Fatigue of the Spirit in Organizational Theory and Organization Development: Reconnaissance Man as Remedy*

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The charge that the OD Division of the Academy of Management is a group from which "the zest is gone" is explored in an address to this division. Several images are presented regarding ways of observing and learning. OD professionals are advised to perform reconnaissance, which is defined as lowering one's defenses, seeing fully, looking again at things one considers already understood, capturing previously undetected nuances, and developing high-variety languages to describe what is discovered. Reconnaissance should also be applied to the values, beliefs, and practices of OD to determine their validity. OD practitioners are encouraged to study and disseminate the findings of theorists, to act incrementally at times, and to identify problems and issues that are not appropriately addressed by those working in OD.

Bob Quinn, president of the OD Division of the Academy of Management, in remarks to the Executive Committee described this division as a group from which "the zest is gone." That assessment surprised me because my reading of what those of you in this division do best, based on reports from people in organization development (OD) and from practitioners, is energize people who quickly lose enthusiasm for change. In a jaded, cynical world, such energizing is no small accomplishment. Perhaps all your energy is poured into those outside efforts and you have neglected the question, "How do you energize the energizers?" At any rate, your energy seems spent by the time you reach issues concerning the OD Division, or at least that is how it sounds judging from Bob's list of symptoms.

- The division is no longer a haven for rebels.
- OD training is becoming more traditional.
- OD is a secondary divisional identity.
- The division's papers rehash old ideas.
- The interests of the division are narrow and consultant driven.

During a lunch meeting, Bob asked me to address these problems and give a speech to the OD Division that would be interesting, affect how people think about OD, help the division

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become more legitimate in the Academy of Management, and give you some hope.

After receiving this invitation, I knew what Marlin Perkins's sidekick on the television program "Wild Kingdom," must have been feeling whenever they went on a safari. Nearly every time Perkins and his sidekick, Jim, got into a dangerous situation, Perkins would say something such as, "I'll just stand over here behind this tree while Jim goes into that cave and tries to get the cub away from its mother." In preparing my comments, I sure feel more like Jim than like Perkins.

THREE IMAGES FOR OD

To address Bob's diagnosis that the zest is gone, I want to use three images. The first image comes from the world of jazz music, and involves Paul Gonsalves, who was Duke Ellington's star tenor saxophone soloist during the 1950s. Gonsalves drank heavily, so much so that Jimmy Woode, Ellington's bass player, became Gonsalves's lookout to protect him from major problems. Once during an Ellington concert in Chicago, Gonsalves fell asleep on the bandstand and Woode was just barely able to nudge him awake in time for his solo on "Take the A Train." Woode hissed, "Paul, you're on!" Still partly asleep, Gonsalves

> stumbled to his feet and out to the solo microphone on automatic pilot. Ray Nance had just finished his violin chorus. Paul came fully awake to hear the audience applauding Nance. Thinking he must have already played his solo, Paul took a bow and returned to his seat. (Crow, 1990, pp. 251–252)

This story is about taking credit for something you never did. The question is: Who in the academy does that? Is it the consultants who take ideas such as consideration and initiating structure, turn them into an industry, and give nothing back? Or is it the researchers who develop ideas by codifying lay practices that consultants bring back from the field, and then

conveniently forget the origins of these concepts? I believe one can find a grain of truth in both scenarios. In either case, whenever people take credit for others' virtuosity, we never learn what happens when those who take credit move into the spotlight. What happens when they are forced to take their chances in public?

Some of the problems involving consultants and taking credit can be described compactly. Trice and Beyer (1984) call OD interventions "rites of renewal," which they define as "elaborate activities intended to refurbish or strengthen existing social structures and thus to improve their functioning" (pp. 660–661). They describe OD techniques as rituals, and cite examples such as team building, job design, quality of work life programs, and grid development; artifacts such as flip charts and inventories; and special language such as "coaching" and "survey feedback." They conclude that

> some of the possible latent consequences of such renewal rites include reassuring members that something is being done about problems, disguising the nature of real problems, deferring their acknowledgement, and focusing attention toward some problems and away from others. Rites of renewal also tend to legitimate and reinforce the existing systems of power and authority that form the basis of the social arrangements being modified. (Trice & Beyer, 1984, p. 661)

OD people often look for new listeners to tell their old story to, and people keep asking for the old story. Finding new stories is hard, especially when you get little encouragement to do so. The upshot is that consultants do not spend much time learning.

That consultants have only minimal incentives to learn can also be inferred from Starbuck and Nystrom's (1981) devastating chronicle of how poorly designed most organizations are. Often organizations are in such bad shape that design changes made at the lowest levels on Boulding's nine-step hierarchy of systems processes are sufficient to produce dramatic im-

provements. Consequently, interventionists get positive reinforcement for conceptualizing—and taking seriously—quite elementary aspects of organizational life.

You consultants do know things that the rest of us do not but should. Consider process, for example. Sandelands and Drazin (1989) have made the important argument that the key problem in organizational theory today is that it is a victim of "achievement verbs," such as "select" (which dominates pop ecology) and "choice" (which dominates almost everything else). These verbs provide the illusion of process sensitivity, whereas in fact they describe outcomes. The statement "the organization chose its niche" says nothing about what the organization actually did on a moment-by-moment basis, yet may sound as if it does. Because you consultants live in a world of process, you are in the best possible position to spot achievement verbs and replace them with "task verbs."

The same is true for change. Within the past two years, I have learned more about change from working with feminist theorists than I have from working with OD people. Feminists are having more trouble with change, but they are also more self-conscious and articulate about this trouble. They take nothing for granted; their conflicts are public so others can learn from them; they are their own patrons, meaning that they control both diagnosis and implementation; and their work has blended theory with practice right from the beginning. What is ironic is that feminist theorists and feminist historians cannot explain how change occurs (Scott, 1988, p. 42). They have no theories of change, and have filled this void for the moment with an odd mixture of psychoanalysis, postmodernism, and poststructuralism. Feminist theorists can be maddening to work with because they invoke postmodernism to put all existing bodies of knowledge into doubt, yet retreat from this position when feminism itself is at issue. Nevertheless, that is a normal, natural problem when politics and understanding are mixed.

My question is, "Why are feminists teaching us this lesson rather than OD people?" Maybe this is because those who perform "rites of renewal" cannot afford to be so self-conscious.

One other problem I want to mention is the swiftness with which you practitioners exclude ideas such as tradition and incrementalism. Never forget, Noel Tichy notwithstanding, that you can do more with frogs than boil them. (I am referring to the hypothesis that if you put a frog in a pan of water on a stove, then light a flame under the pan, the frog will boil to death before realizing that the heat has gradually increased—although to my knowledge, this conjecture has never actually been tested, or at least no one has been willing to admit to doing so.) To exclude a whole set of incremental interventions because of imagined experiments, or simply because they do not conform to the rhetoric of revolution, rebels, and frame breaking, seems self-destructive.

For example, why all the fuss about global management? It is just general management with an additional layer (at least that is a hypothesis worth entertaining until someone gives us a different interpretation). Global incrementalism is not an oxymoron. You consultants should be telling that to the rest of us—unless your unwillingness to embrace both the incremental and the revolutionary has convinced you otherwise.

I could point to other troubles, but we must focus on how to recapture the zest that Bob, and many others, miss dearly.

Consider again the image of Paul Gonsalves, bowing and taking credit for Ray Nance's solo. Suppose you **do** take credit for someone else's virtuosity. Suppose the zest is gone partly because the things you borrow are not particularly path breaking, the act of borrowing is itself wearing thin, and you have not even figured out how a self-organizing division operates. What then? I think part of the answer lies in two other images.

The second image I present involves an activity that goes to the heart of the issue of zest. Jean

Rukkila (1989), writing about what a visual artist must undergo to experience renewal, describes a personal insight: "Today at a restaurant called Alice's I am reminded of a hunch I've had before. Against fatigue of the spirit, there is only this defense: no defense; look again, see."

If that advice were embodied in a role, that role would look very much like that appearing in my third image, which involves what Maslow in the 1960s called "Reconnaissance Man" and described as "one who embarks on exciting and adventurous missions into the uncharted realm of the landscape within" (quoted in Hoffman, 1988, p. 166).

"Reconnaissance" (the verb form is "to reconnoitre") is defined as an examination to discover the nature of the ground or resources before making an advance. It is a survey made for practical or scientific purposes, an exploration to gain information of any kind. It requires mapping and problem finding—that is, working ahead of others.

People in OD have done reconnaissance for some time. Reconnaissance occurs when Peter Vaill maps high-performing systems, Brown and Covey map community development organizations, Quinn maps romantic involvements, Emery and Trist map turbulence, and Bill Torbert maps the universe. Each of those acts of reconnaissance represents a lowering of defenses, an effort to look again, and an attempt to capture something we failed to see before. These examples provide a prototype of your distinctive competence as scholars and of your legitimate role within the academy. You need to reexamine things we think we already understand, and you need to claim as your scholarly role that of the problem finders of the academy.

The following section presents examples of what you might see that would help the rest of the academy think better.

THE ACTIVITY OF LOOKING AGAIN

"Defense-free" looking again underlies many of the ideas we value. Let me mention three ex-

amples. Kuhn's idea of a paradigm originated when he looked at Aristotle's ideas about motion, and—rather than dismiss those absurdities as everyone else had done—asked how a smart man such as Aristotle could say such dumb things about motion. Kuhn began to discover what was salient for Aristotle at the time he developed his ideas. He found that the group with which Aristotle worked had a distinctive, coherent way of seeing, and Kuhn paid increasing attention to the beliefs about motion providing the context in which Aristotle worked. Rather than dismiss Aristotle's work as an out-of-date text, Kuhn speculated that there are out-of-date ways of reading out-of-date texts. These ways of reading became the core around which the idea of the paradigm was formulated.

An even more vivid example is that of John Dewey's lifelong interest in habit, an interest that was not just abstract and cognitive, but also concrete and practical. One can argue that the key to understanding everything Dewey wrote after 1916 lies in what occurred when Dewey, at age 59, began to take acting lessons with F. Matthias Alexander (Mixon, 1980). Alexander tried to teach Dewey to change the way he carried himself and moved, which forced Dewey to change his habits and reintegrate his behavior on a conscious level. Dewey described as "the most humiliating experience of my life" (p. 176) the discovery that he could not execute Alexander's instruction to sit down in a particular way. Even when Dewey used all his mental powers, he could not change the **way** he sat down, and he discovered that people cannot always do as they please or intend. He concluded that habits are like skills and represent complex ways of behaving. On the basis of this experience, Dewey reformulated the meaning of habits of speech, emotion, and thought. By looking again, Dewey saw something that athletes and actors had seen all along but philosophers had not. Dewey's reconnaissance found problems that philosophers and psychologists alike thought about from then on, and this thinking anticipated what many organizational theo-

rists are now beginning to say about organizational routines (e.g., Feldman, 1989).

Within OD, an example of the same thing is Ed Schein's (1987) discovery that when people adopt the simple model of unfreeze-change-refreeze, they typically omit a key step while unfreezing, which then subverts the rest of the process. When people unfreeze they routinely create disconfirmation and induce guilt and anxiety, but fail to create psychological safety, the third part of unfreezing. If people do not feel safe, they make only those changes that shore up existing defenses. When Schein closely examined brainwashing, he saw that either providing or withholding psychological safety made the difference between successful and unsuccessful efforts to produce changes. That is, he looked again and saw that mere beating and unpleasantness were not enough, that people changed only when they felt it was safe to change.

This activity of looking again closely resembles the activity of map making. If reconnaissance is about anything, it is about map making. There is a growing consensus that science is more like cartography than like the board game "Mastermind" (Fay, 1990, pp. 36–37) in which people to try to discover a pre-set pattern.

Here, too, you have good models within OD. Quinn and I agree that the best example of map making we have seen is Hampden-Turner's (1981) *Maps of the Mind.* This book combines startling visual representations of 60 complex verbal theories with options, respect for positions, synthesis, accuracy, acceptance, polarities, and appreciation of complexity and mystery mixed with as much demystification as the phenomena allow. A similar, somewhat more sprawling effort was performed by Edward Tufte as he sought to collect elegant representations of complex behavior in his two books, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* (1983) and *Envisioning Information* (1990).

Whatever the activity of mapping means to people in this division, that meaning should be articulated and taken seriously with respect to a potential role to play within the academy.

All three of these examples of looking again can be understood better when put in the context of a distinction made by Glen Ingram (1988), senior curator of vertebrate zoology at the Queensland Museum in Brisbane, Australia. Ingram was struck by the fact that wildlife field guides feature rich descriptions of what animals look like, but only pitiful descriptions of what animals **sound** like. Language is biased toward what is seen, not toward what is heard—which is a major problem, because we recognize differences in sound even when we have difficulty putting these into words.

Ingram has embarked on a campaign to turn "eye naturalists" into "ear naturalists" so that their reports will be more complete. A watershed event separating eye naturalists from ear naturalists is nightfall. Night is auditory bliss to ear naturalists sitting around a campfire. What they fear most is an eye naturalist who, caught up in the thrall of the campfire, retires to the tent and returns metamorphosed into that most terrifying of creatures: the guitar player.

If you are going to do reconnaissance for the academy, you may want to follow the model of the ear naturalist and try to capture differences that many of us sense, but to which we are not quite able to give voice. I think people such as Torbert, Mirvis, or Quinn are ear naturalists. They sense things that defy representation in a language that is low in variety. The language does not keep them from trying to put into words what they sense, but they get frustrated because the words mask the nuances they want to preserve—and the rest of us are frustrated because we cannot figure out what in the world they are describing. A commitment to reconnaissance is also a commitment to communication and to addressing language with little variety. If you can make inroads on those problems, your legitimacy is assured.

THE SUBSTANCE OF RECONNAISSANCE

If you deliberately cultivate the role of reconnaissance, you might pay closer attention to

several things that, in turn, might improve the quality of work done by people who identify strongly with other divisions in the academy.

I want to mention a pair of examples from music that involve radio broadcasts—a natural site for ear naturalists. The first involves Paul Whiteman (Crow, 1990). Moments before his band was to go on the air playing "Chinatown, My Chinatown," Whiteman changed his mind and told the band to play "China Boy." When Whiteman gave the downbeat, a chaotic burst of chords erupted and he realized that the men in the back of the band had not heard him. Softly he directed the band to switch back to "Chinatown," but by this time the order to play "China Boy" had filtered to the back, so when Whiteman gave the downbeat for the second time an even more stunning clash of chords followed. The microphone was switched off for the band to have some—I believe the phrase is—"team building."

A similar incident happened with the Charlie Barnet band, but with a much different outcome. During a CBS broadcast Barnet's band was supposed to play "I Got the World on a String," but the announcer, Paul Douglas, mistakenly announced they would perform "Avalon." When Barnet kicked off the band, half of it began playing "String" and the other half "Avalon." As Barnet described the incident, "The brass section finally prevailed, 'Avalon' won out, and my heart started beating again. It was very humorous on the street afterward when a lot of musicians praised our 'wild' introduction to 'Avalon'" (Crow, 1990, p. 120).

If you had observed these events, you would have puzzled over something that many in the academy are struggling with—how to make sense of contradictions, paradoxes, and polarities, and how to adapt to continuous change. The Barnet band was able to work itself out of the senseless mixture of two tunes by doing simultaneously both what they had done before (continue to play the familiar introductions to "Avalon" and "String") and what they had not done before (transform one introduction into the other one).

Successful adaptation to change requires simultaneous redefinition and preservation of the core of a business, as Hurst, Rush, and White (1989) have shown in discussing organizational renewal. That is the crux of what we see here. The band plays music that is both old and new, converges finally on the tune "Avalon," and later gets credited by insiders with a creative act. The new piece of music is now another option in the band's repertoire. Furthermore, the members have learned an important lesson regarding process: When trouble sets in, play your way out of it, because that worked once before. In contrast, the Whiteman band was stuck with public discord that no one could mistake for a creative act, nor was the band any wiser for the experience.

Let us examine issues of substance in the context of globalization. A reconnaissance of this activity reveals some intriguing problems. For example, at a time when the suggestion is being made that feminist forms of organization resemble webs and that such webs are more meaningful ways to tie dispersed organizations together, global organizing is being done by white men preoccupied with regulation rather than adaptability, competition rather than cooperation, domination rather than support.

Consider a different facet of globalization. Conducting complex negotiations in uncertain territory with unfamiliar partners requires one to be a supersensitive, chameleon-like person able to make immediate emotional contact and stay with another person, even when one does not understand what one is hearing. That complex scenario is similar to what people using a neurolinguistic programming framework call "pacing" (e.g., see Bandler & Grinder, 1975, pp. 15–25), and to Schwalbe's (1988) important reworking of the venerable concept of role taking. In global interactions, a recurrent pattern—dating from World War II experiences—is one in which the Japanese are disliked intensely but

listened to because they are so adaptable, whereas the Americans are liked but closed out because they are much less adaptable.

Academic work such as Bob Axelrod's (1986) studies at Michigan on the evolution of cooperation can be read as guides for pacing. By following the simple axiom "Meet agreement with agreement, and meet disagreement with disagreement," partners track one another closely. Their agreements establish community, and their disagreements establish identity. In a postmodern world in which meaning is temporary and few narratives carry meaning (Lyotard, 1988), there is premium on a form of intimacy that scholars of interaction do not understand very well.

Viewed through the eyes of OD practitioners, the activity of globalization might suggest additional puzzles deserving closer scrutiny. For example, some have argued that to compete successfully in a global marketplace, firms must develop and protect core competencies, as Honda has done with engines and Casio with semiconductors. In light of this, we should ask: Is a core competency knowable before the fact? If a core competency cannot be known in advance, then how can one claim it is a key force in global competition?

Consider as well the issue of transformation. There is a virtual knee-jerk reaction among OD people to hold that revolution is necessary for transformation. But what do we know about "non-extreme" transformations? Nothing. Are such things possible? Can transformation occur without crisis? Wal-Mart, Disney, and American Airlines seem as if they might provide an affirmative answer—but do they? That is what reconnaissance should seek to find out.

In this article I address the issue of whether global incrementalism is an oxymoron. The following shows why this is not an idle question.

Successful global competition is often equated with winning the corporate Olympics. This image deserves to be taken seriously because of recent research that suggests an unexpected answer to the question, "What makes an Olympic athlete?" Chambliss's (1989) observational study of Olympic swimmers suggests that they attain their superiority through qualitative differentiation from other swimmers, not through quantitative increases in activity such as practice. That is, Olympic athletes do not do **more** of the same thing than other athletes (e.g., practice four hours a day rather than two), but instead do different **kinds** of things (e.g., cup their hands differently on the breaststroke, lift themselves out of the water rather than stay low when turning, eat complex carbohydrates rather than fats and sugars) and modify what they actually do (e.g., compared to Class C swimmers, AAAA Olympic swimmers are surprisingly quiet when they dive into the water). Chambliss concludes that quantitative changes make a difference only within levels of competition, and that qualitative changes make a difference between levels of competition.

The striking implication of this argument is that athletes do not reach the top by accumulating time spent in working extra hours. Chambliss notes:

> It is not by doing increasing amounts of work that one becomes excellent, but rather by changing the kinds of work.... [A]thletes move up to the top ranks through *qualitative jumps*, noticeable changes in their techniques, discipline, and attitude, accomplished usually through a change in settings. (1989, p. 75)

Thus, the top people are different, not better. Chambliss also concludes that "excellence is mundane":

> Superlative performance is really a confluence of dozens of small skills or activities, each one learned or stumbled upon, which have been carefully drilled into habit and then are fitted together in a synthesized whole. There is nothing extraordinary or superhuman in any one of those actions; only the fact that they are done consistently and correctly, and all together, produce excellence. (p. 81)

So it is the little things that count.

Given the scope and content of the global issue, are strategies such as seeking modest

victories and incremental decision making irrel-
evant because they tackle such small portions of
issues? Or are small wins and incremental deci-
sion making absolutely crucial because they
create what little order exists concerning these
issues? In the face of global turbulence, a rea-
sonable goal may be to create pockets of order
such as a useful form, an orderly routine, a
compact vision.

Think about trust, a topic that you OD practi-
tioners supposedly know a lot about. What are
OD people doing in light of growing concerns
with high-reliability organizations involved with
nuclear power plants, electric power grids, air
traffic control systems, chemical plants, and
other systems housing complex transformation
processes?

The root meaning of reliability (*Oxford En-
glish Dictionary*, 1971, p. 2480) is "that in
which reliance or confidence may be put; trust-
worthy, safe, sure." (Interestingly, the term "re-
liable" has been in use only since 1850. When
the term was first introduced, it was criticized as
an "Americanism" used in place of the more
entrenched terms "available" and "dependable.")
High-reliability organizations can be viewed
either as tense operators running tense systems,
or as complex performers producing complex
performances. Either way, there is a premium
on trust among people, and of machines by
people, that strains our current understanding of
trust. High-reliability organizations are also key
sites for reconnaissance because they pose the
question, "How do you get reliable performance
in the face of high interdependence?" The world
implied by that question is the opposite of the
world assumed in the garbage can model.

Many of the issues concerning reliability turn
on the question, "Can you take a complex trans-
formation process that is interactive and make it
more linear?" If you could observe situations in
which changes have made this reversal success-
fully, you would give both encouragement as well
as information to those arguing that there are
alternatives to a technological imperative in which
tightly coupled, complex systems are inevitable.

Consider a derivative of contingency theory.
A rule of thumb for starting any design effort is
the presumption that mechanistic organizations
are appropriate in stable environments, but more
organic forms are needed in less stable environ-
ments. Assume that people impose coherent
interpretations on an environment. These inter-
pretations should make the environment seem
more predictable and stable, which should in
turn make mechanistic forms more appropriate
and desirable. Continued environmental insta-
bility, mediated by a meaningful interpretation
of that instability, could well favor mechanistic
forms, a possibility that surely refines contin-
gency theory as well as a general preference for
organic forms. Thus, it is conceivable that

> mechanistic forms achieve their greatest le-
> gitimacy when people are given the greatest
> latitude to impose on the world those stabili-
> ties which they find most compelling. Once
> these compelling stabilities are in place,
> mechanistic forms become eminently sen-
> sible, because they are eminently meaningful.
> (Weick, 1990, p. 49)

Noel Tichy, in his work with Jack Welch at
General Electric, fulfills the role of a reconnais-
sance person. Consider the wider implications
of some of his observations.

The plastics industry, in which Welch got his
start and heavily emphasized differentiation,
was also a central source for the data base from
which Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) induced the
important issues of differentiation and integra-
tion. The plastics industry has had an unusual
impact on organizational studies. Viewed up
close, what has that kept us from seeing?

Welch apparently views the Japanese simul-
taneously as competitors, partners, friends, and
enemies. This is a good example of not being
forced into either/or thinking, and this behavior
would also code high for cognitive complexity.
How is this complex perception sustained, and
what are its effects on structure?

Welch was a hockey player, which is interest-
ing because most sports metaphors applied to

organizations involve either baseball, football, or basketball (Keidel, 1987). No one has portrayed an organization as a hockey team, which suggests the question, "Which nuances not suggested by the other three sports does hockey suggest, and how might these differentiate GE from everyone else?"

Welch appears to relish passionate oral communication. Much of what Welch does is done face to face, which—according to Daft and Lengel's (1986) research on media richness—is the medium capable of handling the most complex information. Before Welch, GE had used more formal, less rich channels. If you want to be informed in equivocal environments, there is no substitute for face-to-face interactions. If you are in a more certain environment (Cordiner, Jones), you can get by with formal media.

As best as I can tell, Welch makes real trouble for theorists of behavior commitment. To his top people, Welch says essentially, "If I'm paying you $200K, I can damn well **demand** full commitment to change." Research on behavioral commitment shows that people get committed to public, irrevocable, **volitional** acts. Maybe Welch is able to get commitment from people because he keeps reminding them, "Look, you don't have to stay here and take this. You can go somewhere else." If they stay, then they **have** acted out of their own volition.

Maybe Welch gets different levels of commitment from his people according to how much they actually feel they can choose whether or not to go along with him. If so, then high level of choice equals high level of commitment equals "Jack is the best CEO in the world," and low level of choice equals low level of commitment equals "Jack stinks."

Finally, consider Welch's manifesto: speed, simplicity, self-confidence. When you think about it, those three concepts are virtually a complete formula to create self-efficacy (Gist, 1987).

Each of my suggested linkages between Welch's actions and behavioral concepts may be silly—but these observations force theorists to think more precisely, and reconnaissance people to look more carefully. As someone who is trying to develop a better understanding of commitment, I listen to Noel tell me how Welch constructs commitment in his world, just as I tell Noel things he should listen for that he might have missed in previous conversations with Welch. I honestly do not want to sit for hours listening to Jack Welch talk, any more than Noel wants to sit in Ann Arbor for hours poring over the latest ins and outs of commitment theory. Both of our activities represent part of the vitality of the academy, but neither activity makes sense by itself. The meaning of each activity is constituted rationally, and each defines and is the pretext for the other. This is an old lesson, but a complex one that quickly gives way to the more soothing simplicities of listening to one's own kind.

I can suggest other examples of reconnaissance in action. No one needs to remind us that analyses of organizations are dominated by cognitive explanations. Surely eye and ear naturalists see and hear more feelings than are represented in our current theories. Sandelands (1988) has begun to develop the unique concept of work feeling, and research on flow experiences has brought feelings back into prominence, as has the field work of Sutton and Rafaeli (1988). Scheff (1990) has recently made the bold, yet plausible proposal that pride and shame are the root feelings from which all other emotions are derived, a notion not much different from one Maslow often discussed in his diaries (e.g., Maslow, 1979, pp. 663–664). All of this has become even more crucial to organizational theorists because of a whole new class of organizations, ephemeral organizations, identified by Lanzara (1983). These groups, which are exemplified by organizations that formed and dissolved after a major Italian earthquake, are clear examples of self-organizing forms. But what may be most crucial about them is that the glue holding them together may be feeling rather than cognition and rational design. These interactions feel good, are absorbing, create flow

experiences, and may cohere for reasons of the heart.

My point is twofold: First, listen for feelings; second, watch for ephemeral organizations. Ephemeral organizations may become increasingly crucial and visible as official government institutions become increasingly less responsive. Ephemeral organizations may be one of the few remaining protections we have against universal cynicism. Lanzara concludes his essay with this observation:

> In a world which has suddenly become turbulent, unreliable, unpredictable, and where the value of the "precedent," once indisputable, is becoming of little help for present and future action, it would not be surprising if human societies and their members relied less and less on formal, longstanding institutions and procedures, and more and more on informal, ephemeral arrangements. (p. 92)

Only reconnaissance can tell us whether or not that extrapolation is sensible.

Because ephemeral organizations tend to emerge in extreme situations, and because OD people are often on hand in times of crisis, these people are in an ideal position to see fundamental, primeval patterns of organizing, which is what ephemeral organizations embody. My hunch is that those root forms of organizing are too informal, too unstructured, too idiosyncratic, and too expressive—and perhaps too hard to describe—for observers to accord them any special status.

The venerable issue of organizational design is undergoing revisions that could be informed by reconnaissance. I mentioned above Nystrom and Starbuck's documentation of the dismal state of organizational design to make the point that any old design intervention is usually an improvement over current practice. Part of the problem of bad design in organizations can be traced to incompetence at the top. The designs of many contemporary organizations can probably be understood as efforts to work around incompetence. Environmental turbulence does not drive design; rather, design is driven by the distribution of incompetence and by efforts to loosen the couplings between the most and least competent portions of an organization.

Finally, recall that a root meaning of reconnaissance is to map the attitude of a territory. Phil Mirvis (1990) has done this and found corrosive cynicism, a mood that scares me because it is so contagious, so self-amplifying, and so tough to arrest. Above I mention several heresies for OD people such as incrementalism, pre-existing patterns, and precedent, and now I mention another one: compromise. Isaac, writing in 1990 about theories of realism, and Arendt, writing in 1953 about modern political thought, both identified an attitude that people doing reconnaissance in the 1990s need to understand, refine, and take to heart. Isaac labels the attitude "chastened rationalism," which he describes as follows:

> I do believe in the creative power of our actions.... But we live and will live among people who think otherwise. We must learn to live with them and teach them to live with us. We must learn the difficult art of political compromise, without which authentic pluralism will not be possible. (1990, p. 24)

Whereas Isaac believes in "the creative power of our actions," Arendt has some doubts.

> The main shortcoming of action lies in the fact that I never quite know what I am doing. Thinking or making things, I know, or am supposed to know, exactly what I am doing ... this is not true for action. Since I act in a web of relationships which consists in the action and desires of others, I can never foretell what ultimately will come out of what I am doing now. This is the reason why we can act politically but cannot "make history." (quoted in Isaac, 1990, pp. 26–27).

If your goal as OD practitioners is to become once again a division that is a haven for rebels, you should realize that the job definition of a rebel is surely not as simple or straightforward

as it once was. Rebels of the 1990s may be indignant about the growing list of "isms" (age-ism, sexism, racism, classism). They also con-front a postmodern world of fractures, authentic pluralism, chastened rationalism, and—as Meindl, Ehrlich, and Dukerich (1985) have shown—a tendency to handle the ill-structured problem of comprehending the causal structure of a complex system by attributing its origins to leaders. As Evelyn Keller (1985, pp. 150–157) has shown in, of all things, research on the growth of slime molds, our understanding of how those molds form was slowed for years because people kept looking for the pacemaker cell. In discourse among men, outcomes are usually treated as the result of hierarchies, inten-tions, guiding cells, leaders, pacemakers, and dominance; emergent, self-organizing, acciden-tal, cooperative arrangements in which a little structure goes a long way are underrepresented, partly because they are less dramatic and partly because they do not match the typically male ways of knowing.

NEXT STEPS FOR THE OD DIVISION

Given this complex set of issues both inside and outside the academy, what are the routes to hope within the division? Unfortunately, my answer to that question is less dramatic than the exhor-tations you are accustomed to.

Here is a case in point: You need to pay more attention to disseminating what you see and hear in media studied by the rest of the academy. Ken Smith, Clay Alderfer, Bill Pasmore, Frank Friedlander, Bob Quinn, and Jean Bartunek all have linked their reconnaissance with theory and have had a wider impact through publishing in *Administrative Science Quarterly (ASQ)*. Their legitimacy is not in question. *ASQ* contin-ues to publish cases (e.g., Vaughan, 1990), models (e.g., Weitzel & Jonsson, 1989), and interventions (e.g., Smith, 1989), as well as articles that people in this division should have written, but did not. "Footnotes to Organiza-tional Change" was submitted to *ASQ* by a

political scientist outside the division (March 1981), and "The Organizational Context of Human Factors Engineering" by a sociologist (Perrow, 1983).

It also seems clear to me that you cannot keep hiding behind the excuse that you operate with a different paradigm than the rest of the acad-emy. First of all, one of your issues is research utilization, which has been a concern of the incoming president of the academy at least since 1982, when she edited a special issue of *ASQ* on this topic (see Beyer & Trice, 1982). Aside from that, explaining your relation to others in terms of a paradigm clash is counterproductive. Ex-change gets inhibited. You offer a proposal, it generates debate, and—instead of trying to un-derstand the fundamentals behind the debate—you use the existence of the debate as "proof" that you have a paradigm. What you have is a debate, not necessarily a paradigm, and no real evidence that doing anything except "your own thing" is futile.

A striking aspect of paradigms in the natural sciences, as described by Kuhn, is that scientists work in small subcommunities, each with its own paradigm, and controversy exists both within and between subcommunities as part of normal scientific activity. A crucial fact, how-ever, is that these communities have a shared appreciation of the foundations of all fields of natural science and take these foundations for granted (see Peterson, 1981, pp. 16–17). In organizational studies we have no foundations we take for granted—at least not explicitly. The OD Division could benefit everyone if it helped uncover implicitly shared, foundational ideas.

I think one important contribution that can be made by people doing reconnaissance is identi-fying the "silly" questions of our field. Alfred Kuhn (no relation to Thomas) illustrates this issue with the example of a physicist. A physi-cist will gladly explain what happens when a sphere rolls down a smooth incline, but if you ask how the sphere got to the top of the incline, or where an irregular boulder rolling down an irregular mountain will land, the most likely

answer is, "Don't be silly, you can't answer questions like that." In the social sciences, according to Kuhn,

> We waste vast amounts of time and incur great frustration and insecurity trying to find reliable generalizations about social events and relationships that are unlikely ever to be twice the same. We lack the courage, or the sophistication, to say, "That's not knowable," even though we often deal with situations the number and complexity of whose variables make the irregular boulder on the irregular hillside a matter of utter simplicity by comparison. (Kuhn & Beam, 1982, p. xxii)

This advice—OD people should counsel others in the academy to walk away from some questions on the basis of what they see—appears to run contrary to OD's impulse to annex seemingly every question, social issue, concept, and technique in sight. For the role of citizen that type of annexing is understandable, but for the role of social science scholar it represents hubris. Rather than concern ourselves with what we should be doing, we might make more progress if we debated what we should **not** be doing. The people doing reconnaissance are in a strong position to nominate silly questions to be ignored and thereby improve the quality of our thinking.

I note repeatedly in this article how important it is to develop high-variety languages so that we can preserve the fresh nuances we discover when we look again. I think that presents an important project for this division—or some other one—to tackle. I have had some luck in moving toward high-variety language by having my students learn and write in something called E-Prime (Kellogg, 1987), a form of language that lets one use every construction except the verb "to be." Thus, in E-Prime I could not say "OD is worried," but would have to say instead, "OD surveyed its members" (which almost never happens), or "OD encouraged outsiders to think about its issues," or "OD has experimented with different names for the division." E-Prime prevents one from being glib

about map-territory relationships. It forces one to employ a specificity that either pinpoints a word that captures the experience or pinpoints where a word or concept is needed. If we seek to tackle problems, paradox, polarity, and opposition with more intelligence, we must do some work on language.

I am urging you to do several things you are unaccustomed to doing, such as acting incrementally, worrying about words instead of actions, divesting yourself of issues, listening to theorists as well as practitioners, finding problems rather than solving them, becoming champions of compromise, contracting your aspirations, thinking small, and appreciating the mundane more than the spectacular. To that list—which surely vindicates my initial belief that my position was more like that of Jim than of Marlin Perkins—I add one final suggestion: that you cultivate your ability to stop things. I again use a puzzle from the world of jazz to make my point.

Music critics sometimes ask, "Was Duke Ellington America's foremost jazz composer?" This question gets asked so often because the answer is elusive, for at least three reasons. First, most of Ellington's best-known songs originated in someone else's head. "Caravan" and "Perdido" were begun by Juan Tizol. "Mood Indigo" was worked out mainly by Lorenzo Tio, Jr. "Do Nothing Till You Hear from Me" was adapted from "Concerto for Cootie," the main theme of which was written by Cootie Williams. "Don't Get Around Much Anymore," "I Let a Song Go Out of My Heart," and "I'm Beginning to See the Light" came from Johnny Hodges's melodies; "In a Sentimental Mood," "Sophisticated Lady," and "Prelude to a Kiss" were adapted from Otto Hardwick melodies; "I Got It Bad" was adapted from Mercer; "Satin Doll" and "Take the A Train" were written by Billy Strayhorn. Of all the songs on which Ellington's reputation as a songwriter—and his ASCAP royalties as well—is based, only "Solitude" appears to have been entirely his work. For the rest he was at best a collaborator, at worst

merely the arranger of a band version of the tune (Collier, 1987, p. 302).

Second, Ellington has not been considered America's foremost composer because he rarely wrote out any of his work. All that exists today are scraps of paper with chords or fragments. Third, the source of much of his work is obscure. Sections often worked out arrangements after Ellington gave them a chord, lead players altered chords, and counterpoint and answering lines were then suggested by the sections.

If Ellington was not a composer, what was he, as an enormous body of music would not exist today without him? The answer is that Ellington's influence was more diffuse. Musicians incorporated Ellington's sounds, ideas, and harmonies into their own thinking without being aware of doing so. Ellington in effect invented his musicians by shaping their improvising styles (e.g., encouraging the use of the plunger mute), choosing when they would play, and which of their strengths he would parade. His vision shaped the final products.

Collier (1987, p. 304) has likened Ellington to a master chef:

We thus have to see Duke Ellington as we see a master chef. The chef does not chop all the vegetables himself or make the sauce with his own hands. But he plans the menus, trains the assistants, supervises them, tastes everything, adjusts the spices, orders another five minutes in the oven for the lamb. And in the end we credit him with the result.

So it was with Duke Ellington: wherever he got the ingredients, it was his artistic vision that shaped the final product. Hodges, Williams, Bigard and the rest could not have done any of this, and, when they had their own bands, despite years of observing Ellington's methods, they created little memorable music aside from their own playing. It is Ellington's personal stamp, instantly recognizable, that is on these works.

The significance of this chef metaphor, which I admit tends to be overused, was brought home

to me in discussions with Larry Browning. An underappreciated skill of chefs is that they know when to stop the process, and use their own taste as the criterion of adequacy. It takes a mixture of confidence, distance, and influence to say, "That's it—stop," have this directive followed, and have everyone feel it is right.

The conductor I refer to is **not** the classical music conductor, a metaphor much beloved by people such as Kanter and Drucker. The methods of classical conductors simply will not do. They say, in effect, "Here's the recipe, here's the score, your job is to execute it properly, and my job is to direct your execution." When Ellington tried this classical model in some of his extended works and religious concerts, it did not work.

So if Ellington is not a composer in the narrow sense of the word, then what is he? The answer is: an improvising jazz musician whose instrument was the whole band. Thus, his "work" consists of his recordings, not his written compositions.

How does this apply to you OD practitioners? In part, you, who are notorious for your proclivity to start things, need to develop your own tastes as the criteria for deciding when you will stop the chronically evolving processes unfolding inside the OD Division, outside in the academy, and still further outside among your clients. Part of your responsibility is to say to the people who incessantly spin out ideas, concepts, and theories, "Stop," "Do that again," "Juxtapose those two images," "Hold onto that," "That's silly," "This counts." In many ways, organizational researchers have become obsessed with variation and the generation of novelty, but our capacity to integrate ideas has not kept pace with their discovery. Integration is an act of selection, of making preferences explicit, of imposing criteria, of saying "stop."

I consider it informative that this article started with Ellington and ended with Ellington, but in two quite different roles. The discussion of Ellington's star saxophonist Paul Gonsalves presented evidence of the light (some would say

nonexistent) Ellington touch that enabled him to manage a diverse set of musicians, at least one of whom was prone to fall asleep on the stand. The final anecdote, however, offered evidence of a heavier touch, one that was more confident, more structuring, more interventionist. This is the side of Ellington that invented the musicians whom he then managed unobtrusively. Ellington simultaneously initiated structure and expressed consideration, was simultaneously proactive and reactive, a prospector and a defender, all because he knew how to stop things as well as start them.

My hunch is that Ellington kept his zest because he was able to do both. That lesson should not be lost on this division.

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