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Kociatkiewicz, J. and Kostera, M. (2010) *Experiencing the shadow: Organizational exclusion and denial within experience economy*. *Organization*, 17 (2). pp. 257-282. ISSN 1350-5084

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508409341114>

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Experiencing the Shadow: Organizational Exclusion and Denial within Experience Economy

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Abstract

This article focuses on the dark and hidden aspects of experience economy events. These aspects are framed as the shadow in the Jungian sense, i.e. an archetype of the unconscious domain. Individuals and organizations create a shadow as a side effect of attempts at control and ordering of their identity. The article presents stories based on ethnographically inspired field studies of experience economy events to show how staged experience produces an experiential shadow side. The process is problematized and reflected upon as a shadow producing side effect of identity production and management in experience economy settings. The possibilities for the integration of the shadow into the normal operation of experience economy organizations are considered with the help of images of the carnival and the archetype the fool. The acceptance of the paradoxical and strange side of such events they may be better understood and their dark side integrated.

Keywords

carnival; experience; experience economy; identity; non-participant observation; shadow

Introduction

In our contemporary culture of permanent merriment and obligatory happiness it is not uncommon to experience a strange kind of ineptitude: the suspicion that one is not talented enough to be happy, that there must be something broken at the core of one's heart. The well-to-do should be happier than the poor, the modern – more blessed than the backward, and the successful should exude a perpetual state of bliss. Yet this is far from the truth, as Bauman (2008) points out, and, instead, we ought perhaps to ask ourselves, “what is wrong with happiness?” (p. 1). It is not there – and we absolutely must find it! Indeed, our culture obliges us to it. The ways we are supposed to find happiness lie within the sphere of consumption. First

we need to acquire the necessary means, through work that may or may not bring us satisfaction or joy, but that is considered inconsequential, unimportant, it is the financial rewards that matter, not the heart we put into the vast part of our lives spent getting them. Then we need to spend the money on goods and services, and more recently, on staged experiences. In doing that, it is widely believed, lies the path to the ever elusive happiness. Or, as Bauman has it, the miseries of happiness: an imperative to feel joy. But shopping for happiness does not live up to its promises, more often than not it not only brings disenchantment but also outright feelings of unhappiness. This is a text about some of the mechanisms of *unhappiness* as a side effect of organized joy.

Article originally published (2010) in *Organization* 17/2: 257-282. DOI: 10.1177/1350508409341114. This copy includes the content of the article, but does not follow journal layout or page numbers.

We focus on the shadow aspects of organized settings known as experience economy events. The shadow is one of the central Jungian archetypes (1951/1977), i.e. an important cultural image having a great influence on how people make sense of their place in the world. The shadow is an archetype of self-rejection, an assemblage of unwanted and destructive elements which Jung believed was more or less a universal construct of the human psyche. Not only individuals but also organizations create a shadow, and this tends to occur the more intensively, the more prominent are the attempts at perfect control (Bowles, 1991). We present stories based on ethnographically inspired field studies of experience economy events to show how staged experience produces an experiential shadow side. We reflect upon the process of shadow as a side effect of identity production and management in experience economy settings. With the help of Hatch and Schultz's model of identity creation in organizations (1997), we trace the feelings that, by not being acknowledged in the official staging process, become independent of the managed identity and accumulate at the margins, forming the shadow. Finally, we consider the possibilities for the integration of the shadow into the normal operation of experience economy organizations. The main underlying theme for our reading of experience economy is framed by the ideas of the carnival and of the archetype of the fool: by letting go of some of the control along these archetypical lines: accepting the inherent potential for disruption, affirming the paradoxical nature of such events, their grotesque side, and the embracing of absurdity via the archetype of the fool (Kets de Vries, 1990) may be the way to both better understand such events and integrate their shadow-side.

Organizational shadow and the production of identity

The shadow is one of the most important archetypes. In Jungian terms, an archetype is a kind of hidden image concealed

in the collective unconscious domain of reality and shared by all humans. [Archetypes] are the substance that myths and symbols are constructed of and because of their universality they have the capacity of turning individuals into a group. Thus they can be seen as the underpinning of culture and society (Kostera, 2007a, p.76)

Archetypes connect humankind over time and space, like a riverbed ready to hold ideas and images, from which humans draw inspiration and on which they feed their imagination. It is not necessary to believe in the collective unconscious to use the idea of archetypes – they can be just as well portrayed as a kind of a story embodying a particular desire to unfold and a potential to be interpreted and re-interpreted almost indefinitely (Kostera, 2008). In organization studies archetypes have been used for many purposes, from explanation of cultural deficiencies of contemporary organizations (Höpfl, 2002), to exploration of possibilities for environmental consciousness in modern business (Ryland, 2000), to the quest for professional ethos (Jonnergard, 2008).¹

The archetype relevant for this text, the shadow, has been defined by Jung (1951/1997) as the aspect of a person's psyche holding denied and rejected elements of one's personality. The shadow consists of emotions that are dynamic and, without control of the self, may acquire autonomy and even take over the self, as if possessing a person. The source of emotions is always identified as someone else, outside the self, and so the shadow is made up of forces that seem beyond one's control. The world outside becomes evil and unbearable, although from the outside the person is seen as caught in a nightmare of his or her own making. The shadow is a moral problem and it demands courage to deal with – to see it for what it is and recognize it as part of oneself. Only awareness helps in the struggle with the shadow's darkness. The next step is integration, embracing it into the conscious self.

In organizational contexts the shadow has first been explored by Bowles (1991). Organizations, he noted, are diligent shadow-producers, because they steer behaviours and like to manage its culture. Managed organizational identity, although often introduced as a totalizing project, never achieves total control of organizational reality: undesired behaviours accumulate and influence attempts at introducing managed identity, and sometimes they turn into a collective Mr. Hyde that surfaces as powerful and usually uncontrollable impulses. The stronger the attempted control of the identity of the organization, the stronger grows the shadow.

The idea of organizational identity has been a very popular topic for research through at least the last

¹ For an overview, see Kostera (2008).

20 years (see e.g. Albert and Whetten, 1985; Dutton and Dukerich, 1991, Hatch and Schultz, 1997; Whetten, 2006; for an overview see e.g. Nag et al., 2007). For the purpose of this text, we will use the model of organizational identity by Hatch and Schultz (1997), as it addresses the processes of identity creation, themselves important for illuminating how the organizational shadow emerges as the inevitable companion and consequence of identity. The model describes the latter as a product of the interaction between the internal culture and the external image; the process contains following four phases: *reflecting*, or the way values are rooted in culture through assumptions; *expressing*, the way culture communicates itself; *mirroring*, the ways in which identity is affected by the images of others; and *impressing*, the processes by which identity expressions impress the images of others.

All the elements of identity rejected by the actors spill out of conscious processes and flow into the shadow. It is, as we conceive of it, produced alongside all the conscious processes, as undesired and unacknowledged components turn up. Some values, instead of being reflected in culture, slip away into the shadow as values and norms not espoused, yet still honoured by the organization. We call this process *imposition* (all our labels, we need to note, are purely metaphorical and not derived directly from either psychology or organization theories). Certain norms and values never make it to the conscious identity narrative via expression but

remain practiced-yet-not-acknowledged. We have labelled the process of rejection *hypocrisy*. Yet other elements of external images do not get mirrored in the identity but create the shadow through a process we call *denial*. Finally, some of the ideas that the organization sends out are not impressed in the external images but lost, unreceived by the audiences and thus also become part of the shadow. We label this process *misdirection*. The shadow should not be seen as a mere companion to the accepted identity. It may grow powerful and crush the identity construction process in a violent outburst in any phase, or it can accumulate and create a suffocating surrounding of identity creation processes, breeding feelings of burnout and cultural implosion. Figure 1 depicts the organizational identity dynamics model with added elements of shadow production.

Experience economy

In this text we explore the shadow-side of some experience economy settings. The concept was coined by Pine and Gilmore (1999) in their bestselling book *The experience economy*. The book's subtitle proclaims: "work is theatre and every business is a stage," and its authors present the experience economy as a new type of market orientation where businesses strive to achieve a high degree of product differentiation and mass customization simultaneously. Transactions are treated as theatrical spectacles, aiming at providing clients with unforgettable, remarkable experiences.

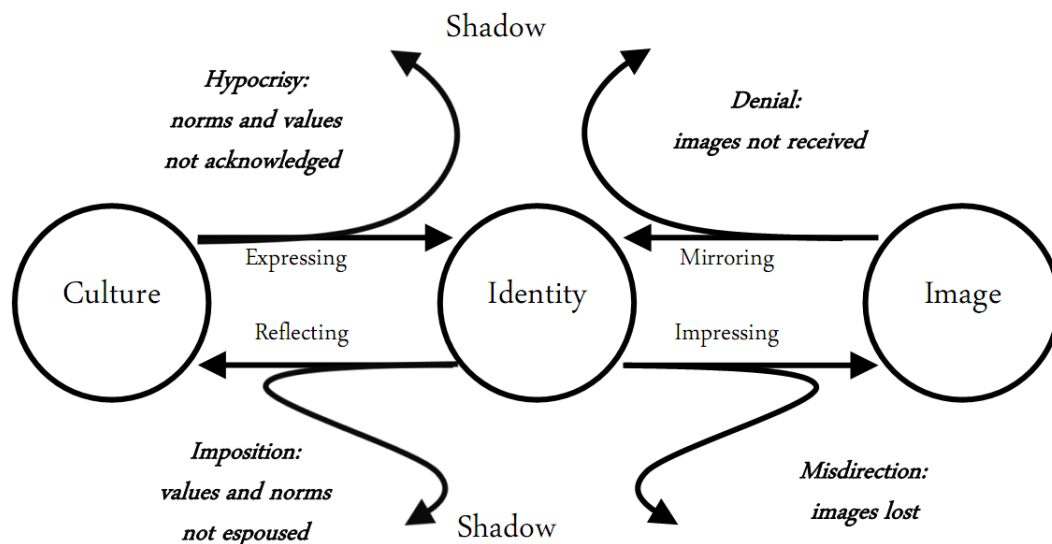


Fig. 1: The Construction of Organizational Identity and Shadow. Based on the Identity Dynamics model by Hatch and Schultz (1997)

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The individual customer's emotions are regarded as crucial and loyalty is much desired. Gilmore and Pine (2007) emphasize that not only firms and management canons change with the introduction of the experience economy, but so do popular expectations. Customers now tend to seek products that fit their self image. Authenticity, rather than price or quality, is becoming the new purchase criterion. Customers look for products they can incorporate as a significant part of their lives. Firms, in turn, guard their ideas jealously and seek to convince the customer of their authenticity. Every product has to be the "real thing".

Management in the experience economy resembles running a theatre (Pine and Gilmore, 1999), with goods and services serving as theatrical props. Not the products as such, not the actions performed by the employees, but relationships become of the essence. The customer should be able to remember the experience well and develop sympathy for the firm and its employees. The performance needs to engage both parties: the customer and the employee.

Hjorth and Kostera (2007) define experience economy as based on the following four principles: immediacy, subjectivity, playfulness, and performativity. Experiences are always embodied and contextualized, never abstract, and so the experience economy product needs to be immediate, situated in concrete time and space. Subjectivity means that experiences always have an active subject, someone who is engaging with the process and transforming it, while being transformed him- or herself. Despite the focus on authenticity of experience, experience economy firms are also typically characterized by playfulness, a certain distance towards themselves and their activities. The customers should be aware of the artificiality of the staging and not take it too seriously; they should also, and perhaps above all, have fun. Finally, performativity of the economy means that the products are being created "on the spot", they become realized as they are experienced. It is impossible to store experiences or to recycle them. They happen for each and every one freshly and as they come.

Hjorth and Kostera describe three kinds of experience economy practices, from unique through mediated to mass-produced. The products are in all cases equally subjective and immediate, but the experience process might be presented as one of its kind, as in art production, as a transformation of one experience into another, as in design changing the ordinary into the

aesthetically sophisticated, or as an experience shared with many others, as in sports spectacles. Depending on the type of practice, customers are invited to be introspective or extroverted in their experiences. Yet in all types consumption takes the form of a quest – for adventure as well as for identity.

While the idea of experience economy evokes promises of ecstatic thrills, it also gives rise to a shadow side. In this paper, based on our observation of events and organizations focused on experience: fairs, shopping malls, and amusement parks, we examine the shadow side of experience economy to look for traces of the unwelcome, excluded, and proscribed artifacts, feelings, and people.

Practices associated with experience economy, whether identified by this name or not, are by no means welcomed wholeheartedly across the academic and journalistic community. Already in 1983, Hochschild (1983) pointed out the difficulties and human cost of emotional labour, the seeming requirement of the transformation of the employee's self and identity to suit company needs in service economy. Van Maanen and Kunda (1989) described coping strategies of Disneyland ride operators forced by their employer to sincerely enact Disney's dream world. Leidner (1993) explored the interpretive work involved in performing, adapting, and transgressing rules of scripted service situations in fast-food franchises and door-to-door insurance sales. Perhaps most famously, Ritzer (1993) criticized the transformations of contemporary economy, largely paralleling Pine and Gilmore's description of experience economy, under the name of McDonaldization. His argument highlighted duplicity, irrationality, and basic inhumanity of the solutions offered by contemporary business trends.

In general, the above authors tend to show the basic corruption, or bankruptcy (moral, aesthetic, or social) of the forms of organizing giving birth to experience economy events. We, in our endeavour to explore their dark side, wholeheartedly accept the existence, and perhaps even predominance of the light side. At its heart lies the acknowledgement of the search for experiences as one of the basic human (and thus, consumer) drives; an important realization not only for economic success in the marketplace, but also a hope for counteracting alienation of both the consumer and the employee. Experience economy does offer commodification of experience, but it also introduces the possibility of its integration as a decisive

factor in sensemaking and identity construction (cf. Giddens, 1991). In a similar vein, Csikszentmihályi (2003) studies *flow*, the experience of utter focus coupled with exhilaration, as the driving goal for entrepreneurs and artists alike. We see it as one of the palette of sensations and impressions sought by both the experience economy customers and purveyors. Identity construction in experience economy is always a tentative process, matching what Martin (1992) terms the *fragmentation* perspective on organizational culture: “a web of individuals, sporadically and loosely connected by their changing positions on a variety of issues.” Yet neither fragility nor loose coupling (Weick, 2001) of such structures renders them immune from shadow production, as we hope to demonstrate in our fieldwork.

Carnivals

A parallel can be drawn between participation in experience economy events and the long tradition of carnivals, periods and sites of festivity, of wild and raucous behaviour, and of suspension of the social order. In his famous study of Rabelais, Bakhtin discussed carnival, the joyous celebration of the “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order” (1941/1984, p. 10) as a fundamental feature of any successful social arrangement, the necessary (and gleeful) counterpart of hierarchic organization of everyday life. Carnival serves not only to release tensions and conflicts accruing in rigid social structure but also

tests and contests all aspects of society and culture through festive laughter: those that are questionable may be readied for change; those that are deemed legitimate may be reinforced (LaCapra, 1983/2003, p. 43).

Most importantly for the present analysis, the Bakhtinian category of the carnivalesque can also be used to shed light on other disruptions of the social order where “gay deception,” (Bakhtin, 1935/1981), the irreverent mocking of established truths, introduces thrills, danger, and the (often false) promise of liberation. The carnivalesque is personified in the various trickster figures, such as the rogue, the jester, or the fool. Jung (1954/71) describes the mythical trickster as a paradox incarnate, a being of “half animal, half divine” nature, capable of the most atrocious acts while at the same time prefiguring a

future saviour. Kets de Vries (1990) argues for the indispensability of a more benign contemporary jester: the organizational fool, an irreverent counterbalance to the leader’s hubris and the sole actor able to expose the absurdity of the established order.

Thus, organizational tricksters and, more generally, the unruly carnivalesque practices foregrounding laughter and spontaneity, confusion and ambiguity, bodily sensations and emotional outbursts, can help mediate paradoxes of insufferable, often unspeakable injustices of organizational life. In other words, they can help integrate the shadow, preserve social stability and enrich the consumption experiences.

Conversely, widespread attempts to excise the carnivalesque, horrific, and grotesque aspects of human experience, to present tailored and sanitized realities up for consumption, feed the organizational shadow, much more dangerous and harmful than the unsavoury ugliness expunged from the conscious organizational reality.

Observing space

Carnivals, as well as experience economy events, are always bound up with specific contexts of time and space. They occur within particular settings, often laden with predefined meanings, but also establish new meanings and redefined the significance of established contexts. We have based our research on the idea that space can be narrated and presented as a story. According to de Certeau (1984/1988, p. 115), “every story is a travel story – a spatial practice”. Latour (1992) points out that narration is based on association, i.e. a narrative adds episodes sequentially and chronologically (*first this happened, and then happened that*), and it operates on the sense of how things hang together. Telling any story implies spatial and temporal contextualization of experience and/or events. Space is the fabric that stories are made of, together with temporality, the protagonist and the plot. Our research was in that sense self-reflective in a way: we chose to concentrate on one of these contextual aspects, space itself. Regardless of its other forms of existence, space is experienced narratively – as a meaningful succession of sensations and observations. We collected our material by means of ethnographic observation. Kostera (2007b) speaks of two classical types of observation in organizational ethnography: participant and non-participant. Participant

observation takes place when the researcher takes upon him or herself roles from within the studied organization. Non-participant observation means not taking upon oneself any such roles and remaining an outsider. In our study we used both types of observation as a kind of hybrid method, merging into an impression of the experience.

Ethnographic research allows one to study phenomena in their "natural" context that requires to immerse oneself in culture (Agar, 1986). Directly experienced situations, witnessed interactions, personally made observations and conducted interviews and field notes are subsequently developed "maturing" into theoretical interpretations (Rosen, 2000). Our interpretations materialized as short stories written on the basis of our observations, in which we were trying to embrace both the realistic and the sublime. They are what John Van Maanen (1988) calls impressionist tales, field-stories resembling paintings created by impressionist artists. Their authors wish to "evoke and open, participatory sense in the viewer [...], startle complacent viewers" (p. 101) and engage the reader with the field. The material of these tales are "words, metaphors, phrasings, imagery, and most critically, the expansive recall of fieldwork experience" (ibid., p. 102). The result should be a lively and dramatic story that makes the readers feel as though they have actually "been there", together with the author.

We place our research within the narrative approach (Gabriel, 2000; Boje, 2001), aiming to evoke narratives from our field, and putting together the results in the form of stories. Like Czarniawska (1997) we believe that organizing can be usefully seen as storytelling, and reports from organizational fields can be therefore presented as yet another kind of stories. Another feature reason for our using narratives in this text is to highlight the intangibility and fleeting nature of (experience economy) organizing: there is no final form; organizing exists only inasmuch as it is being performed.

All the stories concern us moving around in the field; thus, they can be seen as space stories (de Certeau, 1984/ 1988). They are personal, and speak of our own embodied experiences, and thus of our own spaces, rather than of any depersonalized objects of study. We treat them as full narratives, as the result of our research rather than as field notes in need of explication. For that reason, each of the stories is followed only by brief commentary, better seen as research footnotes than as

critical analysis. These footnotes are then followed by more general discussion in which we integrate our reflections into a more comprehensive problematic of organizational identity construction.

Our intention is to explore the experiential dimension of the settings we observed. We have decided to write the stories in first person singular to emphasize the subjective quality of experience (Hjorth and Kostera, 2007), and due the fact that they were all solitary explorations. The stories we cite in this text are a selection from a wider collection of observations, some of which we conducted together, and some experienced by only one of us. which wWe have picked out the following as best illustrating different key characteristics of the studied phenomenon. They are not direct quotations from our field notes which were sporadic and sparse, though accompanied by photographs in an attempt to capture a wider spectrum of our impressions. These narratives are, instead, written ex post, a result of our conversations regarding our experiences in and of the field. The stories are narrated in first person to emphasize the subjective quality of experience (Hjorth and Kostera, 2007), in singular or plural depending on whether one of us, or both, were present at the time.

Journeys in experience economy

Et in Arcadia ego

Arkadia is the biggest shopping mall in Poland, opened to the public in 2004. If you write "arkadia" in Polish google the first link that shows up will lead you to the mall, not to the Greek or the mythical Arcadia (spelled identically in Polish as the mall's name). It prides itself on hosting 255 shops, 22 restaurants, a cinema with 15 screens, and a parking for 4400 cars. Its architecture and interior design allude to the mythical domain: decorations represent astrological signs, and one of the passages is named after Pan Twardowski, a fabled Polish sorcerer. Large parts of the ceilings are covered with glass – it lets the light in, while blocking the meteorological vicissitudes. The interior is organized to invite experiences of carefree shopping: little picturesque stands with colourful souvenirs to remind the customers of sea-side holidays, a traditional stand with sausages and preserves to bring the mind to fantasies of what it used to be like to shop in a real bazaar. Small cafes spilling out into the passages symbolize the big city minus

the rain and traffic noise. The whole space moves the flaneur into a mythical shopping paradise, its mythical namesake – the world of happiness and brightness. Yet I (Author2) feel increasingly stressed, tired, somehow inadequate. I see some dreamy faces, people walking around smiling, a man strolling in a different rhythm from the crowd's. He strikes me as something of a sleepwalker. A couple talk loudly and laugh noisily. A group of teenagers walk by. All of the passersby seem to be oblivious of the others, not being part of their companies. More than once people walk right into me without saying sorry, they just march ahead. They seem to be able to navigate without even looking at other people, as if surrounded by a protective bubble. I follow the main human stream, and we mill around and around, I make several loops before I step out into the vast hall, flooded with light and sound. Why do I feel so lonely in this populous place? I realize that I have forgotten why I came here. Yes, I'm doing research. Back to observing and noticing. The wall of sound and movement dissolves into concrete symbols, sounds, persons, things. In this abundance of detail the place becomes a bazaar and carnival. Yet whenever my attention slips, everything melts down again into a magnetic stream drawing me in, drowning me and urging me to move in circles... This Arcadia reminds me of Hades, the place where the shadows of the dead stroll around aimlessly and unwittingly, deprived of memory and awareness.

Arkadia tries hard to present itself as a site of wonders, magic, and blissful excitement. In tune with the description of contemporary shopping malls as “temples of consumption” (Ritzer, 1993; Makowski, 2003), its decor attempts to evoke a mood simultaneously spiritual and idyllic. Yet none of it is anchored in the building's space beyond the most superficial styling. Arkadia readily corresponds to Augé's (1995) description of non-places, spaces suitable for passing through, yet discouraging any human contact or spatial engagement. In true hyperreal fashion, digging beneath the superficial, advertised image does not reveal any underlying structure of meaning, but rather vacuity, confusion, a lack of direction. Much of the critique of contemporary shopping malls, and the consumerist culture they are taken to represent (e.g. Barber, 1995; Ritzer, 1998) centres on this shallowness, artificiality of meanings attached to consumer products, and on the resulting alienation of the citizen reduced to the role of a passive consumer.

The feelings I experienced in Arkadia were reactions to this shallowness that the setting in no way acknowledged or accommodated. I felt alienated and excluded from something vital, a promise that failed to materialize. The culture of the market is older than supermarkets, it has its roots in bazaars and fairs. Yet Arkadia is shallow and superficial and its conscious core, the identity, does not hold the values of a visitor with expectations rooted in a bazaar culture: the possibility of registering discontent, of openly resisting the proffered imagery. I also felt annoyed and impatient with the overt extravaganza of the setting – the paralysing inability to find the shop I would have liked to find and buy the things I wanted to buy. The messages sent out by Arkadia, promising fun and celebration, were lost on me and I was annoyed with them.

The Hanging Gardens and the Abyss

Złote Tarasy (Golden Terraces) is a shopping centre in central Warsaw opened to the public in 2007. The complex hosts 200 shops, a supermarket, several restaurants, as well as a parking for 1700 cars. It is located close to the Central Railway Station in a modern building, and is covered with a wavy glass roof, revealing a view of the sky and the neighbouring high-rises. I (Author2) enter the complex at ground level and my first impression is that of flooding light. The name Golden Terraces is indeed a good description of how the light and space sculpt themselves. I explore the ground level, pausing in the big hall from which all the upper levels are visible, then I walk around slowly in the passages. Some people walk purposefully, heading for one of the stores. Some stroll individually, or in groups, their pace relaxed, reminding me of city flaneurs in the Old Town. Many are passing through the complex, heading for one of the exits. Among the passersby there is one distinctive group with a more purposeful demeanour than is characteristic of others. They carry backpacks or suitcases and most of them walk briskly, rarely pausing or looking around. I take the escalator to the upper levels. The escalators are made of translucent fabric, you can see the mechanisms working inside. The stairs are arranged in a tall shaft and the movement of the machinery, people and light gives a strong impression of sparks spiralling upwards and downwards as in a chimney. I let myself being transported through the fluid space, up to the utmost level right under the wavy glass roof. The light is even more intense here, I step out right into it and I catch myself thinking

of sudden illumination. The contours of all things are soft and they seem to shimmer and flicker. This is the fast food court, but no smells or sharp edges of organized space typical of such courts are to be seen here. People look relaxed and they seem to be consuming their food peacefully and without hurry in an atmosphere suffused by and smelling of light. The queues are short and they move slowly. I order a small set of sushi and sit down at a table, taking my time to watch and eat. A woman with a small child takes a seat nearby. She eats while the child plays silently with a matchbox car, pushing it along the soft lines of shadows on the floor. After having eaten, I stroll around for awhile, then I zig-zag down the escalator stairs to the ground level where I land softly, in a group of people with heavy luggage. They head for the escalator leading down. I follow. In the underground there is still much light, due to a glass covered wall pointing upwards. A soft smell of flowers emanates from a flower-shop. The people with luggage head for a dark passage away from the glass-wall. I walk after them, listening to soft music. "Up and down you turn me..." We pass through a revolving door and a strong current of air. I take another step and I find myself in an entirely different reality. First, the strong, foul, rough smell attacks my senses, I am immediately wrapped up in it, it feels clammy and intrusive, the smell of old frying oil, kebab joints, dirt and railways. The noise is almost as compelling. The first thing I notice are the loud announcements of trains about to leave or arrive. Then all the other sounds, human and mechanic, chaotically merging together. The dynamics are very different from those on the other side of the revolving door. People walk fast, some with luggage and some without, a man driving a small transporter makes his way through the chaotic crowd. Numerous booths line the walls, many of them radiating the foetid smell of frying oil. People behind the counters look sweaty and tired. The lights are dimmed and artificially bluish. This is the true underworld. Small shops explode with a cacophony of colours and smells, very different people mill rapidly by: I see a man dressed in fresh white jeans and a clean white T-shirt and a man in dirty-green rags, with a face full of scars that look infected. A veggie stand is literally besieged by shoppers, shouting to the assistant who seems to be in a great hurry to weigh and hand the goods to buyers. She looks grey in the face and her eyes are underlined by big dark shadows. She doesn't look the buyers in the face. Nor do they look at her face. A group of teenagers enter a door in the wall; I take a peek into the dark interior: it's a gambling den, I

can see the one armed bandits standing by the wall. The corridor is quite dark here, I pass by a shabby internet spot and something that may be a sex shop. I see stairs and a spot of light, I ascend, a vile odour of human urine attacks my nostrils, like a curtain which mercifully disperses in the end and I step out into the city street suffused with sunshine and traffic noise.

As the banality of Arkadia's image was supplemented by the vacuity of the experience of participating in its space, so the impressive tranquillity of Złote Tarasy necessitates the intensity of transitions at the edges of the groomed spaces of the mall. Diametrically opposed spaces and experiences overlap, order encounters disorder, hope and contentment meet despair and desperation. The barrier between realities invoked feelings of exclusion in me, although this time I was not the one being excluded from some incomprehensible joys of the mall, like in Arkadia, but rather a whole reality out there was being rejected. There was no place for poverty, for public space, smells, noises, things characteristic of the shopping culture of my city. That culture, definitely belonging to the bazaar culture, was carefully kept outside by walls, curtains of sound and artificial smell.

All theatrical stages, literal as well as metaphorical, require backstage areas to support their performances. Researchers writing about organizations seen as theatres (e.g. Höpfl, 2002; Mangham and Overington, 1987) provide abundant examples of the tensions between the two. Here however, all the described spaces provide very public performances, albeit of a different hue, and any commonality, or complementariness between them remains unacknowledged. This incongruity made me feel disenchanting, disappointed. I was hoping for an artful enactment of public shopping space, and ended up in a thinned out, sketchy performance before a chosen public, selected for its passivity as much as its willingness to appreciate the spectacle. The expected meanings were prepackaged, and did not take into account my preferences or reactions, resulting in what Brook (1968/1990) memorably termed "the deadly theatre," toxic to any new ideas. My hopeful image of Złote Tarasy was not supported by its official identity. At times I also felt the irritation that accompanied me in Arkadia – the grandness of the setting discouraged mundane thoughts of buying something I needed. For that I would have preferred to move somewhere else. The images sent out by the identity management of

Złote Tarasy were lost on me.

This is perhaps a good time to reiterate the personal character of our explorations. We see the location of space we associate with organizational shadow literally beneath the surface, hidden under the presentable and carefully managed space of the shopping mall, a fortunate, and perhaps uncanny, accident rather than any rule of spatial presentation of organizations. Basements, attics, as well as central, easily accessible locations can all serve as the places to hide organizational shadow. In every case, creation of the sanitized spaces of publicly offered experiences requires the setting up and careful maintenance of boundaries, keeping the uncontrolled outside reality from encroaching onto organizational space. The next story, recounting an event experienced by the other author (Author1), deals specifically with the management of just such a boundary.

An idyll for suspicious minds

Łódź, nominally the second largest Polish city, is served by only a small airport, offering flights by low cost airlines only. Situated on the far outskirts of the city, it averages only around six plane visits a day, and its passenger amenities consist of a small café and a shop selling alcohol and souvenirs to travellers. A large crowd waits in queues to check-in stands, passport control, and security scan. Fortunately, there is also a sizeable contingent of border guards and security personnel, intent on eliminating any threats to flight safety. All are very sombre, and very methodical in their work, more so than the people I met at any other airport. Their gravitas contrasts absurdly with the middle-of-nowhere location, and the shabby, makeshift buildings that form the setting of the security procedures.

My papers are in order, I have no baggage to check in, but I am less successful at going through the security scan. The guards decide that a frying pan I was trying to take with me is just too dangerous to be allowed aboard a plane. I have to leave it in a provided bin for later destruction. Exasperated, I try to discover which part of the frying pan constitutes a potential weapon, yet learn that neither the dish nor the handle (as the two can be separated) are safe enough for me to carry through. I have to deposit both in a provided bin for subsequent destruction. My suspicion raised to the level approaching that of the guards', I posit greed as the possible motive, and make sure to find a small part I can take with me, so as to leave behind only an incomplete frying pan. One of the guards tries to reassure me,

describing prohibited equipment other people have tried bringing aboard. Somebody apparently even attempted to take an electric kettle. I try, and fail, to imagine the danger posed by an electric kettle, but the guard brings me back to reality by demanding to know the function of a wine bottle stopper/vacuum pump I have also packed. Annoyed, I answer curtly but the guard demands I describe its operation in detail. Finally, shaking with barely contained anger, I am let through, together with my bottle stopper. Having checked in no baggage, I can relax in the boarding area, but other passengers are not as lucky. Many are called back to review their checked-in baggage, as its closer inspection reveals proscribed contents. I sit in a corner, trying to console myself by inventing imaginative explanations regarding function of a bottle stopper. As usual, great answers come far too late to be of any use.

This story immediately raises a question of whether departure hall of a low cost airline airport should be considered as partaking in experience economy. Certainly, services offered are advertised largely through their low prices, and minimizing costs appears as the leading managerial preoccupation. At the same time, much as in the case of flight attendants described by Hochschild (1983), copious amounts of emotional labour are demanded from (any) airline employees. Customers are surrounded by just as many smiles as on flag carrier flights, even if the smiles look somewhat more forced. Of course, staging of experiences goes well beyond assuring polite and convivial interactions with the customers – indeed, staging a safe flight invariably involves curt and formal encounters between passengers and security.

Crucial for the creation of a safe flying environment, is the control of the organization's boundaries: careful monitoring of people and objects about to partake in the flight, as well as of behaviours and emotions of everyone involved. Yet the act of separation is itself a deeply emotional practice, engendering anger, fear, and suspicion bordering on paranoia forming a suppressed counterpart of the overt creation of security.

In this instance, the remote location, small scale, and, ultimately, obvious insignificance of the airport provokes an additional manifestation of the shadow that exposes the delusions of grandeur of the organization, counterpoising absurdity and grotesqueness to the utter seriousness of the airport's conscious self-presentation. It invokes feelings of strong impatience with the show and a longing for a

more mundane enactment of the travel situation, such as that of commuter-trains, without the imposed halo of “air travel experience”.

The image that the airport was trying to persuade its passengers to embrace was lost on me. I also felt somewhat excluded from the fun available, perhaps, elsewhere, to some other consumers – maybe the ones travelling by standard airlines, maybe the first class passengers, maybe the VIPs? The conscious identity management of the airport failed to express the culture of air-travel it attempted to appropriate.

As a participant, I am left feeling deceived by the incongruity of the unfolding spectacle, but the experience carries none of the ironic tones of a Bakhtinian “gay deception:” I feel completely alone in my refusal to accept the organization’s claims. There is no possibility to laugh at the scene’s pomposity, no jester able and willing to puncture organizational hubris.

The next story, recounting an event witnessed by the two of us together, also speaks of a highly ideological discourse of justification, albeit of a different kind and taking place in a completely different setting.

By papal decree

In June 1999 the Pope John Paul II visited Warsaw. The entire city became radically reorganized in order to accommodate the visit. Most of the roads were closed to normal traffic and some additional bus routes were added to enable passage to the religious festivities. Many inhabitants were worried about traffic jams preventing them from reaching their workplaces. A number of companies and institutions declared the day of the papal visit a day off. In other companies, some people called in sick as a preventive measure. However, the traffic nightmare scenario never materialized. Instead, most of the time during the visit, the streets were empty, and it was much easier and quicker to get to many places than usual.

Warsaw is known for the bad state of its streets. Their poor shape is due to a notorious lack of funds. However, before the papal visit, all streets where the Pope was likely to drive through were repaired. Some were even specially constructed in case the Pope might possibly like to pass through. The road construction fever blocked the city for months before the visit. The improvements proved to be one of the few enduring effects of the visit for the city inhabitants.

All the fire brigades of Warsaw were fully mobilized, and so were the police. Yet there were fewer crimes

than usual. People phoned the police in order to learn how to get to places, how to behave when the Pope drove through Warsaw, and even to ask about the weather forecast. This was highly unusual, normally the inhabitants of Warsaw address the police force with roughly the same problems as other big city inhabitants.

The Pope used his famous *papa mobile* car to move around the city of Warsaw. For travels at some greater distances he was provided with a special helicopter by the Polish state. All the means of transportation used by the Pope were described in detail by the mass media. The live transmission of the farewell encounter between the Pope and the people gathered at the Warsaw airport contained, among other things, quite a long account of the airplane that the Pope was about to board.

The Pope was omnipresent, not just in religious contexts but was invoked frequently in the media that referred to the Pope while taking up all possible topics, from the weather to the housing situation. Numerous pope-related gadgets flooded the market. These included books, videotapes, multimedia CD-ROMs about the Pope, at least three compact discs containing his poetry as well as music inspired by him, puzzles, a family board game, and a computer game. Additionally, billboards promoting products loosely or not at all related to the visit, but referring nonetheless to the Pope’s image were quite common. For example, Agfa advertised a photo camera film promoted as “film for the pilgrim” on posters depicting the Pope.

A group of Swedish colleagues arrived in Warsaw at the time of the visit to attend a management conference. They had been looking forward to a visit to the Warsaw opera. To their surprise the Grand Theatre was closed during the entire papal visit. They were even more amazed when they learned that prohibition had been declared in the city of Warsaw and all the surrounding areas for the duration of the visit. Several University departments and public libraries were also closed. Some hospitals did not allow visits to patients during the standard visiting hours on Sunday. The Swedes joked that a guard should perhaps be posted in front of liquor shops and theatres, asking for people’s religious denomination: Catholics would be kept out, but Protestants – allowed in.

This was, though, clearly the view of outsiders, not inculcated in the logic of the local discourse. Pope’s presence (or the promise of his presence) served not as an expression of religious authority, but as an organizing principle reconfiguring the city, the incontestable basis for legitimizing shifts in urban

order. When a newspaper reader complained about beautiful poplars lining one of the Warsaw streets were being cut down, the editorial team investigated, and cheerfully reported that there was no need for alarm, as the trees were brought down as part of the preparations for the papal visit. Everything that happened in Warsaw at that time seemed to happen because of the Pope. Most of the conversations also revolved around the visit.

But then, transformation of the city was remarkable. A colleague from Innsbruck arrived and left Warsaw on the same day as the Pope. Our Austrian friend thought it was a lucky sign and was in great spirits when he arrived. However, when he discovered all the complications and limitations, he started to feel puzzled and confused. He explored the city mainly by foot, but also by tram and bus. He observed, with much interest and curiosity, the ceremonial face of the city, the decorated churches, public and private houses, altars, and people. On the last day we took him to the airport in our car by a convoluted route around the main roads. He was positive he had witnessed something very exotic and extraordinary, even though he didn't see the Pope at all.

In the story, the Pope, despite never appearing in person, dominates the discourse as well as the space of the city. His figure is very much that of an absent father, distant, authoritarian and authoritative. Indeed, absences dominate the story, ranging from empty streets to empty shelves and removed trees. Absent is also the possibility of continuing life unaffected by the Pope's visit. Yet this totalizing discourse nevertheless dissolves into a complex pattern of organizing, its hegemonic linguistic coherence subverted in a myriad of diverging goals, practices, and spatial arrangements. Papal presence forms the basis for experiencing Warsaw of June 1999, but actual experiences are still formed through engaging with diverse local practices rather than by papal teachings or official proclamations. This is not to claim any asocial quality for experience, but rather the impossibility of restricting staged experiences to a predetermined range of responses. In this case, the setting invoked strong feelings in us that were outside of the conscious intentions of the event: we felt excluded and oppressed, and we were resisting its rules. As Protestants, agnostics, Catholics from outside of the current mainstream, we felt we did not belong. We also felt oppressed by the event, having had norms imposed on us that we did not identify with. Like the foreign visitors, we wanted to do different things, drink wine together with our

guests to celebrate their visit, or even celebrate the event with the Austrian friend, but not on the ways enforced by the organizers. Several of the values and norms deriving from the managed identity were not freely espoused by us but rather imposed.

The event of the papal visit fulfilled its carnival role of suspending some traditional norms of social interaction, but it did not offer space for reinterpretation and creation of new meanings: instead, it offered packaged solutions of new rules that all participants were expected to follow. As a result, we felt estranged, impatient, and frustrated at times, wishing to be able to travel in the city, drive our friend to the airport and not being able to realize these mundane aims. Some of the official images fell on our deaf ears.

Another staged event in Warsaw which we also attended together brought a set of different feelings.

Experience the Market

On a sunny day in June we attend the nostalgia fair in Warsaw, announced as Nowy Kercelak, or New Kercelak. Kercelak used to be the name of the legendary marketplace in central Warsaw that operated until WWII. One of our grandmothers used to visit the marketplace before the War and to her, as to many inhabitants of Warsaw and the area around the city, it was the epitome of old Warsaw. The new Kercelak greets us with disco music and a stage show, perhaps a dancing context for the general public. The event draws a large public. As we pass by, a winner is announced, but the sounds continue and are audible all the time we spend at the fair. One of the streets is closed off to traffic and numerous stands are arranged along it. They tempt the visitors with everything from ice-cream of a kind we remember from the pre-transition era, to antiquities galore, to folk handicraft. Smells of grilled sausage and sweet wafers mix and entice, kids scream at the height of their lungs, disco music pulsates. Suddenly we hear the sound of some kind of vehicle approaching. It turns out to be a miniature horse driven tram that runs along the old and long unused rails that still exist here. So they are usable after all these years? I am amazed. I look down at the cobblestones and the rails with respect. The tram drives by, with kids attached to its sides, just like in the old days.

A group of acrobats dressed in old-fashioned clothes perform some of the typical marketplace tricks. They date from before our times and we cannot judge the accuracy of the performance with the original but it certainly looks good. We feel a bit like we're moving

back in time into the historic marketplace but then we are very semantic readers at the moment. Then we notice a performer, dressed up like a typical traditional Warsaw *cwaniak*, or hustler, inviting the passersby to play dice or a game of three card monte. The latter is an infamous game that slyboots used to inflict on unsuspecting passersby, especially visitors from the country-side, as practically all Warsaw inhabitants knew of its reputation as a confidence trick. The entertainer would bet some money on a card and the passerby was also invited to place a similar bet. Then he or she was asked to guess where the card was. If they guessed right they would win, if wrong – the performer won. In one round someone from the public, usually a *szill*, that is a secret associate of the performer, won the money. Afterwards, genuine members of the public played, all of them losing, sometimes significant amounts of money. There are stories in many families of how a person going to Warsaw to sell a horse went home empty-handed after an encounter with a game of three card monte. We are amazed at the twist the experience economy takes in the new Kercelak with the three cards performer – here we are invited to experience the swindle, experience what it's like to be cheated. The man tempts us with a little game of three cards and tries to persuade us to bet one of our cameras. He is very charismatic but we decline, laughingly. Then we notice the stall *vis à vis* – with a sign announcing that our problems can easily be solved. It is a stall run by a group of Christian fundamentalists, dressed in T-shirts with a sign of a fish on the back. They advertise an image of Christ who wins in all life's games, ultimately but certainly, and they invite the passersby to bet on him.

Nowy Kercelak recasts a fabled space of Warsaw history and legend, representing it in a contemporary entertainment setting of a street fair. This involves translation of memory (and history) into a form suitable for a different audience, and accounting for the aims of the fair's organizers. One of the most distinct features of this process is the attempted domestication of the market space, fabled, after all, as much for legitimate trade as for the amount of illegal business and swindling to be found on its premises. But translation, of texts as well as of ideas, events, or organizations always introduces new ideas, changes available interpretations, and adds new possible meanings (Steiner, 1975; Czarniawska and Sevón, 1996)

Here, the legacy of crime is acknowledged in the figure of the pretend-hustler, witnessing the remarkable

power of experience economy approach, recasting even the most unpleasant event (that of being swindled) as an enticing experience. For, although the tradition to romanticize outlaws and crooks dates back to Bonnie and Clyde, Robin Hood, and beyond, in most representations the reader is not invited to identify with the victims. Yet, at the same time, the experience of the New Kercelak three card monte lacks the central element of victimhood, the foiling of target's expectations. In the entertainment version, visitors expect to be cheated, effectively removing the element of danger from the experience.

But is it that simple? Is it really possible to excise unsavoury sensations, dangers of ignorance, and possibility of transgression from staged experiences? We believe that Christian preachers handing out free literature and inviting passersby to join Jesus manifest the exact very same risks that the staging sought to cast out from the space of the fair. Not because they are unavoidably insincere, or their aim is to cheat the visitors. We know little about their agenda, or about the dangers (and rewards) of accepting their invitations, although we find it likely that they were sincere. We felt that the event abused our confidence somehow: we went there to participate in lighthearted fun, and encountered actors that seemed to take themselves far more seriously than what the event could support.

Both the entertainer and the zealots approximate the trickster role, attempting to redefine it in the context of an experience economy event. Both interpretations, however, fail to raise any difficult questions, or to expose the absurdity of the established order—the prerogative and *raison d'être* of a successful Fool (de Vries, 1990). The sanctioned swindler served to recast a bustling market into a safe, domesticated space and the preachers' message was, paradoxically, too serious to be taken seriously.

Nevertheless, Kercelak obviously attracts readings that go beyond its aura of easy fun. In the middle of the fair we found ourselves considering problems of salvation and eternal damnation, yet, if we were to look for answers there, on the spot, we felt we would become quite disappointed. The images these people might have brought to the fair would not have been responded to by its conscious managed identity. But we were also a bit disenchanted with the event itself, its incongruity. The managed identity of New Kercelak fell sadly short of our images of street fairs and marketplaces, and of the legend of Kercelak itself.

Aftermath

Wrocław, a city in Western Poland. New Year's Day. On the previous night, the City Square hosted the largest celebration in Poland, with a music show drawing tens of thousands of mostly intoxicated inhabitants and visitors. Now, though, very little sign of the wild carnival of the night before can be seen. There is a flurry of activity in the city centre, however: large, immaculately choreographed groups of cleaners work hard to remove all traces of last night's revelry. By noon, most city centre has been cleared. While frenzied work is carried out around the City Square, the rest of the city is virtually deserted. Municipal services, including public transport, are effectively on hold, despite posted schedules promising otherwise. Shops, cafes, and restaurants are similarly closed. The weather has changed, too, and biting cold underscores the static stillness of the abandoned streets.

As we walk around, we discover traces of city life upsetting the frozen landscape. A few befuddled-looking tourists stumble around the empty areas. Small groups of frozen would-be passengers huddle on bus and tram stops, trying feebly to ward off cold while they wait for delayed and cancelled buses. We join one such gathering, and eventually catch a tram to the Centennial Hall, an exhibition centre and a masterpiece of modernist architecture. The hall is, unsurprisingly closed, but a small skating rink set up outside draws a number of visitors. It is one of the very few businesses open on the day, but it is a fairly basic operation—no refreshments are on offer, only the ice, and a possibility of renting skates. Still, we are heartened by finding a working attraction.

We decide to return to the centre, checking bus and tram schedules posted on numerous stops around the complex. It seems that even on New Year's Day we should not need to wait too long, with a large number of available connections. An hour later, frozen to the bone, we are finally rescued by a dilapidated bus. As we are returning to the hotel, one of us starts coughing, having gained a severe cold as a memento of our outing. The condition appears to mirror that of the city itself.

This, the last of our stories, and another exploration we have undertaken together, brings us to the end of the experience event. It speaks of the reassertion of order after a night of revelry, the triumphant return of normalcy following the excesses of a Bakhtinian carnival (Bakhtin, 1941/1984). For even though events of New Year's Eve were carefully planned and organised, the infusion of an immense crowd (with alcohol and fireworks) garnished the proceedings with

not a small amount of chaos. But the day after, visitors are absent from the streets while large, organised contingents remove all traces of the celebration. This task is important enough to prioritize it over the preservation of the normal functioning of the city, as seen in the breakdown of public transport and the closing of shops, kiosks, cafés, and restaurants.

We are particularly interested in contrasts and inconsistencies to be found in organizational representations and practices, and this story provided many. The dynamism, joyfulness, and exuberance of the experiences staged on New Year's Eve removed orderliness, moroseness, and loneliness from city space. These feelings did not vanish, however, but reappeared in force the next morning. It made us feel strongly disillusioned and disenchanting. The event held for us promises of renewal, images of endless celebration, emotional high that it in no way could or would stand for. All we were left with was a day-after aura of a broken spell. The disillusionment originated from the the managed identity of the event failing to respond towards some aspects of our image of it.

Shadows and light

All of our stories can be described as experiences brought about by some form of customer engagement with experience economy, though their relation to the products being offered varies widely. We deliberately chose to study everyday settings and largely commonplace events to highlight the potential of examining interactions in the framework of experience economy. We see heightened receptivity towards surrounding sensations as lying at the heart of engagement in staged experiences, thus paralleling, and uniquely suitable for, ethnographic investigation. In the described instances, we focused on the darker side of these common, largely unremarkable experiences, as embedded in their staging. None of the issues raised by our stories are endemic to experiential events, yet we believe they appear here in a starker contrast. We are also aware that contemporary consumption entails a host of much more potentially disturbing phenomena, ranging from pornography to drug use to sexual tourism: each of them deserves careful and contextualized study, and provokes difficult decisions regarding their acceptability. Our aim, however, is not too look for the darkest shadows, but rather at the most common, domesticated aspects of experience

economy that nevertheless invite attempts at further sterilization.

The events we described are all what Hjorth and Kostera (2007) call mass-produced experiences, where the product is intended to be shared with a considerable number of others. The consumers of mass experience are invited to be extroverted and open to a collective reception of sensation. The theatricality of this type of experience economy events is particularly obvious, and they acquire a strong carnivalesque flavour.

A common theme to be found in all stories are the attempts to control, to set clear boundaries, to order and sanitize. This is hardly surprising, as control over the offered product is implied in Pine and Gilmore's (1999) invitation to stage experiences. But experiences, even more so than other components of organizing, are relational, and require input and active participation of the people experiencing the staging. And, although mainstream marketing is all about eradicating sadness, ugliness and loss from the sight of the consumer, it is crucial to realize not all experiences are, or can be, pleasant. Feelings and ideas excised from organizational discourse do not vanish, they aggregate in the organization's unconscious (Sievers, 1994), forming its shadow. Building on the model presented in fig. 1, we can now add the feelings invoked by the unacknowledged and lost elements taking place during the four sub-processes of organizational identity creation (fig. 2)

The unacknowledged and rejected elements of the

identity creation process make up the shadow. The encounter with the shadow produces negative feelings, sometimes quite strong. The values not spontaneously reflected in culture by espousal, become *imposed* on it and in some of the studied experience economy events, invoked feelings of being oppressed, a desire to resist (or the resignation of surrendering). Norms and values that are not expressed in the identity and unacknowledged through *hypocrisy*, led to feelings of exclusion and alienation in many of the studied events. The images that fail to become mirrored in the identity through *denial*, brought to us feelings of disillusion and disenchantment in several events. Consciously promoted ideas not impressed in the external images by *misdirection* become lost, and made us feel impatient with the officially staged show, frustrated in the lack of correspondence of what we wanted to do with what the event allowed for in several cases.

The strongest and most repetitive feelings we encountered were those of exclusion and alienation, as well as disenchantment, the failure of the spell. How typical these feelings are for experience economy is hard to say, as is how representative our observations are. However, the negative feelings we have experienced are fairly recurrent at least in some of the settings. It would be interesting to see how other experience economy events compare to our explorations, and how other organizations do.

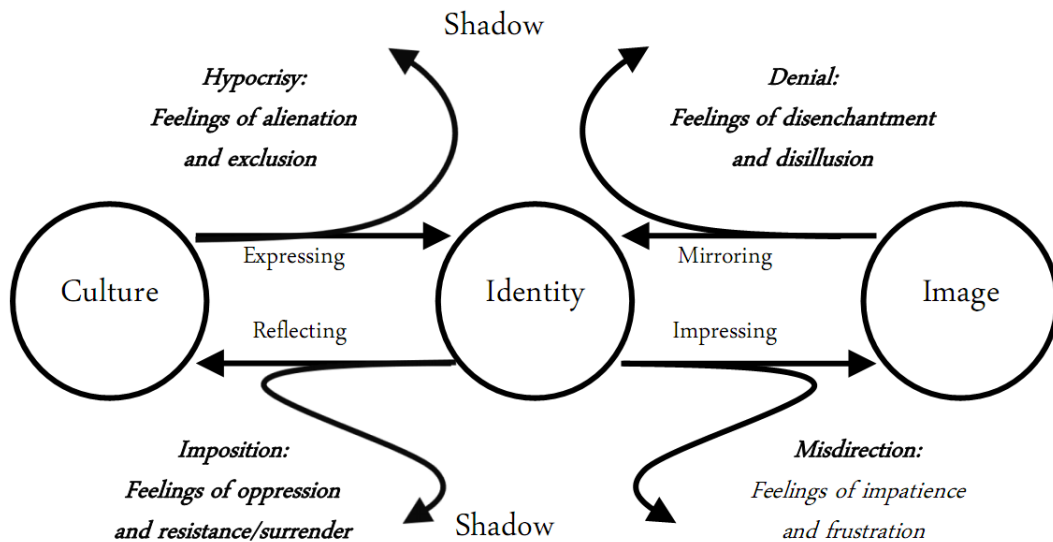


Fig. 2: The Construction of Organizational Identity and Shadow: feelings invoked by experience economy events. Based on the Identity Dynamics model by Hatch and Schultz (1997)

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Integrating the shadow

Our exploration also point to the need to search for ways to integrate the shadow. The shadow is dangerous precisely because it is repressed and unacknowledged (Jung, 1959). It manifests itself in uncontrollable outbursts, with results ranging, as our stories demonstrate, from farcical to chilling.

While we cannot point out any surefire way of integrating organizational shadow and, indeed, do not believe in the possibility of creating a simple managerial solution, we can still infer some ways of searching for a fuller organizational identity. We see such search as a quest more than problem-solving—a continuous process that, while helpful for those involved, can never culminate in a definite solution (Kostera, 2005). To even begin to deal with the shadow-side of the experience economy is to accept the darker aspects of experience: not all sensations are pleasant, and it is impossible to make them so. In this vein, Brunsson (2003) asked for the acknowledgement of organizational hypocrisy: appreciation, open discussion, and acceptance of the shadow robs it of its power to subvert conscious identity. Recognition of the common ambivalence of (organizational) experience is what separates art from kitsch (Kostera, 1997), in organizational life as much as in any artistic endeavour.

The already-discussed figure of an organizational trickster can provide help in this quest: exposing fragility of organizational dogma, satirizing the power claims of its leaders, and openly discussing hidden anxieties all help to integrate some aspects of the organization's shadow. More generally, ironic distance towards sacred truths hampers the organizational processes of imposition, misdirection, and denial, inhibiting shadow-formation and fostering a more inclusive organizational identity.

We see all these strategies prefigured in Bakhtin's discussion of carnival, and specifically in the double sense of this idea appearing throughout his writings: as a temporary irruption into the ordered hierarchical reality (1941/1984), but also as a basic epistemological stance allowing the participant, as well as the researcher, to distance oneself from the seriousness and rigidity of the phenomena under consideration (1963/1987). Similarly, the carnivalesque character of experience economy allows not only for inclusion of unsavoury sensations into organizational practice,

but also for transforming them into a means of constructing, and comprehending, a more fully integrated organizational identity. Transgression forms the bedrock of understanding.

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