative that preserves accompaniment to a former baker attached to butterscotch cookies, devoted to her garden, who now misses her deceased daughter Emma who visited her on Sundays; et cetera. Honor her voice."

The system produced: "**Tuesday, 2:47 PM – Room 14B** We knock gently, the sound barely audible over the industrial hum of the heating system. Mrs. Jansen turns from the

window, her fingers still working the edge of her quilt in the same rhythm she once kneaded dough. *Is it Tuesday already? The days blur like watercolors in rain.* Look – they planted butterflies (a faint smile) butterfly bush; Emma loved those. (thinking) *Purple like her prom dress. She danced in the garden, sixteen and immortal*." See, my computer science friend said: "The system can produce affective text of accompaniment." In *Tamara*, instead of fear for the co-writing / distant writing technologies, I call for such encounters organizing radical ethical openness to Other.

Whether one agrees with Hugo Letiche's argument or not his provocation makes clear that questions of writing are now also questions of authorship, mediation and responsibility. The closing reflections return to what Tamara *is, and what kind of journal it must remain if it is to host such disagreements without losing its ethical center.*

Tamara: A journal for alternative organizational knowing and writing

Monika Kostera and Anna M. Górska

The reflections on what the purpose of *Tamara*, the journal's commitment to different modes of writing and knowing, the invitation to engagement and commitment are ways of resisting linearity, narrowing down, and simplifications that define much of the neoliberal canon. As academic community, we challenge the ideal of a singular, neutral managerial language of organizing, embracing perspectives that favour negentropy and complexity. Across the pieces collected here, that challenge takes different forms: a defense of conversation, a critique of citation ritual, a return to storytelling, a feminist refusal of detached authority, an insistence on linguistic plurality, an opening to the arts, a philosophical reopening of management, a reminder that journals are also lived communities, and a renewed concern with the ethics of writing itself.

One such perspective is that of Kantian universalism which assumes that the human person is an end in themselves and can never be treated as a means to another, external end, such as profit or efficiency (Kant, 1997). Humanity should always be respected as a value in itself, and not treated instrumentally. Simone Weil was one of the first to apply this way of thinking to the world of organizations and management (Grey, 1996; Weil, 1987). She drew attention to the violence of any management system based on human degradation, which is seen depriving human work of skills and meaning, and humiliating employees. Although

critical of the capitalist system, Weil did not base her analysis of work on Marx's concept of exploitation, but, instead was guided by Kantian universalism. In her view, the source of the system's injustice and dysfunction lies not so much in exploitation, but in oppression, in the instrumental treatment of people. Management and organizing cannot be seen as "neutral" because they concern human beings. For Weil, enslavement is an inherent feature of management practices, regardless of their intentions.

Following Weil, we believe that liberation from oppression requires a complete reorientation of goals: one that places people beyond instrumental positions and respects them as subjects and ends in themselves. Only such an approach can restore to contemporary management the morality lost in the process of modernization (Weil, 1987).

If you are an academic active in social sciences, dreaming of joining or starting an academic conversation such as the ones illustrated by the reflections, you are very much welcome to submit your work to our journal. It is now SCOPUS listed which ensures a fair visibility. You are also wholeheartedly welcome to read our publications – they are all published in golden open access mode without any extra fee from the authors required. Of course we invite you also in other important community roles: as reviewer, special issue editor, ally spreading the word about our existence and activities.

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