Play and responsibility in academic writing: a Menippean dialogue

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Abstract
Tackling the in-between of scholarly responsibility, towards matters of concern, and towards innovative play, the purpose, if you will, of our paper, is to actualize a dialogic approach to the writing of organizational research. Call it a Menippean dialogue (Sullivan & McCarthy 2008) that dashes past an agélaste ethos (Styhre 2008) and postmodern non-committal. The Menippean dialogue, a genre that is named after the Greek parodist Menippus, usually involves a form of satire where the author creates extraordinary situations for the purpose of testing philosophical truths/ideas. Bakhtin (1984) describes it as a genre that often follows loose-jointed, discontinuous way of writing that is carnivalesque in nature. In venturing into the potential of the Menippean dialogue, we reconsider our ‘habitual forms of publication and public action, and address the question of ‘how to speak to it’” (Steyaert & Hjorth 2002, p.767). In particular, the purpose is to extend the work of other scholars who contest the implicit but still present assumption of order, linearity and solidity in the research and writing of management and organizational studies. In unsettling the fixation for fixing things in writing, this genre enables us to venture into the tension between opening and closing forces in academic writing in the triadic relationship of author, hero and reader. Through our dialogue we hope to tease out some sense of directions for future writing, which might bring some solace to those walking the talk.


