Editorial

Poetry in Management Research

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Abstract

Poetry can contribute to advance management research. Reflecting on poetry as a path to regenerate management research lets us understand the ways of researching and the constitution of the researcher. Poetry is a way to start the construction of meaning and, at the same time, a coping mechanism, a way of re-existing not to de-exist. The poetic representation of lives is not an end in itself. The goal is political: to change the way we think about people and their lives in organizations using the poetic format. The researcher-poet makes the world visible from new perspectives and understandings, evidencing a political-ethical responsibility regarding the poetic. Poetry can move beyond prescribed ways of reading, writing, understanding, and 'doing' organizations and management, connecting itself to ethical considerations of voice and power dynamics.

Keywords: poetry; poetics; research; ethics.

Introduction

> When my feet
> slow down on the march,

please
don't force me.
Walk for what?
Let me be still,
let me stand still
in apparent inertia.
Not every traveler
walks roads,
there are submerged worlds
that only the silence
of poetry penetrates
(Evaristo, 2017, p. 18)

Poetry has been around in management research for some time. It has been analyzed in several ways: (a) as a means of improving organizational and managerial practice (Morgan, Lange, & Buswick, 2010); (b) as a way of understanding organizations, management, and entrepreneurship (Darmer, 2000; Kostera, 1997; Smith, 2015); (c) as a way to inject creativity into organizations and management (Grisoni, 2008); (d) as a resource to understand and/or develop research on organizations and management (Darmer, 2006); and (e) as a pathway to instigate the learning and educational practice of management (Gallos, 1997; Bilimoria, 1999; Höpfl, 1994). Although not a new subject, we understand that poetry can stimulate and enrich the practice of management research. As a special form of narrative, poetry remains on the margins of management (Darmer & Grisoni, 2011). However, like poetry and poetic language, margins express persuasive and disruptive powers of the prevailing order (Kristeva, 1984; Höpfl, 1994).

In this editorial, we bet on the power of poetry to regenerate organizations, but especially to advance management research. Poetry requires commitment, affection, intuition, and imagination from its author, for it must make sense to readers not only in terms of words but also beyond words, in terms of metaphors, musicality. It invites us to reinvent or at least rethink our models as far as it includes doubts, paradoxes, and contractions, transforming them into beautiful ideas about the human existence (Bachani, 2021). Indeed, poetic researchers explore how the vibrant use of language (metaphors, stories, irony, imagination etc.) provides for the construction of shared experiences and meanings (Cunliffe, 2002).

Modes of researching, existing, and creating

Reflecting on poetry as a path to regenerate management research lets us understand the ways of researching and the constitution of the researcher. A dissertation, a doctoral thesis, a story, a life, a research project, even a country, need to be instaurated to minimally exist. Intensifying existence and presence, these instaurations require work from the researcher who surrenders to the responsibility arising from them. A mode of existence "is a way of making a being exist on a given plane" (Lapoujade, 2017, p. 14). To instaurate is not to represent to ourselves where we want to go, and subsequently, the mere act of mobilizing the means and resources by which that end may be realized. Instaurating refers to the way in which something is gradually conquered (Souriau, 2015). Presences and existences need to be conquered bit by bit.

Why instauration? Each existence consists of a gesture that it instaurates, if we understand instauration as the act, immanent to the event, of bringing a mode into existence (Lapoujade, 2017), for our unique, intimate, immediate and direct experiences are what we have at our disposal (Souriau, 2015), whereas the term '**doing**' refers to the instance in which, through our personal energy, we take responsibility for the becoming, the coming into existence, for the establishment of something as concrete and as full as possible. Usually, the 'doing' is plagued by a kind of haunting, that of the work-to-be-done, another fundamental presence. In graduate school, some of what haunts us could be dissertations, theses, lines of research. To 'do' research, researchers will need to sufficiently establish their own path. Instauration is the key to existences because it refers to the existential incompleteness of everything (Souriau, 2015).

The idea of the inconclusiveness of life demands an act of accountability for the world, i.e., it demands an accountability for doing the work by doing, for the very act of instauration. Nothing exists by itself; everything needs to be completed. "Nothing, not even our own selves, is given to us other than in a sort of half-light, a penumbra in which only incompleteness can be made out, where nothing possesses either full presence" (Souriau, 2015, p. 220). Instauration and unfinishedness are two forces that manifest themselves concomitantly in favor of thought creation. For this reason, the aesthetic discussion about creation and affirmation of modes of existence, by referring to the responsibility before the instauration of worlds, is inseparable from a problematization simultaneously political and ethical, including in our ways of research.

Since science can address everything and knowledge derives from the ethical, aesthetic, and political action of the researcher, to claim to know something does not express that we know everything about what constitutes an object. However, the act of knowing is also born from the cracks and concerns we feel, embodied in our research questions (Fonseca, 2019). An ethic of listening, attention, and coexistence takes us back to the notion of subject to action and no longer subject of action. Thus, it will be the work-to-be-done that subjects the person who sets out to set it up (Jacques, 2019), intensifying the meaning of responsibility, in the double sense, of co-responsibility and responsiveness in the act of research.

This is a renewal of the art-life metaphor. This means that a thesis, a dissertation or a research paper will not be the finished work but will be part of this journey. The work of establishing the work-to-be-finished is the same work of establishing the life-to-be-lived. So, when we talk about an academic trajectory, we are not only talking about theoretical choices, about the empirical field, methodologies, about work, but also about instituting a path related to ways of life. Art, taken by its undertaking (work) of instauration (of the work), becomes here a living metaphor of life. And, if the work is the journey itself, we can say that certain works take a whole life (Souriau, 2015).

Souriau's (2015) philosophical provocations lead us to a fruitful field of thinking and critically operating other modalities of investigative thinking, putting on the agenda the possibilities of researching with nuances different from the founding and guiding idea of the split between subject and object, science and nature. By problematizing research in the field of management, considering modes of existence, we allow ourselves other instaurative processes of research. Thus, we begin to question how we confer existence to our research problems. We take the problem in its mode of existence, its historicity, temporality, and spatiality. In the specific territory of management research, understood as an inventive and poetic act of creation, a research problem is preceded by establishing a way of thinking, which implies in a kind of aesthetic creation, germinating the

pulsating encounter of the researcher as an artist of thought with his/her research-work (Ribeiro, 2020).

Poetry in the research process

Art has inhabited a wide variety of academic fields for centuries. Philosophers from diverse traditions, aesthetic thinkers, feminist scholars, ethnographic writers, activists, and artists can all, in their various and distinct ways, contribute to thinking about art and aesthetics in the field of organizational studies. In general, arts-based methods in qualitative research are understood as a process of incorporating the creative arts to address research questions and ultimately produce some form of artistic representation at the conclusion of the study (Bhattacharya, 2017). Researchers from different disciplines use this approach during all phases of social research for data generation, analysis, and representation (Leavy, 2015).

Scholars who incorporate the arts into their research claim that these methods offer a more holistic approach to inquiry and that they allow researchers to deal with the uncertainties and paradoxes of experience (Moxley, 2013; Moxley & Feen, 2015). Arts-based methods offer the possibility of moving in multiple epistemic directions, producing multidimensional (Bhattacharya, 2013) and multivocal knowledge. By connecting the cognitive and affective worlds of research participants and the researcher, arts-based methods allow researchers to become familiar with those they seek to know (Furman, Langer, & Davis, 2007).

In history, particularly in some peoples, it is noticeable the increase and encouragement of the urge to consume what is material and natural, dilapidating subjectivities that also become objects of mere consumption. Thinking about broadening our existential horizon implies enriching our subjectivities or, at least, being able to maintain our subjectivities, 'our visions, our poetics about existence.' Then, we can think of the ability to sustain a poetic vision of existence as an alternative of resistance among others (Krenak, 2019). Mindful of Krenak's provocation, our focus falls on the potential of poetry and poetics to allow us to rethink and set up academic processes in relation to research creation as the production of relational knowledge (Meriläinen, Salmela, & Valtonen, 2021).

Our time specializes in creating absences (Santos, 2002), expert in creating absence of subjectivity (Krenak, 2019), in silencing and making invisible as strategies of annihilation. Keeping "our, visions, our poetics," leads us to think about a new relationship of research with poetry, not to get definitive answers to questions related to numerous ongoing economic and socio-environmental crises, but, at least, to think in the direction of what can be done, to think about instaurations (Krenak, 2019; Souriau, 2015). How to instaurate truths that are no longer universal and exterminate worlds considered illusory ('absent,' invisible) but recognize the plurality of ways of existing and negotiate the participation of new actors in their fabrication? How can we think of a new relationship between research in the field of organizational studies and poetry that is not reduced to a minimalist poetic reflection but can (re)make the world? To answer at least partially these inquiries, let us reflect with Dias and Oliveira:

> Come, listen, the lines are infinite and their ever-future ecologies joyfully unpredictable. Their ways of being together are multiple and are always making and unmaking themselves, with things coming from anywhere. Things that always come with their loose threads and ask to be followed: sometimes unraveling, sometimes intertwining or continuing in unusual braids. At each passage, things ask to move forward in a profusion of connections and directions. To follow the lines is always to go from one thing to another, from articles to the loom, from the loom to the poem, from the poem to the booklet, from the booklet to speech, from speech to the web, from the web to dance, from dance to photography, from photography to the altar, from the altar to embroidery, from embroidery to sculpture, from sculpture to writing… In a ceaseless experiment in the art of existing between the lines and learning to listen to the vibrations of a sensitive loom that exists between things-being-worlds, always open, inconclusive, and in constant transmutation. (Dias & Oliveira, 2019, p. 224)

Poetry has been recognized in relation to poiesis, 'making' in the 'Sourian' sense, remaking or even revolution (Threadgold, 1997). Poiesis can also mean 'bringing to light,' a threshold of becoming, a life-giving verb (Whitehead, 2003). It is a way of initiating the construction of meaning and, at the same time, a coping mechanism, a way of re-existing not to de-exist. "Therefore, re-existing is a political gesture whose ethics seek a social change both less ambitious and more sensitive" (Arruda & Fonseca, 2018, p. 217). This practice highlights the relationality of how to research with and for people (Haraway, 2016). Poetry in the rescue of sensitivity has its own qualities, accommodating itself to matter and time, to the human and the other non-human.

Poetry as research? Yes, that is right! The poetic representation of lives is not an end in itself. The goal is political: to change the way we think about people and their lives in organizations by using the poetic-performative format. The researcher-poet makes the world visible from new perspectives and understandings, going beyond what scientific writing does not always allow for (Denzin, 2017), evincing a political-ethical responsibility of the researcher regarding the poetic.

Poetry as a way to stimulate reflexivity and critical vision

Among its countless modalities and strands, one of the segments of arts-based research proposes a critical approach. This kind of method, which values critical vision, dominates our imagination, takes possession of our souls, and brazenly strives to affect our own ways of living, being and coexisting as researchers, as social scientists, as people. It transforms and offers new ways of expressing our identities (Finley, 2018). Research that is deliberately transformative inspires us to reflect and leads us to the ethical and political action necessary to initiate positive changes in our social interactions. Art is an essential aspect of culture, often used as a coping mechanism for those suffering oppression. It can bring visibility to conditions that create oppression, making them valuable strategies for challenging social inequalities (Moxley, 2013, Corley, 2020). Critical arts-based research makes intentional use of imagination (Faulkner, 2017; Corley, 2020; Prince, 2021). It reveals itself as a performative research methodology that is structured on the notion of possibility, what could be, of a research tradition that is postcolonial, pluralistic, ethical, and transformative.

Poetic inquiry is a form of arts-based method of narrative expression with a growing presence in qualitative research (Krahn, 2018) that assists researchers to delve deep and into the tangled complexities of the realities they research. It is an alternative way of representing research material that combines the art of poetry-making with the principles of qualitative research. The condensed and evocative nature of poems can broaden our subjective lens and help draw attention to understanding Others more clearly (Colby & Bodily, 2018). A valuable feature of poetic representations is their ability to engage readers in reflective analysis - the practice of critically examining and documenting the researcher's fluid position and experiences within the research (Boylorn, 2011; Moxley & Feen, 2015). Reflective writing modifies the subject/object relationship. Writing is immanent (Deleuze, 2013) rather than transcendent. Writing is the modification of the text simultaneous to its creation and destruction.

Poetry as an arts-based method can be employed alone or in combination with other research methods as 'an act of creative resistance' to inhabit the in-between, offering alternative voices to the dominant narratives communicated by interconnected institutions of power (Prince, 2021). Poetry, in its many forms and articulations, can go beyond prescribed ways of reading, writing, understanding, and 'doing' organizations and management. As such, it is also connected to ethical considerations of voice and power dynamics.

What is the future of poetry in the future of management research?

Since the beginning of the current health crisis, several national and international journals have sought to include, in their editorials and publications, discussions about how research can seek to "make a difference" in the context of this crisis. They seek to broaden our understanding of the impact of research by referring to academic, practical, social, political or educational impacts. The focus is on research agendas that contribute to the challenges society is facing. Thus, in the field of management, with an orientation toward important questions and the problems related to social issues, administrators and management scholars are being called upon by society to give attention to broad issues of social justice, climate change, migration, and, more recently, social inequalities amplified by a global pandemic.

Consequently, we pose two questions: (a) why instauration? and (b) why poetry as research? Our expectation is to provoke and instigate the use of poetry in management research as a concrete possibility of approximation and coexistence with more traditional practices of academic inquiry. We speak of research that institutes new modes of existence, that influences, through multifaceted ways and channels, how people and organizations think, feel, and perform. Of course, poetry is free and does not hold to a single purpose or follow a single concept or thought. Poetry always becomes greater than the purpose for which it was designed.

The use of poetry in management research may mistakenly suggest the idea of 'an impossibility to define method' since it is a flow of coexisting singularities. However, we believe that this flow of singularities carries with it the power to deal with certain freedoms in the quest for a more empathetic, creative, innovative, generous, and powerful way of thinking and researching. It will certainly require boldness and detachment to spill concepts through fissures cut into the fabric of 'traditional' thinking. On the other hand, this way of researching can open infinite pores, tears, and gaps and shed light on the invisible or silenced social fabric. If we do this, then perhaps we will

be talking about and constituting inclusive knowledge. As we saw earlier, presences and existences need to be conquered by the work to be done.

What is the future of poetry in management research? This question can be answered with another question: what are your practices of researching and changing the world?

> Desert of language
> I scouted . . . I dug . . . and I dug . . .
> I drowned in the sea of words
> Sounds, sonorities
> Mute voice
> Noisy silences
> The sky fell on my shoulders
> Folds, between everything, between so much, between lines, in between
> I entangled between interludes
> . . . saved by the spells,
> now breathing thanks to the witches and sorceries that inhabit my gestures and existences
> Wasp and orchid
> Let's continue presence, instaurating.
> (Antonello, 2022, piece for this editorial)

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