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Relational Forms of Inquiry and Writing**

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Uncovering the communist and capitalist shadow: developing relational forms of inquiry and writing

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‘The social sciences are concerned with humans and their relations with themselves and their environments, and, as such, the social sciences are founded on the study of experience...’(Clandinin and Connelly, 1994: 414)

Introduction

What model of enquiry is the most appropriate for the rapidly changing countries of Central and Eastern Europe? This chapter seeks to set out pointers towards developing and adopting innovative methods for carrying out research in this complex area. We feel that methods devolved from the scientific method cannot begin to capture this complexity, and we offer some examples of a different type of research, based on the researcher’s reflexivity, and most importantly on documenting and recording the researcher’s experience in relationship to the research situation. We do not attempt to ‘find’ anything here. This paper is an exploration of a method and of experience.

We draw on our individual and joint experiences in order to offer up a shared perception of methodological issues that we have encountered in our exploration of the historic and transitional context of Hungary and Britain. One of us (Bronwen Rees) is a British researcher, with an academic background at undergraduate level in French, and a Ph.d in Management Science from Cranfield University in the U.K. The other (Katalin Illes) has a Ph.d in World Literature from Budapest, and an MBA from Heriott Watt University in the U.K. For the past five years, we have been carrying out joint research into the transition of Hungary, and the impact of Western managerial knowledge on the culture of Hungary. We have drawn on historical, psychological and social theories to inform our work (e.g. Illes and Rees 2000, Illes and Rees 2002) and our focus has been on human resource management, and management education in particular.

The story that we tell, inevitably reflects the different filters of our national cultures and academic backgrounds, and shows, we hope how we can take these filters into account in mapping out methodological issues. Our paper suggests that there are benefits to be gained from taking seriously the subjective aspects of research, as well as attempting to objectify and codify perceptions as is the aim of scientific method. It suggests that this can enrich our understanding of culture and historic process. It is the story of the development of a personal relationship, and how this personal exploration of each other’s cultures can bring rich insights into both environments, and help build meaningful links between the two cultures.

The story can be read on two different levels: primarily on a personal level in the form of a friendship and second on a broader level between and across cultures.

It is also a history of a relationship to forms of scientific inquiry. It offers up some new perspectives on the stories that make up our collective existence. It also stands somewhat in the face of the conventional methods of scientific inquiry, and makes an offering of how we experience, how we relate to that experience, and how to relate that experience. Our argument draws on the pioneering work of Dewey (1938) and is based on our individual and joint difficulties in relating to the abstractions of more conventional research which tends to deny personal experience, and are built into the hegemonies of social organisation and structure, such as the University or management teaching.

Each of us, in this paper, tells of our different experiences in carrying out research, both separately and together. Both of us, from different cultures, have however experienced different, often unarticulated obstacles, to understanding and explaining the phenomenon in which we are interested. For both of us, this has appeared as a lack, an abstraction, and an inability to find a voice that represented our individual and joint experience. Our explorations both theoretically and empirically have led us to the metaphor of the ‘shadow’ to help articulate the dilemma. We used this metaphor in an earlier paper in relationship to the transition, but we find it equally useful to help describe our own relationship to method.

It is from this shared discomfort, in the face of unarticulated ‘shadowy’ obstacles that this paper has arisen. From where has this discomfort arisen? We would like first to explore the possible origins of this discomfort, and then see how we can locate and amend this methodologically.

Towards a theory of narrative

The possible source of our discomfort lies in the nature in which knowledge constructs and is constructed by our collective representation or reality. To understand this further, we can draw on Foucault’s understanding of disciplinary power. Disciplinary power draws attention to the fundamental role that that knowledge plays in making aspects of existence thinkable and calculable and therefore the object of conscious action. ‘Power and knowledge directly imply each other; ... there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations’ (Foucault, 1977, p. 27).

In this piece of writing, we move away from the power/knowledge construction, which is so readily apparent in most social science research, and take the risk of working with and representing experience.

Recognising that this power/knowledge construct necessarily underpins the scientific method, which is one way of representing experience, we wondered whether we could find ways of moving away from this, yet still retain methodological validity. To do so, perhaps we need to explore the psychological processes through which the power/knowledge construct may operate. At a simple level of explanation, we could say that power, in a Foucauldian sense, is constructed through conditioning. As stories and theories become part of the collective, their repetition in well-organised ways becomes ingrained in our habitual patterns of thinking and relating. What if, however, we take a more lateral view, and take on the possibility that there are other ways of perceiving and representing the world?

For example, the discipline of cognitive psychology has discovered different ways of looking at the world. Bruner (1986; 1990) identified two modes of cognition, which he termed 'paradigmatic' and 'narrative'. In the paradigmatic mode, cognition is viewed as an information-processing phenomenon in which concepts are coded in memory and manipulated by cognitive operators. Situations are represented as concepts to be 'solved' by rational analytic thinking procedures, making computations, comparisons and substitutions in a form of scientific reasoning. This model dominates cognitive psychology, as it dominates other cognitive sciences and the other social sciences, and indeed our everyday understanding of cognition (Boland and Schultze, 1996).

Despite contributing to the establishment of this mode in his own discipline of cognitive psychology, Bruner (1986; 1990) has now suggested that this has suppressed the recognition of another, more powerful and universal mode of the cognition: the narrative mode. Here, events are selectively isolated in experience, events populated with actors with their own histories and motivation, and stories are told by setting the actors and events in a meaningful sequence. Bruner argues that, as a means of making sense of ourselves and the world we live in, this mode is ubiquitous but consistently ignored. However, '[...the paradigmatic view,] synonymous with an abstract theoretical view of the world is taken to be *the* mode of cognition not only in science and technology, but in all forms of human reasoning.' (Bruner, 1990: 9, italics in original).

A probable reason for the predominance of the paradigmatic mode of cognition lies in the actual interrelationship of the two modes. As Lyotard (1984) has highlighted, scientific practice does not recognise narrative knowledge as valid, even though the paradigmatic mode itself relies on the narrative mode to justify and legitimate its claims. The narrative mode, built as it is on a meaningful reconstruction of the world, cannot be proved by analytic or cumulative logic. According to science, 'narratives are fables, myths, legends, fit only for women and children' (Lyotard, 1984: 27).

It is only when the 'masculine bias' in accepted psychological categories such as 'identity' and 'morality' came to be recognised that important concepts such as relationships, intimacy etc. began to emerge in the discipline of cognitive psychology. For example, Lyons (1990: 42) shows how adolescent girls, rather than using an abstract conceptualisation such as justice for analysing a situation, may resolve a moral problem by stepping into – not back from – the situation and by acting to restore relationships or to address needs. She puts forward a dual model for making decisions based on a care/justice dichotomy, which may well reflect the paradigmatic/narrative dichotomy. In this way, important concepts come to be excluded from the agenda, and this is perhaps one way in which the power/knowledge construct comes to operate.

While Lyons does not suggest that girls and boys use different models exclusively, the fact that the recognition of the narrative mode has emerged following on from this earlier research might suggest that girls and women are more likely to use the narrative mode more frequently. It certainly could be inferred from the ways in which girls and women perceive themselves, and also from Chodorow's theory about the reproduction of mothering. The distancing process that boys go through when disidentifying from the mother is more likely to lead to the paradigmatic self 'characterized by separation from others, segmentation and calculation' (Boland and Schultze, 1996). The narrative self, acting out situations, taking

into account relationships with others, building beginnings, middle and ends, does bear a greater resemblance to women's psychological development as explored above.

These possibilities raised several questions for us methodologically. What if women find it difficult or uncomfortable to work within paradigmatic frameworks? What could be learned working from the more narrative style? Most importantly, for this paper, if there are these differences in cognition, what are the differences likely to be in cross-cultural working? Language itself is not enough to convey experience. Scientific frameworks themselves may well inhibit the research process. This was beginning to point to the more subtle internalised pathways through which power relations exert themselves.

A commitment to engage with and represent experience

In order to address these issues, we then referred back to Dewey's theory of experience (1938). Could we introduce some of Dewey's ideas into our own investigations in Hungary and the U.K.? Most importantly, could we find a way of justifying our approach that would enhance the current methodological status of cross-cultural work? Let us examine some of some of Dewey's ideas in a little more detail. The key, according to Dewey, in exploring, representing and communicating experience is intentionality. It is the researcher's intentionality that defines the starting and stopping points. One of the common laments of those engaged in reclaiming the study of experience is that it cannot see the wood for the trees – in the study of messy complexity, the individual trees hide the forest and so it is impossible to arrive at closure - or in the language of the scientific method, it is impossible to find generalisability and reliability.

If, rather than looking for generalisability and reliability as benchmarks of our research, we engage more closely with our intent, then can we justify our approach? We think so. And to do so is to engage with the politics of method (Eisner 1988) Let us then be clear about our intent here. We wish to reflect on the coming together of cultures, of the West and the East, as the benefits and problems of the Western consumer society have impacted on Hungary. We are not concerned here necessarily with 'proving' or 'objectifying' our findings. We are using our growing friendship, our reflections on that, and our form of writing as a method of inquiry. Readers can assess for themselves the validity of our methods. For us, the importance of our inquiry resides in whether our discussion could have an impact on the community – communities of business in both Hungary and the U.K. One of the special powers of personal experience methods is that their connection goes beyond theories, researchers and practitioners to the life community within which we all relate. We would like to claim that personal experience research is a form of public inquiry that goes beyond the specialities of research, and connects with fundamentally human qualities of human experience. These are human methods.

For Dewey, an individual's experience has internal and existential conditions. A person does not have social experience: an individual is social; no sociality, no person. This is a crucial methodological understanding, and one we believe that is of great importance in transition economies. The stories that are lived are those of the coming together of cultures. It is the coming together of different peoples, and a clash of their worldviews. Experience methods give us a way in of overcoming the inevitable assumptions of 'knowledge transfer' that have dogged much cross-cultural research to date. The important issue here is that the research reflects the conditioning and experience of people of **both** cultures. If not, then we would question the validity of research undertaken by those of a different culture, if their intent is

one of improving those relations. In other words, experience methods provide both a process of inquiry, and a means of change.

Finally, in the study of experience, questions of voice and signature are crucial (Richardson, 1994). In questions of voice – who is being heard, and who not being heard? What is being said and what not being said? What is missing from the story? Questions revolve too around the researcher's voice. The researcher is partially naked and open to criticism. How much can we reveal? Are our jobs as researchers on the line if we go too far down the personal? When we have lifted the veil of silence that scientific voices often bring, how do we represent that voice? What is our signature? There are multiple ways of being in the text, as well as being in the field. How lively should that signature be? Too much, and we obscure the voices of the participants. Too little, and we fail to represent their story in a different way. This text, then, is an experiment. It is an experiment as we write it. What will our joint signature look like? At this moment of writing we have no idea. But what we feel more and more passionate about is that the way in which we can learn from experience and carry out change is through opening ourselves up to the possibilities of experience, and learning how to communicate that to academic, business, and national communities. It is about an engagement of the body and heart with the material as well as the intellect.

This is a story then about a coming together of cultures in the form of two beings who carry the collective experience of those cultures. It tells two stories of research, as two small rivulets flowed together and became a larger river, and found the courage to stand in the face of scientific inquiry, and to recount tales from the field directly through the personal.

Writing and relationship here are our mode of inquiry. The writing is our form, and the relationship is the story of the emergence of that form. We are concerned not with one country, but with the coming together of cultures, in the sense of the personal, the academic and the organisational. Our aim is to open up our own experience, and to offer that in relation to the events of the transition, to ourselves and to our friendship as a lens. To approach this chapter in this way is partly a matter of participating in the politics of method by reclaiming the study of experience from its abstractions in the scientific method, or from its playful incorporation into the textual and discourse analysis, where the subject itself has become disembodied.

All inquiry can be seen as interactions of experiences of participants in a field and researcher's experiences as they come to that field. When we begin experiencing the experience, we need to be sensitive to the stories already being lived, told, relived and told (maybe retold). However, when we come together we begin to live and tell a new story of our collaborative work together. We tell a story as researchers, and we try to represent the research project, but a major part of that telling is in our own experience, relived and retold, in relationship to academic frameworks to the subject, to ourselves and to one another. Back to our intent: to enrich our own lives, and at the same time, to communicate something about how cultures can work together and learn from each other, in a mutual exploration and sharing of experience. Our method here is to use the narrative of our lives and our relationship to provide pointers as to how reality is differently experienced, and what the implications of that might be for the way in which some of us conduct our research.

Our intent then is consciously political: it is loosely based in critical management research which calls for an approach that is at once interpretive, open, language sensitive, identity

conscious, historical, political, local, non-authoritative and which has a textually aware understanding of research (Alvesson and Deetz 2002). Along with Alvesson and Willmott (1992) we would argue that ‘ ... in the present context of developing management studies there is less point in stressing theoretical rigour and orthodoxy than in welcoming a broad inspiration from a variety of theories and ideas that share “enough” affinities to advance or enrich critical studies of management.’ (p. 9).

However, it does not eschew theory, or fall into the irony of post-modernism: ‘To argue that because knowledge is not absolute or final there is no knowledge , only interpretations... undermines what I still think is one of the most vital contributions of theory: it can offer a deeper understanding of what is at stake in political and social conflicts that have a very real external existence; it provide an opportunity to become what might be called “better citizens”, more aware and with a deeper understanding of what is going on around us. If it does not provide answers to problems, it enables a better understanding of their complexity and difficulty.’ (Craib, 1992, p. 249/50).

We are engaging and building up a joint ‘interpretive repertoire’ and engaging not only with the conditioning that has lead us to it, but with the emotional frameworks that have created our own individual ‘interpretive repertoires’. Thus our approach to experience methods do not eschew theory – rather theory is intertwined within the method, and drawn upon when useful.

In the following section, we offer up a highly selected narrative of our journeys towards this method.

Theoretical and methodological journeys

Katalin’s reflections

I was living and working in Budapest until the end of 1989. I can vividly remember the surprise, the disbelief and the joy that followed the abolition of the Berlin Wall. It was difficult to believe because, although the country had experienced a loosening of the Russian leash, those who had first hand experience of the retaliation that followed the revolution in 1956 retained (and still retain) a psychological and even bodily memory of that violent period. This surfaced the trauma and fear that has existed in the collective psyche of Hungarians over more than 500 years. It did not seem possible that freedom could just appear on the doorstep without bloodshed and suffering.

At that time and despite the fall of the Wall, this fear prompted me to follow through my decade-long plan to relocate to the United Kingdom. As with all radical relocations of this kind, this too was experienced with difficulty. In meeting the culture shock, despite a fistful of qualifications, I needed to retrain in the U.K. academic system, drawing on all my inherited qualities of survival. From a Ph.D. in world literature, from my dream world of poetry, emotions and personal reflection I moved into the world of business and the underpinning of social sciences. In two years after leaving Hungary I started to find new ground under my feet. I gained a position at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh in 1992 and was appointed as project manager on the Know-How project, which aimed at providing an accounting framework for the developing market economy.

Managing this project allowed me to learn about British organisational culture, systems, structures and mentality. I was the only non-British member of the team. It gave me an

opportunity to observe and learn. However, the strongest emotion that I felt at the time was that I needed to prove myself. I needed to prove that I was as good and as competent as the British team members. I also wanted to be accepted and belong to the British team. When I was in Edinburgh I felt more and more often that I was accepted and when people made comments like ‘you do not talk like a Hungarian’ ‘you think very much like us British’ I took them as compliments and felt very proud of myself. Life was more difficult when I was in Hungary or with Hungarian project members in the UK. They automatically expected loyalty and favourable treatment from me. After all I was one of them, by birth, and the fact that I had the good fortune to get to this position brought the unspoken responsibility of representing them and their interests. I did not want to be disloyal to my roots. In fact I felt that I needed to do my utmost to support the changes in Hungary. On the other hand I started to see the other side of the coin, the British perspective and I did not want to be disloyal to my newly chosen home and people either. It led me to an almost impossible position when I tried to please everybody and tried to represent the interests of both sides equally. It gave me lots of head and heart aches and sleepless nights. It took me a while to find my own voice and gain acceptance and respect not as a ‘pleaser’ but as a bilingual, competent manager who set out to build bridges between two different cultures.

Now as I reflect on these experiences I realise that I acted as if I was the teacher to both sides and in reality I was a student on an intensive, double degree course having to study many subjects in depth both on the British and the Hungarian side.

In a short span of time I changed countries, I changed disciplines, I changed life styles. Research in literature allowed considerable room for individual, subjective ideas. In fact original, unusual approaches were highly appreciated and rewarded. In social science as I quickly discovered the rules were rather different. In this framework I was expected to use the scientific method and I needed to learn to prove and justify every statement. British colleagues had the scientific rigour; the in-depth knowledge of the methodological frameworks and they knew how to present the findings in a proper academic manner.

Initially, I was fascinated by the precision, the Newtonian logic and systematic, step by step approach of the scientific inquiry. As I have never studied this approach in Hungary I made the personal association that in my world feelings and subjectivity was to do with my past and factual, rational thinking was my way to success in the present and future. I shared the excitement of my British colleagues, who were keen to support the changes required in Hungary. We all felt that by sharing the well-established British accounting education system with the Hungarian profession we would make a good contribution to the country’s efforts to move towards market economy. I felt that I was making a difference and it felt exciting and heroic. However numerous difficulties and limitations of methods quickly eroded my naïve enthusiasm, leading to intense frustration. Whilst I was a native speaker of Hungarian, however, I had only learnt accountancy in Britain, and had very little idea of the appropriate Hungarian terminology or methodology in accountancy. A literal translation did not always convey the meaning because dictionaries at the time reflected the old, centralised accounting system in Hungary. In fact, the use of existing dictionaries proved to be so misleading a number of times that I had to consult both a British and a Hungarian expert for clarification. Indeed, the joint efforts of the British and the Hungarian accounting academics led to the first accountancy and finance dictionary to be published for professionals in Hungary. As project manager I had a sense of achievement, however, as a researcher, the experience felt frustrating and incomplete. I did everything as I was advised by those well versed in the scientific method, I still did not have a real sense of achievement;

there was a reality gap in the work that was published in a well respected international journal (Illes et.al. 1996).

This reality gap was also present in the qualitative interviews. When I worked on a comparative research interviewing both British and Hungarian participants of different collaborative academic projects, I picked up on body language that suggested that participants were actually less than happy with the liaison with the partner institute ,both on the British and Hungarian side but too ‘polite’ to discuss it. There was no room in the research to examine and explain these subtle cultural differences. Whilst the research pointed out the difficulties of cross-cultural working, the structure of the research project itself, allowed merely observation. The same reservation of verbalising negative experience took place in all my research projects at the time. When talking to people in Hungary the fear of the unknown, fear of the globalising partner was expressed in terms of the rhetoric of change, rather than its reality as I experienced it. However, given that I was learning new scientific methods, I did not feel in a position to voice this as part of the research report.

In all cases, the results of the research reflected the problems in the method itself. Only a fraction of the experience recounted either verbally or non-verbally could be arranged into neat boxes and bullet points. The complexity and the uniqueness of each case were deeply related to the interviewee’s personality, individual and national history, organisational position and his/her underlying motives for being involved in the project. The framework of enquiry did not provide an opportunity to report on individual circumstances and feelings. While there were some common features, it was impossible to force the findings into the scientific framework without losing a whole human dimension of emotion and experience.

My initial intent, to help bridge cultures, so that both could mutually benefit, could not be met within the confines of the research projects as they had been set up. However valuable the insights, what use was made of the observations?

Bronwen’s Reflections

I ended up in the field of organisation science through default. My first degree was in French, and so my formative years of thinking were illuminated by French thinking patterns - that is a rather eclectic, free-flowing approach that does not resemble the utilitarian underpinnings of much British empiricism. This was followed by many years working as freelance editor and writer in the area of business, including editing a management journal which is what took me into the world of the social sciences. I undertook a Ph.D. at Cranfield University rather by chance. Wanting to write and research my own work rather than editing others, I found herself in receipt of a scholarship, ready to undertake a project into the position of women managers in the U.K., France and the Netherlands. This started with what has felt like a monumental struggle with positivist social science. The women in management literature, and its primarily positivist underpinnings did not answer the question I had set out with: why is it that women appear to collude in their own subordination? I searched through sociology and psychology until I was fortunate enough to find a strange social scientist in the public policy department at Cranfield who asked whether I had heard of Foucault. This started a completely new stream of inquiry that has lasted for over ten years that embraces critical theory, feminism, the labour process debate, and its Marxist orientation and post-modernism. The quest took me outside of Cranfield’s expertise, and I found an additional supervisor at Cambridge who was more au fait with these areas. This relationship with different theoretical orientations and their

methodological underpinnings is ongoing, and is concerned primarily with highlighting the abstractions of method which tend often to misrepresent experience. Whilst these methods are useful, the unquestioned assumptions that the findings represent the ‘truth’ are frustrating and limiting. We need both.

Despite the avowed calls for interdisciplinary and new methods, I experienced great difficulties in finding particular journals that were willing to take the risk of publishing novel methods. Questions at management conferences were sometimes underpinned by an assumption that my work was based in the scientific method, and tended to detract from the perspective that I was offering. For example there was a lecturer who took over ten minutes questioning a particular statistic which was used to illustrate the numbers of women in management, and how this had been collected, when the whole paper was about an exploration of the underlying processes of discrimination. Whilst he may have been correct in questioning this (which I acknowledged straight away), he did take a disproportionate amount of time away from the core of the paper and my opportunity to disseminate these ideas. I am pleased to say this has now been published (Rees and Garnsey 2003).

My Ph.D viva took over 5 hours, unprecedented at the time, with Professors Mary Jo Hatch, newly arrived from the US, and at her first viva, and Hugh Willmott as external. Both were in very different areas of study, and the problem was reconciling and integrating different areas. This is only now being published (after having spent 3 years at one publishers, only to be turned down by a new editor when it ‘didn’t fall into their lists). (Rees 2003). At the same time, I also lost a fellowship at a prestigious British university, which can only have been, in my interpretation, partially due to the radical nature of my approach.

Whilst exploring issues of women at work theoretically and methodologically, my circumstances also reflected this frustration. I was working full-time, and also a single parent of two. Difficulties that were undoubtedly experienced by women in the workplace were mirrored in my own life. This led to an awareness that the choice of methodology is not necessarily determined solely by empirical or theoretical considerations. I was led to my choices partially through my circumstances, and through my own experience of my voice not being represented. This is not some personal campaign: rather it is an honest acknowledgement that our views, our ‘theories’ of the world are determined by our experience, shaped by our experience, and not necessarily extracted from a linear argument of mental reasoning, however elegant that argument may be. We forget that theory is merely a mindmap of reality. It does not represent emotions, feelings, sensations, or even perceptions – but it has emerged from a combination of all of these. For me, to ‘hide’ behind a positivist methodology would have made my work ‘safe’, but not, in my eyes, meaningful. When, three hours into the viva I mentioned to Hugh Willmott that I wished I had done a more traditional Ph.D, he replied kindly that I would not have been the same person. This has highlighted to me that we are, as human beings, an intrinsic part of our research. What I offer is partial. But it does, and more and more so, remain true to the ‘views’ that I hold about the world, and my desire is for these views to become more and more explicit, not wrapped up in another, but rather more obscure, partial view of the world. I have introduced this story to illustrate the point that, in my view, all methods are useful, provided they help with the ‘intent’ of the research. Arguments about methodology and theory without reference to practice, are, at best tautological, at worst, debilitating and closed.

Writing the above has not been easy. Writing in the first person in this field is rather like appearing naked. I am aware of the questions that this will raise, and . to be frank, I am weary of attempting to answer them. However, I believe it is important that management studies, particularly in the cross-cultural context, can broaden its horizons to question its own epistemologies, otherwise cross-cultural communication can only lead to conflict and pain.

At the same time as this work was being carried out, Katalin and I met at a conference in Leuven. We happened to meet at dinner and she said that she thought that I would be very important to her. This has been the case, as she has also been very important to me. Let's examine this further.

Crossroads: developing joint inquiry and finding the independent witness

Up to this point, our struggles had been, on the one level, completely different, and yet on another, similar. We had both felt the intransigence of the scientific method: Katalin experiencing it through the conditioned fear that she described earlier, and Bronwen experiencing it through the rigidity of the establishment. We were both still struggling with finding 'legitimate' ways of expression. One of us was already well acquainted with alternative ways of 'doing' research (post-modern, critical theory, feminist, action research), but even so, in the field of business, there were still few empirical examples of how this may work. The constrained voice of the objective narrator was still ever present. Even in the best of critical theory thinking, for example, bringing together as it does structure and process (see Rees 2003), the narrator him/herself tends to stand outside the work.

Could we develop a new style of research that would bring to life some of the real stories, yet also retain a possibility of generalising to organisational level? And which would shed light on the cultural differences and commonalities that bind us together as human beings?

We began to research in Hungary. We began by examining our intent. How could we carry out research that would remain true to our intent? For both of us, there was fear, brought about by our mutual conditioning. For Bronwen, it was fear of a new culture, of not understanding and not being understood. For Katalin, it was fear of the past, of the years under the Soviets.

For Katalin, having a British person with whom to converse outside of 'being Hungarian' and outside of 'being scientific' meant that she could retain the witness sensibility that is so important in seeking to understand, and give space to someone else's reality. For Bronwen, it was invaluable to witness and discuss Katalin's response to the changes, as she struggled with the dual identity that she had acquired. Having a 'native' present, and beginning to know that native well, meant that she was far more sensitised to the subtleties of exchanges that would not have been possible with only one researcher, or with someone seeking only a paradigmatic response.

Katalin learnt through Bronwen the importance of being well-versed in the scientific method, of knowing how to 'move on' yet still embed new work in this tradition. In Hungary, there is far more individuality in the way in which research can be carried out, more of a tendency towards building up personal systems, and more freedom to express

personal emotions about a phenomenon without reference to the collective body of knowledge. This approach does not work in Britain, and what Bronwen had been seeking to do was to find a legitimate way of introducing this more individualistic approach into well-established frameworks. This paper represents part of this project.

Bringing the two cultures together in relationship

We began to realise that the power of our collaboration rested in the way in which we built up our relationship. Not only was this pleasurable (and sometimes conflictual) but in the very processes of building up that relationship lay the roots of deepening understanding of different cultures. As we encountered difficulties or intense experiences, the veil of understanding drew back for each of us.

In our research, exploring through relationship, we began to find some interesting metaphors that could be used to increase understanding of the cultures. One of the metaphors we used was that of Jung's shadow. The 'shadow' for Jung (1933) is understood to stand for the processes by which the persona grows out of a need to adapt to the expectations of parents, teachers and society in the course of growing up. In this process the child learns that some qualities are regarded as desirable while others are not. Those that are not are hidden from view, and form a psychological complex which Jung called the shadow – and the archetypal core of this is the 'enemy'. This is a matter of survival for societies, but later in life, if the shadow aspect is not given conscious expression, then it manifests in unintegrated ways such as passive/aggressive behaviour, or outbursts of anger. The task of the individual later in life is to attempt to acknowledge and surface these hidden aspects into a full expression of the autonomous individual, thereby eliminating the negative behaviours, and giving positive elements (such as creativity) more focussed expression (Illes and Rees 2002). However, such shadows develop both at an individual level and at a societal level. These are both intertwined. 'The structures of the human psyche, the structures of human society and the structures of human history are indissolubly complementary and can only be studied in conjunction with each other' (Elias, 1991). Jung himself interpreted the shadow at a collective level and argued that communism and capitalism represented each other's shadow. Following his suit, we adopted this metaphor to argue that Hungary and her oppressors act as each other's shadow (Illes and Rees, 2002).

Slowly, we began to realise that the history of our working together, reflected the process as described by Elias, elucidated in another way by Dewey, hinted at by Jung, and explored in greater depth by the Jungian scholar Neumann (1973). When we started to work together we could say that four characters started to emerge. The socialist persona and the capitalist persona; the socialist shadow and the capitalist shadow started to challenge and get to know each other. It was a process where the persona had to look into the mirror held by the opposite shadow. The shadows could not hide any more because they were regularly confronted by the opposite persona. An interesting dialogue started to develop that moved away more and more from the extreme and the judgemental and moved towards the complex, complementary and human. It felt like looking at a two-dimensional picture and slowly developing eyes for the third and fourth dimensions. It was as though we were tearing the veils that hid our richnesses and our perceived negative aspects.

When we talked about history, we started to identify the national characteristics of our ancestors in each other and identified many roots of our different social conditioning. Through our joint trips to Hungary, we started to realise that only by our joint efforts could

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Elias 1991 is not in the bibliography.

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This is perhaps where we get some idea of how you are using the shadow metaphor – but you have already drawn on it (in Katalin's experience) as if the reader understands your meaning. Could this idea be brought in earlier – maybe even in the introductory section, since you use the term in your title?

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Persona, mirror, shadow – I think you must give your readers more help in breaking into the metaphorical language you are using. It's fascinating, but not self-evident.

we tap into the rich and complex underlying process of change that goes way beyond statistics that happens in the intangible depth of the individual's and nation's psyche. We started to develop a two-way learning process where we both had the benefit of understanding our roots and chosen cultures. Working together can give the feel of wearing vari-focal lenses, which gives a number of different perspectives. We believe then that working with another researcher of a different culture is particularly important in carrying out cross-cultural research, since normally we are blinded by our own lenses, which are themselves selected by our conditioning. This process may not necessarily be harmonious, since often there is a struggle for the contents of the shadow to emerge, but if there is a shared intent, then we believe that ultimately more clarity will ensue. Rather than objectifying knowledge into a common framework, which is the aim of the scientific method, our approach acknowledges subjectivity, but uses relationship as a means of releasing the 'blind spots' that are an inevitable part of being human.

In short, we acted as each other's mirror, providing the 'reflexivity' in a spirit of joint inquiry that did much to enhance, we believe, our perspectives. At a psychological level, we provided a lens in each other's conditioning, for what is banished into the shadow, and the context for the lens was both Hungary and Britain. Perhaps we were both humbled in the experience as we increasingly realised how little we knew, both about one another, and, therefore, about our participants. This was, and still is, the most important learning for us. What follows is a few selected illustrations of the insights that may emerge from this way of working.

Using relationship as method

Bronwen's experience

In our working relationship, we have been on a long journey. We have visited Hungary several times, sometimes together, sometimes alone. Each journey has been different, and each time there has been a learning that takes place. In these journeys, both Katalin and I have changed, and so has the country. I noticed the fear and even dread that Katalin needs to work through in a country where she has experienced much oppression. I notice the great strength that she needs to summon up in order to return, having made her 'escape' in 1989. At the same time, I have noticed my own responses change.

Let us imagine sitting in the Vice-Chancellor's office at the University of Veszprem. We had walked up the marble steps of the Soviet building, and here I was in an enormous room, some 100-feet long, the former office of a Soviet official. Now Hungarian flags dominated the room, but these were also at half-mast, because of the early death of the deputy vice-chancellor, aged 48, apparently from overwork. I understood no Hungarian, and yet was attempting to communicate myself through Katalin as interpreter. Was she interpreting me correctly? I tend to think more and more about my speech, and I wondered whether what I perceived as the somewhat 'florid' language of the Hungarians has taken over.

It also seems that a few sentences take many more minutes in Hungarian. I had to rely entirely on Katalin's integrity and clarity for this. I wondered what I was doing there, in the middle of Europe - what had I to offer? Despite this, I was also experiencing a great sense of mental space. I had no social conditioning to fall back on, so I was able to observe things, to which I would normally not attend. The delightful politeness and respect of these high

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This sentence is rather clunky, and could do with some more crafting.

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Should this be another main heading?

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Not clear - 'spaciousness'. You haven't changed this and I still don't understand the use of the term.

officials. An open heart. A wounded heart perhaps. Perhaps that was why it was open. I felt a great privilege to be in this room where so much history, outside of my personal or collective experience, had taken place. It felt that we had transcended time and space. The woman, who had introduced us to the chancellor, was a philosopher, who had also taught the vice-chancellor as an undergraduate. Roles and responsibilities fell into relief as a rare level of communication as human beings took place. Research in this instance was not that of counting. It was more an understanding of how being able to drop our traditional filters, of being aware of the lens through which we are looking, could enhance **the sense of the possibilities of cross-cultural communication**, a sense that was not possible within the traditional scientific frameworks, since certain assumptions are already well-encoded in their methods.

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I suggest putting this in italics, because it is at the heart of your argument. Change it back if you are unhappy about the suggestion.

Later that year, at a conference, I was invited to deliver a paper on human resource management. I did not use the usual 'jargon' but attempted to show the dangers of rhetoric – to highlight what was not being said in these potential frameworks of control (Rees, 2003). Again, Katalin stood by my side, this time simultaneously interpreting. Again, I wondered what was being said. But there was full concentration. I had thought that I would bring the fruits of my thinking to this venue at the beautiful Lake Balaton. But as the evening wore on, and we visited the wine cellars of the regions, as the Hungarians broke out into the most wonderful rhythmic singing, I realised how much there was for me to bring back to the U.K. After ten years of capitalist culture, the Hungarians have already grown wise to the dangers of consumerism. Some have taken advantage, others choose more carefully. And again, due I think to the fact that Hungarians have learnt to live with oppressors, they learn to take what is necessary, what they need, and some of the rest goes back into the shadow. And it is at the **shadow edge** that our mutual exploration of culture and ourselves has taken place.

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'shadow's edge', 'shadowy edge'? I really like the metaphor of 'shadow', which is highly evocative. Because it is in your title, however, I think it quite important to clarify how you are using it. It comes out of the blue at this point of the argument and becomes central in the next page, but I'm not clear how you are applying it.

Katalin's experience

Reflecting on my research over the past 12 years, it feels like dealing with two personas and two shadows. When I came to Britain, I brought my Hungarian persona and my Hungarian shadow. My persona manifested itself in the form of a competent, confident, cosmopolitan professional who glides through cultures with ease. My shadow was suppressed in the depth of the psyche as I was busy acting out my persona of this 'super woman'. However, the shadow erupted in the most unexpected situations both in Britain but particularly when I went back to Hungary. I felt the pain of change, the fear of uncertainty and of the unknown that had been so deeply engraved into my psyche during my upbringing. It made me very sad to see beggars and homeless people during my visits. They were not part of my heritage they were the outcome of the changes from socialism to capitalism. They were an almost inevitable by product of the transition that I found difficult to deal with. The more pain I felt emotionally the more rational I tried to be in my research work desperately trying to believe that the benefits are far greater than the costs. Sometimes I wore reading glasses and became very critical; other times I wore glasses that helped my long distance vision. I made great efforts to comply with the scientific method of enquiry and experienced the frustration of having to leave out the personal, the emotional and unquantifiable aspects from my report.

When I went out to Hungary with Bronwen for the first time we had a long conversation about my perception of the changes in Hungary. It was for the first time that I allowed my emotions to emerge and shared many of my pain and fears of the past and my uncertainties

of the present state of Hungary. I trusted Bronwen and I knew that she would not judge me or use my honesty against me.

After jointly interviewing people in Hungary I found it very useful to sit and reflect back to each other how we perceived the events of the day. Sometimes Bronwen's account made me realise that there was a perfectly appropriate but rather different interpretation of the same situation. Looking for clarification with all honesty I always found that it was to do with our perception and conditioning. When someone talked about the fear of changing regimes, of changing rules and regulations they triggered my own fears of my past life in Hungary. When I had Bronwen there as a witness I felt safe. I could dive deep into my fears looking them straight in the eye knowing that I would not drown. Bronwen would throw in a safety belt and I can swim out of the experience feeling richer.

Working together in Hungary gave me an opportunity to relate to the past from my new reality. It enabled me to bring aspects of my personal and collective shadow into consciousness. It feels that my personal growth and my development as a researcher are closely related and intertwined. This personal and professional relationship offered me a protective, secure place to develop my own voice. This voice tries to bring together the objective with the subjective, the rational with the intuitive, the Hungarian with the British, the masculine and the feminine side. This voice is stronger, clearer and more educated than the voice I had when I tried to put the world into clear categories.

The next step on my journey is to join a choir and sing together with others. My work and friendship with Bronwen gave me the confidence in singing and taught me many valuable lessons of duets and teamwork.

Uncovering issues: potential sources of cross-cultural conflict

We have provide four extremely brief 'field' accounts of our experience of carrying out research in Hungary and Britain. In line with Dewey (1938), it moves back from the inward, to the outward, forwards and backwards. We are not here concerned with a linear narrative. Embedded and entwined within the field accounts there may well be observations, issues and the beginnings of some theoretical frameworks (e.g. in the notion of the shadow) that anyone thinking of conducting business in either Hungary or Britain might find useful. These issues have emerged not as 'findings' in the field, but as part of our constant and ongoing observations and discussions with one another. These differences have emerged as a result of our collaborative friendship, rather than from scientific observation. We believe that they raise interesting issues that can be addressed both at the level of research and at the level of work in cross-cultural settings.

Systems and procedures

In the West, we traditionally associate Soviet-run countries with vast bureaucracies, but our collaboration has surfaced a rather contradictory picture, that is, the intense reliance in Britain on systems. If the learning outcomes match the learning objectives, then what goes on in the classroom is immaterial. So whilst lip service is paid to creativity, the systems and procedures predominate. Katalin has experienced great difficulty in the U.K. finding her way around these systems. This suggests that they have been institutionalised over a long period of time, and therefore that they are largely unseen. They have become part of the paradigmatic furniture. These systems, no doubt, are taken over into the host culture as unquestioned 'assumptions'. One of the ways in which this happens, as we have noted is

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We're back here to issues of level of heading. Is this second or third level?

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This has come out of the blue. Nor does it surprise me – or I suspect many who work in British education. And why is it 'rather contradictory'?

through the overuse of the scientific method as the primary research tool in both cultures. Such a method removes diverse experience from the agenda.

Some of these observations have arisen from the types of answers that we have been given from people in Hungary and Britain. When interviewing people in Hungary, we often observe that the interviewees will respond with a personal account. Answers are often personal and offer a rich and complex case history. There is not a definite distinction between the public and private. In the experiences it appeared that everything was related to everything else. In the UK, our interviewees often gave objective, factual answers to the same questions. They clearly had an objective, rational view about the issues, which in their turn perpetuates an objective rational account. Even when the interviewer tried to push for more personal, internally processed views, the response was often a puzzled silence or a side step away from the personal.

One of the reasons for this lack of an internalised system that we find apparent in Britain, is that we have observed that Hungarians actually talk far more than they write. This observation emerged as a real surprise to the British researcher, particularly as it was only noticed some three years into our collaboration. Educationally, this is manifested in Hungarian's emphasis on oral examination, but it actually suggests a far greater cultural difference than we might at first imagine. Bronwen has sometimes experienced frustration sitting at conferences and meetings, when the 'oratorical' style predominates. Time then seems inexorable. The simplest of things takes forever. One sentence seems to take five in translation. Sometimes, when presenting a joint paper with Katalin, she finds that Katalin appears to be flitting from one subject to another, and not keeping to the point of the written paper. How might we deal with this at a cross-cultural level? This emphasis on talk, we speculate, may be one way in which Hungarians have maintained their individuality, and are not 'subjected' in the same way as other nations in the power/knowledge continuum. Seen in a different light, the process itself carries meaning, and it would be important for a researcher to take this on board, rather than become irritated. The process is one of giving contextual meaning to a situation. Again, this would not be obvious to a non-native, and perhaps not even to a native. Here again, our joint perspectives proved invaluable in our understanding of situation.

It is possible that such frustration is taking place in businesses, and we feel that this could do with far more exploration: it needs some mutual communication to help surface assumptions before decisions could be made. We do not provide the answers here, but in raising these observations, the possibility of deeper engagement arises. Also, building on these observations, one of us has set up a research team to help organisations build in 'awareness' techniques into their cross-cultural training. These 'awareness' techniques are built on developing a 'reflexive ground' for individuals and teams to mirror their own emotions, feelings and anxieties, and also to express their own 'intent' (Rees and Wilson 2003).

Learning and inquiry

We have both discovered, through experience with each other, and in the lecture hall, that there is a significant difference in modes of enquiry. Hungarians do not have the forms to question or debate in the same manner as takes place in Britain. This is represented at an

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Before you seemed to be pointing to key differences between Hungarian and British modes of cognition – but in this paragraph, you are pointing to commonalities in scientific thinking, for surely there is no doubting that social science in Hungary is as – even more – prone to quantitative, positivist approaches. I'm finding it difficult to follow where the argument is going. Now in July, I remain confused about where this paragraph is taking your argument.

institutional level in Parliament by challenge and (apparent) conflict. Working with Hungarians, Bronwen has often found that feedback needs to be delivered very ‘tactfully’.

For example, we can recall a time when Hungarian and British academics were sitting around the table discussing the content and structure of distance learning materials prepared by the Hungarians. Distance learning was a novel method in Hungary, and introduced as part of the growing exchange of ideas between two academic institutions. The British academics were acting as expert advisers. When a detailed critique was presented, the Hungarians began to defend the approach, and were unable to really ‘hear’ the advice. The more detached, objective methods of the British were perceived by the Hungarians as a personal ‘attack’ and they consequently ‘defended’ themselves. This could have led to unnecessary conflict, and misunderstanding. However, we believe that greater understanding and relationship between the cultures, brought about by the building up of honest relationships, could enhance working teams: our experience together shows that there is a very real difference between the more ‘objective’ world of the British, and the more ‘subjective world of the Hungarian. From working together, we have realised that neither is right nor wrong. It is the fact that the borders between the external and the internal world of the individual seem to differ culturally, and can lead to apparently ‘defensive’ behaviours. This has significant implications for those of us working in the field. We need to ensure that we are aware of our own filters and interpretations, when asking questions, and we also need to try and ‘make sense’ of the filters through which the ‘other’ is answering the questions. By acting as witnesses to each other, we can reinforce this awareness both in research and in business practice, so that both perspectives are kept at the forefront of our perceptions. Having two researchers of different nationalities can provide a much richer, and certainly more helpful interpretation of ‘how things are around here’.

A further observation, based on the more ‘oral’ nature of the culture, is that in conferences and presentations, Hungarians are more likely to use a ‘declamatory’ style, and will often create their own systems and approaches to life itself. Even in conferences of a business nature, Bronwen has seen several Hungarians discuss their philosophy on life. This is interesting and passionate and can open doors of experience. However, it would not pass muster in a British environment, where there is burden of proof at every stage. This may well have implications both in management teaching and in business, where this approach could well be viewed by the pragmatic British manager as a waste of time at best, or interpreted as ‘woolliness’ or ‘lack of clarity’. In practice, and this would require further exploration, this may represent the process by which Hungarians understand and reach business situations.

Gender differences

This is the subject of another paper, but given our interest in the subject it is worth raising here. Hungary has not undergone a feminist revolution. This has enormous implications for cross-cultural working and has emerged significantly in our friendship. For example, Hungarian businessmen always give flowers to their colleagues and subordinates on their birthdays. To a woman from the West, this may seem patronising, and indeed Bronwen viewed it as such. Stepping back, and looking at this through the eyes of a Hungarian, it may be viewed as a way of creating harmonious relations. Due to its lack of a feminist

revolution, the divide between the public and private, between authority and subordination, is articulated in different narrative spaces. The small incident of the flowers, without the collaborative research background, could be taken as a sign of 'backwardness' rather than as a different expression of gendered relations.

Conclusions: developing the witness

The relationship we have developed over the years allows us to reflect back our differences. In this way, we work at the edges of our experiences and act as each other's 'witness'. We each provide for the other a safe container in which we can push the boundaries of our own experience, and open up the possibilities of experience that would be impossible for a sole researcher. The position of 'witness' is one that is well-known in psychotherapy – where the therapist can provide a 'holding' for the client to face up to experience that is locked in the memory. When a culture is re-viewed through this experience, significant differences may emerge. In a time of transition and significant and sometimes painful change, we would suggest that a relational method of inquiry is far more likely to meet our initial intent: namely that of building significant bridges between two cultures without imposing an 'imperialist' view from one culture to another.

Together, we have written and published a paper on the shadow of Hungarian history (Illes and Rees, 2002). This has emerged from an engagement with each other and with our own fears and shadows. This metaphor has served us well, and served as the possibility for growth. Only by exposing the richness and darkness in this shadow can we truly achieve a fruitful interaction. As Bronwen has witnessed Katalin and her relationship to this truly beautiful country, so she has witnessed its history - its necessity for survival, the throbbing heart, just below the surface. In so doing it has helped to open her heart, and with it her understanding. As Bronwen gets to know Katalin better, she can see the frisson more quickly; pick up on the fear almost before it has arisen. When, on a solo visit to Sopron University to deliver a paper on globalisation, she hears someone comment about all sitting in rows handclapping at a theatre and appreciates the references back to the Soviet era. She can feel more acutely the meaning in the comments. These have implications for stories in the workplace. They have implications for the delivery of courses, in which Bronwen has been engaged. She begins to have a sense of what may or may not work – for what will be taken on consciously, or for what will be driven back into the shadow. Working in her own shadows in Hungary, she becomes more aware of her own conditioning, and what has happened at subliminal levels in her own place of work. These are issues of human conditioning, human suffering and human joy. They are also issues of ethics and values.

Working together both in the UK and Hungary enabled us to look at a more complex, deeper level of intercultural communication. How can we aim to decode our meaning from our conditioning and send transparent messages? How can we learn to appreciate and comprehend the intricate coding of another culture? How can we learn to communicate in a more open and deeper human level?

These questions have led us inexorably towards exploring issues of ethics and values in more depth, and to finding out in practice how two cultures may meet. This is not to deny the importance of more traditional methods; it is rather a call for the use of more imaginative approaches. The complexity of transition and cross-cultural work needs other metaphors than the collective one of the scientific method. To some degree, our exploration has been

through the relational aspect of our research. Great store is set on the value of collaborative research, but rarely is attention drawn to the nature of that collaboration, and the processes that render it valuable. Through this we can open the doors to the richness in both our shadows, and act as each other's witness to penetrate into these depths. Through this, we can truly begin to explore our research through narrative rather than paradigm, and leave others to help create paradigms upon our narratives. We hope you enjoyed our story.

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Please put the references in Palgrave format – look at feedback comments to earlier draft.

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