Organizing Space: A Literary Turn?

**When:**
Thursday, July 6, 19:00-22:00

**Where:**
Contact the organizer below

**Contact person:**
Boukje Cnossen, Tilburg University (b.s.cnossen@uvt.nl)

**Event description:**
We invite everyone with an interest in space, organizing, and fiction to join us for this ‘off-EGOS’ gathering which will combine talks by Gibson Burrell and Christian de Cock with collective experiments and discussions. The aim of the workshop is to provoke and engage academics to consider alternative methods in which to think and practice space in organization.

Recently, efforts have been made to get our theorizing on space beyond a discursive framing, and study its material relationality. What if, though, rather than opposing the apparent reality of materiality to the fiction of words, we engaged differently, and more fully, with the reality of fiction? Themes of mobility, movement, or on the contrary entrapment, are legion in the world literature and often explicitly tied to the experiences of work and what we might call organizational life. Amélie Nothomb’s harsh look at a Belgian expatriate’s work at a Japanese firm, in Fear and Trembling, parallels the building’s verticality and her elevator trips with the woman’s steep social and professional descent. Bulgakov’s A Young Doctor’s Notebook ties together the arduous life and work of the narrator with his travel into the harsh and unforgiving Russian land.

The workshop takes its point of departure in the work of Chilean author Roberto Bolaño, in particular his posthumous magnum opus 2666. Widely regarded as the first novel of the 21st century, 2666 offers what it calls (citing Baudelaire) ‘an oasis of horror in a desert of boredom’. That oasis of horror might be organization, specifically contemporary organization; or it might be the failure of organization. The text of 2666 remains episodic and fragmented such that it seems to be held together by a strange consciousness - one of dissociation, seemingly shared by both author and key protagonists in the novel. On the other hand, it might be that the novel allows us to explore and experience the possibility that modern organization is constitutively horror. We should then ask whether organization, and our very capacity to talk of it, is only possible because of our own unacknowledged consciousness of dissociation. 2666 is thus taken as an example of what can fiction and literature can do in terms of thinking (dis)organization and (non-)space.

The event is organized by Damian O’Doherty, Justine Grønbæk Pors, Nicolas Bencherki and Boukje Cnossen, and is the 3rd Space, Creativity and Organising Workshop. In addition to signing up for participation, please send an e-mail with your research interests (a few sentences suffice) to Boukje Cnossen (b.s.cnossen@uvt.nl).

Welcome!