

## Book Reviews

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Per-Olof BERG

**Emotional Structures in Organizations: A Study of the Process of Change in a Swedish Company**

Studentlitteratur Lund, diss., 1979, xii + 287 pages

Some years ago Per-Olof Berg at the University of Lund in Sweden started a project to compare successful and unsuccessful programs of organization development. The results were frustrating and pointed in diverse directions. He therefore decided to make a number of case studies on such programs. The first company chosen for his study was Emmaboda Glasverk, a glass producer in southern Sweden. As the study went on, this company became the sole object for study. The author also shifted his focus of attention from the issue of success in programs of organization development to the development of organizations over time.

Berg now presents his work in a book of six chapters. In the first two chapters he provides some background information and discusses his research methodology. The third and fourth chapters, in which Berg's data are presented and interpreted, constitute the core of the book. In Chapter 3 the reader may follow the development of Emmaboda Glasverk through 56 organizational dramas from its foundation in 1919 to the situation in 1979. This is a history of economic problems, technological changes, an intensive program of organization development, change in ownership, culminating in lay-offs during the spring of 1979.

This development is then interpreted in the fourth chapter, where Berg works with so called 'emotional structures', which he summarizes graphically. The basic theme of the interpretation is the dependency on a patriarch and how this dependency changes through different 'revolutions'. The first 35 years of the company is dealt with as 'The Dependency Period', which is followed by 'The Structural Revolution', 'The Neodependency Period', 'The Cultural Revolution', 'The Counter-Revolution', and 'The Counterdependency Period'.

The interpretation in the fourth chapter is then used in the fifth one to derive a tentative framework, which might be summarized: "Organizations may be considered as social organisms consisting of emotional structures, the changes of which come about through a mix of continuity and revolution." This framework points to new interesting means of gaining further insights on organizations, although some of the conclusions of the author may be open to discussion.

In the sixth and final chapter of the book Berg recapitulates and discusses the validity of his results. Among other things he elaborates on their theoretical contribution and practical consequences.

P.-O. Berg has faced a number of methodological problems, and I shall briefly mention some of them. One problem concerns *the possibilities to generalize from one case study*. The author has discussed this problem, and he has responded to it by relating his results to those of earlier studies. It might have been an advantage, however, if he had also been able to compare his object of study to other organizations in order to show what the Emmaboda company stands for.

Another problem regards *the time period covered by the study*. P.-O. Berg has chosen to study the full period of existence of the company, a reasonable decision from a theoretical point of view. It brings about data problems for the earlier years of the company, however, and a risk that too broad conclusions are drawn from a limited material.

A related problem is the one on *the accuracy of the data*. Berg has used a number of interviews for his study, and – as he himself points out – the interviewees have not always been unbiased in their accounts. In order to handle this problem the interviews have been counterchecked using written material. An opposite procedure might have been preferable, however: to start with the written documents and have interviewees elaborate on issues in them.

As the title indicates, the book is written in English. The documents, however, are in Swedish. This circumstance has caused the author some *problems of translation*. Some statements have been weakened, others have been strengthened in the transition process, which too, of course, affects the accuracy of the data.

Despite the fact that Berg's solutions to his methodological problems may be an issue for discussion (and despite some formal shortcomings) his thesis must be considered an interesting contribution to our knowledge of organizations. His study also underlines the need for *longitudinal* studies of organizations. Indeed, such studies seem to be one of the most important tasks for researchers in the field of organizational behaviour today. Studies like the one presented by P.-O. Berg ought to be supported both in order to provide opportunities to develop the methodology and to generate important knowledge on organizations. It is also to be hoped that other companies will be as open to researchers as Emmaboda Glasverk has been.

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#### SPECIAL BOOK REVIEWS – ROMANIA

Although science and philosophy today appear as independent disciplines, this appearance is surely misleading, for neither could remain vital without the other's influence. Protoscience is a philosophic enterprise, and one of the philosophy's main responsibility is to weld masses of scientific data into a coherent account of human nature.

The term 'human system' is comparatively recent in origin. The philosophical tradition does not even know it. For some people, to speak of 'human systems' reflects a scientific concern. In contemporary science, a peculiar compartmentalization of areas and concepts has led to a divorce between human systems and philosophy, a divorce which explains why both are in deep crisis.

One cannot overemphasize how urgent it is to recover the sense of 'human systems' which is and implies a unity between theory and practice. The credibility of the humanist message depends on such a recovery. In the last analysis, the attempt to build a socialist society must be an effort to emancipate human nature, mutilated and humiliated by many causes. In this crucial respect two recent Romanian books illustrate this trend. It is my intention to present them in order to open a window. It seems to me that it is high time to see what is on the other side.

Mihai DRAGANESCU

**Profunzimele lumii materiale,**

Editura Politica, Bucuresti, 1979, 279 pages

One can approach the "Depths of the Material World", the most recent of Draganescu's work, in many ways. It would be possible to discuss the complex relationship between the author and dialectical materialism. Equally, it would be possible to discuss Draganescu's place in contemporary thought, showing the internal logic which led a scientist, whose starting point was electronics, artificial intelligence, and information sciences, to move beyond these towards philosophy. I shall do both at the same time, using the method which the author himself recommends.

'Material world' is not so much a new subject, as a new way of looking at old questions, those concerning time and space. The assumption is that a good way to explain these difficult notions is to use the philosophical experiment. It is well known that Edington compared the scientist to an ichthyologist. Using a net of two-inch mesh, the ichthyologist catches fish that are never less than two inches long. Does this prove that there are no fish in the sea less than two inches long? Clearly not. But his net will never catch them. In the same way it is suggested by this book that there are facts which the contemporary scientific method will never 'catch'. More precisely, since endless accumulation of facts cannot be grasped by the human mind, there is an inescapable need for theories that offer some suggestion as to how the facts may hang together. The existence of this book – a text with a strong point of view – makes clear the need for philosophical experiments. This explains one feature of this book which might strike the reader as odd.

Marked respect and admiration for Kant is also a preference unusual among contemporary Marxists, although Italian Lucio Colletti, in his philosophical writings, said that from a strictly epistemological point of view, there is only one great modern thinker who can be of any assistance to us in constructing a materialistic theory of knowledge: Immanuel Kant. His basic claim is that Kant asserted with the greatest force the primacy and irreducibility of reality to conceptual thought. The qualitative gulf between the conditions of being and the conditions of thought is the position that provides a fundamental starting point for any materialistic gnoseology. Draganescu is of the same opinion.

The first chapter of his book is devoted to the thing in itself. According to Kant, the outer world causes only the matter of sensation, but our mental apparatus orders this matter in space and time, and supplies the concepts by means of which we understand the experience. Things in themselves, which are the causes of our sensations, are unknowable. Space and time are subjective, they are part of our apparatus of perception. According to Draganescu, in order to get a deep insight into the thing in itself, one must introduce a new coordinate: orthoexistence. In fact, the thing in itself becomes orthoexistence. One can imagine its models or investigate it scientifically. In this framework, space and time are no more subjective. They are objective, linked with a particular universe generated by orthoexistence. Orthoexistence generates the quantifiable world. There is a kind of coupling between self-awareness and orthoexistence, which permits a materialistic interpretation of the total existence. The author introduces the concept of a closed loop of the material world: unstructured matter – informatter – universe (quantic world + Psyche). In orthoexistence, which covers unstructured matter and informatter, there is no time and space. Orthoexistence knows space only through existence, i.e. the universe.

For Draganescu, unstructured matter and informatter are no longer alien to one another. Man is thus related to orthoexistence through both of them. His view of the destiny of man is built upon a dynamic view of material world. Informatter structures the unstructured matter and the result is the universe. Therefore man is not a static being with a pure nature as such. There is no natural or normal state of nature in the strict sense of the term. Man can participate in orthoexistence because this is no longer the transcendent metaexistence who presides looking down from a remote heaven. Orthoexistence becomes intimately involved in the universe because humans are open to it.

Draganescu considers that human systems are not systems but *quasisystems*, i.e. systems being coupled to orthoexistence, open to informatter. This attitude towards human systems reflects itself in three important areas: the experiment of self-awareness; the link between physics, information and life; and the zone where the laws are engendering. These are titles of three distinct chapters in his book.

It is beyond the scope of this essay review to deal with the claims for self-awareness, which would lead us into the sphere of ontology. But one thing that is

clear in this regard is that Draganescu considers man as the connecting link between two different worlds. This is not a dualist position. According to a dualist, the mind seems to act independently of the brain in the same sense that a programmer acts independently of his computer no matter how much he may depend upon the action of that computer for certain purposes. According to Draganescu, the integrative activities of the brain are produced by a mental field, an objective reality, a substance from orthoexistence, located in orthoexistence.

Despite the formal difficulty of Draganescu's language (he introduces for the first time such terms as orthoexistence or informatter) the readers are likely to find themselves at home with most of the central leitmotifs in the book. For, in one form or another, these have by now become part of the contemporary intellectual debate. But to say this is not to imply that the themes developed by Draganescu are self-explanatory truths or even manifest axioms of Marxism. Needless to say, this is not the kind of book one reads casually, but one which needs serious study and thought by the meditative reader whom the author challenges to respond positively to the call to distinguish between system and civilization.

In general terms, proponents of a system theory stressed society's nature as an automaton. For this would make possible the formulation of analytic laws governing human behavior as regular as physical world. Mathematical manipulation of these laws would govern human affairs and social felicity would be predetermined. Draganescu tries to show that man is not just a machine. His philosophical experiment is bold enough to be of wide-spread interest, especially today when this topic is discussed in sterile environments by theoreticians, many of whom have never done any original scientific experiment.

The crucial conclusion of this book is that the next step of science will be to explore the zone where the laws are engendering, a zone which is not covered by contemporary mathematical structures. We can understand orthoexistence, more precisely the depths of the material world, through scientific approach—this is the optimistic message of the author. The need for the future? Radically different types of models. If the methods available in the contemporary toolbox are not appropriate, there is our job to develop new scientific tools that are appropriate.

A part of a job of a scientist is to produce worthwhile results with whatever tools are available. Another part of his job is to produce appropriate tools.

This aim can be achieved only through long development – I believe that this book can assist in this development.

Constantin NOICA

**Povestiri despre om**

Cartea Romaneasca, Bucuresti, 1980, 254 pages

In “Tales about Man” Noica reexamines Hegel’s “Phenomenology of Mind”. About two centuries ago, Hegel spoke about spirit and the course of its development. Today, Noica – a philosopher – considers that such a book cannot be ignored without one being punished. You can ignore the opinions or the truths of philosophers, if they are alien to the horizons of your life – he says – but you cannot ignore the paths of Man, if somebody succeeded to show them. I shall not attempt to defend those paths as described by Hegel. I offer them through the intelligible version written by Noica, which is definite enough for fruitful discussion.

Trying to comprehend the world, the man went from one disillusion into another. This is the backbone of the story: development of the human mind, from consciousness of mere sensory experience to reflection thought, awareness of itself, and ultimate reason. Only the Spirit, which is more than reason, can be viewed as the substantial subject of the philosophy of history. To become acquainted with Spirit, in its office of guidance, is the object of the author’s undertaking. The story is beautiful but too long to be presented here. However, it could be illustrated by two of its moments: chivalry and community.

The Pilgrim – Ignatius Loyola once said of himself – observed in his soul now this, now that, and found it profitable; then, thought he, this might be also useful to others ... So far, so good. He, who desires to fight in an order, shall set this thought before his mind, that he is a part of a group founded for special purpose (we read in *Spiritual Exercises*, a manual for the training of recruits) or personality moulding we would say today. Fallacy, says Noica. To associate with others by setting up a group code is not difficult. The bad experiences associated with many modern events show that to have the support merely of your friends does not guarantee that you are in the clear with anyone else, nor with society at large.

Unfortunately, we understand from this book, the *Exercises* have provided the basis of all modern sys-

tems of devotion. Noica feels that the world we live in would be a much happier place were it never haunted by the abortive venture into utopia. Sometimes, the chosen goals are mere manifestations of individual’s desires. These are the cases which are dealt with in this book under the heading “spirit of chivalry”. The dream of a rationally organized community begins to be viewed with suspicion as a contrivance to release humans from the self-control which render them human. We know of no example of people being forced into freedom, but we know too many examples of people being forced into slavery while they are told that they are being led to freedom.

Noica says also other things which fit more neatly into the framework I have sketched, when he considers the spirit of community. The history of mankind – he says – is the history of religions. This can be easily detected on the practical level of the life of spreading communities. Typological parallelism between a spreading community (viewed as a topos of salvation) and a community can never level their basic differences. While in the latter the prominent figure is the prophet, the former places the prophetic ministry after that of the apostle. A spreading community posits the apostle at her outskirts, and he is the one who addresses the world as not-yet-community. But the primacy of apostleship does not mean at all that an apostle is dragging her on his trial according to his own wishes. Community is not chivalry. Moving at the border of a spreading community the apostle is still her member and is filled with her spirit. Yet the work of Spirit is not exactly the same through the apostles and through prophets. Prophets are interested in nailing salvation into the hearts of the believers, whereas apostles witness for the salvation event to the yet-nonbelievers.

The argument, then, is that a spreading community should not and cannot stop the apostles from speaking out what they think the Spirit is urging them to speak. It is only afterwards, and not at all beforehand, that under the guidance of the spirit of discernment, can she differentiate between the apostles and false apostles. And today more than ever perhaps, the world is in urgent need to differentiate between them, its cry for salvation being louder than ever.

This is a radical opposition to the conservative view of culture reduced to chivalry to the detriment of community.

Some thinkers would go so far in their protests against the chivalry image that they would accept utopia as sufficiently powerful to destroy, time and

again, even the thickest layer of habitual pattern. But utopia means chivalry. Utopia (a place which does not exist) is not eutopia (a place to be desired). It is the eutopian, not the utopian, who makes scientific sense. They at least have a feeling for the true dimension of the phenomenon of man. This is the message of this book.

Noica has rendered scholars a valuable service by bringing together old and new images of human systems. While remaining faithful to the spirit and intention of Hegel, he made his work accessible to the contemporary reader in an original and attractive way (his mastery of language represents an event of major spiritual importance). His book uncovers not only the flavor of the Hegelian text but also the spiritual universe which is that of our time.

#### **Conclusion to both reviews**

That is the amazing thing about good books. They feign a confusion that sends you off in a productive line of thought. And even though you get a broadened view of the matter on your way, when you return to your point of departure, you will find that the kernel of truth has been there the whole time – you had to make the tour to be able to see it.

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