

THE KITSCH-ORGANIZATION

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Abstract

The paper discusses kitsch as the discourse of depriving experience of beauty and surprise. It argues that people often construct kitsch when they organize. Three different Kitsch-Organizations are depicted: the Polish communist youth organization from the 1950-ties, a foreign enterprise operating currently in Poland, and a school of organizational behavior.

Kitsch, not being equivalent to "low" or "popular" culture is a degrading construct. Adopted as a second level metaphor to the studies of organizations, it can be of use for critical social constructivist analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Postmodernism became somehow enthralled with the so called low or popular culture: it acknowledges it, while modernism often failed to see its significance, condemning it as useless, vulgar, and worthless (for a discussion, see Burszta and Piątkowski, 1994; Frydryczak, 1992; Gołaszewska, 1992; Wertensein-Zuławski, 1992). I do not mean to be provocative by returning into a modernist normative discourse (that would perhaps border to the tasteless - please excuse this tasteless irony). I do not intend to discuss the significance of "low" versus "high" culture. To me, kitsch does not equal low culture. The label "low culture" is matter-of-factly condescending, scientifically benevolent. Kitsch is something else.

Kitsch has an identity independent of "high culture", but not of "art" or "beauty". In *The art of the novel* Milan Kundera explains that it used to stand for the enemy of art in his country. So it did in mine.

I consulted the Polish *Dictionary of foreign words and terms* from 1970 and here is what it says about kitsch: "useless painting, literary work, film; cf. junk-art" (p.376). Further, the dictionary explains that this expression was coined in the 1870-ties by Munichian artists. The new *Handbook of literary expressions* by Michał Głowiński et al. (1994) defines "kitsch" in the following way:

technically skillful art, but superficial, operating with external effects, - stereotypes, easy ornamentics, calculated for fast effect, appealing to not too refined tastes (p. 108).

The quoted dictionary definitions explain how the word is understood in Polish linguistic communities, but left me with a feeling of dissatisfaction. However, I do not intend to take up the quest (or even less: the "search") of new ostensive definitions. I will let this text to be a performative definition, a transcript

of the process of construction of such a definition (on ostensive versus performative definitions see Latour, 1986; Czarniawska-Joerges, 1991).

I start by exploring the narrative expression of the word "kitsch". In *The unbearable lightness of being* Milan Kundera says the following about kitsch:

[i]n the land of kitsch there governs a dictatorship of the heart. But the feeling that is awakened by kitsch has to be such that the masses can share it. Therefore kitsch cannot be supported on the exceptional situation, but on basic pictures, that people have imprinted in their consciousness: the ungrateful daughter, the rejected father, children running in the grass, the betrayed fatherland, remembrance of the first love.

The kitsch provokes two tears of emotion. The first tear says: how it is beautiful, children running in the grass!

The second tear says: how it is beautiful, to get emotional together with the whole of humankind over children running in the grass!

Only the second tear makes kitsch of the kitsch.

Brotherhood of all people in the world can be constructed merely on kitsch (p. 170; translation MK).¹

Kitsch is then the obvious, the familiar and dear, the glue that holds us together. Kundera adds: "In the land of total kitsch the answers are known a priori and exclude any questions" (p. 172). It is not reserved for "bad taste", however: it is only too natural. Nobody is completely immune to kitsch: "kitsch belongs to the human fate" (ibid.: 174).

Kitsch is then inherent, unifying. It is also affirmative, in Kundera's words: "[t]he source of kitsch is an authoritative approval of being" (ibid.: 174). It is undisputable, unquestionable and thus serious, even if it tries to be comic. It is also comic while trying to be tragic, and in that it is even more and dramatically serious. Not all seriousness is kitsch. But the complete unability to take a step aside and be ironic is an attitude intimately coupled with kitsch.

There is, however, another dimension to kitsch, bordering to relations of power. Kitsch is accord, acceptance: of being, of received ideas - being their translation into the language of beauty and feeling (Kundera, 1990: 163). But beauty astonishes, it is dazzling. Kitsch fails to surprise, it avoids amazement, it abhors the singular, domesticating our perception and emotion, promising an everlasting,

never-ending, eternal everyday being. This way kitsch is not only uniting, but also transcendental, metaphysical. But it fails to make the difference, to inspire being. It does not mean absence either. To use Kundera's words again it is closer to non-being, non-thought, also a kind of eternity (the massive one).

Kitsch is at the same time thin, superficial. Kitsch crumbles when it is questioned. It is powerless, because it cannot face the most powerful human expressions of being: irony, inquiry, amazement. It gives eternal life to those who forget that they are alive - for the moment which they forget.

THE MIRROR OF THE KITSCH-ORGANIZATION

Kundera writes about the *Kitschmensch's* need for kitsch: "it is the need to gaze into the mirror of the beautifying lie and to be moved to tears of gratification at one's own reflection" (1990: 135).

Organizations, social constructions, reveal more or less of the tendency characteristic of the *Kitschmensch*. A type of organization that is strongly dependent on kitsch I will call here the *Kitsch-Organization*: the organization mirroring itself in the shiny surface of its "corporate culture".

In the following sections I will present some examples of such organizations, and explain the role of kitsch for their construction.

The Eastern Kitsch-Organization

By "eastern" I mean here: from the eastern side of the Big Wall (a masterpiece of kitsch in itself).

The organization dates from the early 1950-ties, but many times since during the communist era in Poland efforts have been undertaken to re-construct similar organizations. These efforts never really succeeded, and organizations were quite different from the almost archetypical one I am about to

describe. People were never as ready to abide ideologic control of this intensity² (see e.g. Czarniawska-Joerges, 1987). One trait was, however, remarkably stable: the kitsch (and the *genre* of the kitsch).

ZMP, or the Union of Polish Youth, was a youth organization established under the early years of communism in Poland with the Soviet Comsomol as a model. Membership was collective, i.e. whole school classes were made members as soon as the pupils became 14 years old. In gymnasiums as good as all students were members of the organization, while in vocational schools perhaps only a minority. This was due to the fact that it was virtually impossible to be admitted to a university or get a good job without being a member of ZMP.

The organization was similar to that of the Communist Party - it was its "little sister". Its highly hierarchical structures, with a high degree of centralization, allowed no spontaneity. However, ZMP performed "concerted spontaneity", organized youthfulness and enthusiasm. Its power was both formal (it could exclude a member and thus hurt her or his future career seriously) and emotional. In fact, many people were actively and passionately involved in the functioning of ZMP and can still look back at it with nostalgia. Other, look back at it with horror. Among my interlocutors, the first category was not represented: I talked only to silent "dissidents" and a person without any emotional judgements about the organization.

My interlocutors agreed, however, that ZMP could be really attractive for some people. It organized young people's time down to the minute. They did not have any "free time". After school they were engaged in many activities, among them sports, dance, song, etc., but nobody could choose his or her activities. Not even the "bosses", i.e. the heads for the local or even regional ZMP. The students were allotted tasks and were required to excel in them. Due to the "socialist competition" among classes and schools the pressure to succeed was very strong. People who did not treat it serious enough, i.e. with deadly seriousness, could be excluded from the organization, from school, or even go to prison.

One of my respondents told me a story about a school boy who "disappeared", together with his whole family, after "non-serious" behavior.³

ZMP held many meetings, with speeches, song (*We ZMP, we ZMP, we are not afraid of reactionaries*), dance, carefully pre-arranged, perhaps with flags or kerchiefs that the participants waved with, in a pre-orchestrated, systematic manner. The repetitions before these military looking performances were endless and exhausting. But nobody was in a position to say no. The members wore uniforms, or at least red ties, they were forbidden to dress in some ways (that were banned as "reactionary"), and one could have serious problems for wearing too colorful skirts or socks (see fig.1).

During the meetings a lecturer perhaps also explained some ideals of Leninism and Stalinism. It goes without saying that there were no questions or doubts allowed. This was the most serious offense: it could end in prison.

The meetings were famous for one more thing: the self-criticisms. Some people were told to step forward, to accuse themselves for offenses in front of the whole audience. Almost everybody had to go through it. The most rationally minded people did not mind: they recited the taught formulae without giving them a second thought. This was the best strategy: silent hypocrisy. Of course, that was not something people talked with their friends about, it was a highly introvertic private strategy some were lucky enough to invent - and to keep to themselves. But for many people the self-criticisms were a nightmare and a tremendous humiliation. Some other probably believed in the ideals, they were fanatics, they wept and accused themselves passionately, vowed fidelity to ZMP and The Cause, and denounced their friends. By the way, you never knew who denounced you: at some schools anyone could be the informant, even a person's best friend. Some other schools were different, full of silent hypocrites, bordering to resistance. The meetings with self-criticisms were, though, a ritual that everybody had to go through everywhere, with more or less pain. The declarations made were the

obvious grandeur of such a mass organization: loyalty to the Party, to The Cause, condemnations of "reactionaries", of jazz, of individualism, of poetry, of art. One could only employ the accepted slogans and metaphors, adopt the rhetorics of the pathetic, not involve any personal improvisations, besides the pain and perhaps the tears.

When Batiushka (Daddy) Stalin died, people wept in the streets, the tears were sincere, some even committed suicide. ZMP bore the deepest and most perfectly organized grief.

An ex-participant of ZMP recalls that he, and probably even other university students (they left their traces) started to write ironic remarks in Leninist and Stalinist books at the library in 1954, or perhaps 1955. People got suddenly interested to borrow these books. The students queued to get a copy (and to add something of their own). They did it in private, but with a public intention, they did not agree to do it - it just started to happen. In 1956, after the famous Khrushchev speech, the members of ZMP deconstructed the organization (with genuine delight). It happened during one night. The day after ZMP did not exist anymore.⁴

The Western Kitsch-Organization

I will now present an example of the Western Kitsch-Organization. The one I picture here is operating in Poland, but I do not think it matters, it could probably be anywhere. I picked these settings because it is easiest for me, as I live and work in Poland. I also believe that this is a typical picture, representing this flourishing category of many cultures and branches.

The firm is well known for its "strong corporate culture", its "feeling of belonging", and "family feeling". The company often arranges parties, with a lot of ceremonies, common songs, speeches, jokes, etc. The atmosphere of these parties is "informal" in a planned way, liturgical, repetitive: everybody knows what will happen. The employees often receive gifts from the firm: the firm's products. They

tend to dress similarly, even though it is not explicitly demanded (everybody "knows" that it is necessary), they have to smell in a certain way (an employee once received a deodorant as an allusive present). It is not rare that they wear ties or sweaters with the company's logo. The competitors' logos are banned and the consequences of manifesting an "alien" logo can be severe.

One of my informants, a post-graduate student, was quite shocked by the secrecy of the firm. As he expressed it, everything seemed to be top-secret, and the people looked "brain-washed", even old friends were not willing to discuss anything that had to do with the firm or the business. Their loyalty was amazing: they reminded him of young scouts. It is perfectly normal for scouts. For adults it seems rather odd and not quite mature.

The superficial casualty is radiant: everybody smiles, people say merrily hello to each other. In the midst of the title loving Polish culture this is one of the islands of informality: people are supposed to say "you" even to a boss. This dropping of titles is, however, coupled with unquestioned power, indisputable and unnameable. People find themselves working very late "out of their free will", nobody tells them explicitly to, but they feel obliged. In other Polish enterprises the working day lasts for 8 hours, as the law prescribes. This, and many other foreign employers do not care about the law, not by breaking it ostentatiously, but as if it did not exist. Some people are also expected to work weekends, and do it "with genuine enthusiasm".

There is a lot of "genuine enthusiasm" around. People are expected to be "enthusiastic" and also to "have fun", all this while working hard. They work hard "for their own and their company's success". They are expected to believe that and to be committed to this statement, even if they do not own the company, do not assist in making more important decisions, and virtually cannot even decide about their own job: the pace, the goals, the means.

People are told that they stick together that they are one family, and care about each other and the company very much. Many look as if they really believed in it. Many live for the company and disrupt their family and private lives. Some get burned out, but that is a taboo: they have just "disappeared".⁵

The Post-Modern Kitsch-Organization

The organization is a private institution offering courses directed to managers and business people in different areas of business administration, but primarily "motivation" and "human resource management". It is located outside of Warsaw, in the countryside, in quite attractive surroundings. The building itself is a renovated communist construction of the 1960-ties, uniting the most stereotypical features of "communist" and what is considered "capitalist" style in Poland. And so, the building has thin walls, low ceilings, is made of cheap material looking like plaster and aluminum to the non-professional eye. The decorations are, however, heavy leather, huge plastic plants and the school's logo printed in big types everywhere. The chairs that the students use are uncomfortable but "modern", the blackboard is, of course, not black. There are many mirrors, one room has mirrors all over the walls. Many "funny little drawings" are hanging on the walls, as the one enclosed (fig.2).

The school employs few people. The rest are temporary staff, even though quite regular as teachers. They come and go without seeing each other, often without knowing their names. They are there only the time strictly necessary for classes. It is quite obvious that they have all other jobs and hobbies, they teach there only for the money. People just flow in and out. The students flow in and out: the courses given are usually short. Most of my ex-students-informants were disappointed or neutral to the school and said they would not return. Their disappointment was of a fluid character: this was clearly a "disposable product", one time is enough, there were rarely other reasons for it. One was

satisfied, but evaded my inquiries why he was satisfied. This is probably a wrong category for analysis of this school's functioning.

The courses offered are most often easy motivation theories, games, a popular, fun version of the otherwise quite sinister sensitivity training, popular psychology and a colorful package of the so called human resource management. There are no exams, no demands.

It is easy to accept the school, and the school requires acceptance. Critique would be out of place. People tend to be affirmative, during classes, in the cafeteria. In spite of the "fraternity" appearances, the funny little "jokes" between the management and the participants or workers, e.g. of the canteen, the "family-atmosphere", it is quite clear where the power sits. There are no alternative interpretations: not because they are prohibited, but because they are just not appropriate in this kind of reality.

One of the students, more articulate than the others I have spoken to, complained that there is an artificial reality in the school, prohibiting all other kinds of reality and criteria for experience. During classes, playing the games, he felt somehow under press, I would say: to join in this psychological "hyper-reality". The lectures were to my respondent a time of relief, when he could rest from the stress accumulated during the games. He was ironic about what he was saying, often stopping to laugh. Asked why he laughs, he became a bit confused. Over a coffee he finally confided me the reason: what he felt seemed out of place for him, he did not want to seem ridiculous.

My interlocutor was the only one I know who broke the spell of this school. To others it was obvious, even if unsatisfactory, or perhaps satisfactory. Obviousness is nothing to laugh at. Nothing to get stressed about.⁶

WHY WE ALL ARE MOVED TO TEARS

The examples above are more or less controversial. The first seems most evident: the communist organization was a totalitarian organization, a "greedy institution" (Coser, 1974), where actors are persuaded to "live entirely for their roles as members of the organization and to identify with its aims and with the means chosen for achieving them" (Rottenburg, 1994: 74), or in Rottenburg's terms, the "integrated model" (ibid.). This model fulfilled in ZMP quite evident deprived people of privacy and dignity. It may be somewhat difficult to accept that this organization had common traits with a modern western enterprise.⁷ However, adoption of the kitsch metaphor enables such comparisons. Like the communist ZMP so is the capitalist organizations feeding on kitsch through its corporate culture. To me, the capitalist and the communist organizations, though dichotomically different are equivalent, or rather, complementary: they are two faces of modernism (more about the complementarity of this dichotomy in Kostera and Wicha, 1994).

The capitalist Kitsch-Organization is a kind of seduction, as Steve Linstead puts it (1993).

The corporate image is a means to capitalize on the fundamental drive of ontological *lack*, the desire for the other which drives social structure, by manufacturing a synthetic lack which is engineered by consumerism, and which offers access to the desired world of the other (implicitly, at an ontological level) through access to the desired world of a particular social milieu... The corporate image, or corporate culture, is a seductive device, designated to operationalize manufactured lack into a desire willingly to be controlled (Linstead, 1993: 61-61).

Culture is a response, again: *simulated*, to this simulated lack, it offers a pseudo-reality to people (ibid.), an acceptable such, holding them together, giving them hope and faith. Modern organizations replace churches (Sievers, 1988: 36), are symbols of immortality (Sievers, 1986). They fail, however, to fulfill this role more than as surrogates, easy to accept and easy to break into pieces of broken glass (the mirror).⁸

The communist Kitsch-Organization had exactly the same ambitions: to be One, Eternal, to Unite, even if the term "culture" was not utilized by communist organization theorists; they spoke instead of "rules", "principles", "ideas", and "ideals".

I see both modernist forms of Kitsch-Organization as totalitarian organizations. "In their propaganda, totalitarian societies project an idyllic smile: they want to be seen as "one big family" (Kundera, 1990: 110). Through their transcendental pretensions and their obsession to achieve consensus, yes, with different aims in mind (economic rationality was the capitalist organization's product, while political rationality was the communist organization's product, as I argue elsewhere, Kostera and Wicha, 1994), they both solicited means to uni-form, connect, concert. The tear-provoking unity and loyalty unto disruption of one's own and others' lives are common for both constructions: totalitarianism feeds on kitsch.

What is perhaps more difficult to accept is the example of the post-modern organization. Is it really postmodern, or am I engaging in modernist projections (see Burrell, 1993 who had a similar dilemma)?

I see the described organization as an example of a different culture of organizing, a different rationality and even "order" (or rather, non-order, but not chaos). It is enactment of the boundarylessness, flux, the popular, and the episodic. It is also appearingly non-hierarchical. These qualities make it distinctly different from the "usual" - or "modern" organization. I interpret the school as postmodern; still, however, it is a kitsch-organization. Apparently, it is not totalitarian. People are free to come and go, they do not feel loyalty toward each other or the organization. Nobody really expects them to. However, I believe that this organization is *totalizing*, even if in a different way. It has no borders: this gives the illusion of freedom. But having no borders, it never really ends or begins, it is a whole life style that pervades a whole sphere of people's lives.

What is kitschy in this kind of kitsch-construction? This time no tear will fall, people are playing a game and are aware of it. This is a supposedly comic version of kitsch. It is play, it is amusement, and bad feelings are prohibited. But the comical is not funny: it lacks the suspense and the surprise. It is a domesticated parody, made solemn through domestication, the coming and going of people, of each individual does not change anything, does not make any difference for the organization. And for the person if she or he carries the spell with them home. I do not think people actually do this: not yet, not in the turbulent, changing Poland of 1994. There are still many kinds of art, and competing kinds of kitsch rivalling with the post-modern organizational kitsch construction. The latter is a refined kind of kitsch: a "high kitsch ", just for the cultivated elites.

BECOMING ENKITSCHED?

Kitsch seems to me as an ever-pervasive trait of our organizations. It is perhaps something people do when they organize: they have to establish a common ground, tame chaos, tame ambiguity.

Organizations, particularly "interested" organizations (the majority is such: the profit-oriented, many of the non-for-profit, those with a single aim and rationality), are often streamlining experience, in order to achieve affirmation, a concerted and uniform effort to achieve simple goals, that were not decided upon together (see Brunsson, 1985). In order not to question this, the foundations of power have to be accepted without saying, becoming a taboo. The organization is thus based on received ideas. The organization then introduces customs of "democracy" or participation in decision-making. Even ZMP had such customs and they were often referred to openly. The freedom of questioning and discussing was, however, limited to insignificant things, that people were told were fundamental. All other things were "obvious", given. The other kitsch-organizations are founded on the same rules, even if the "free space" is bigger in the Western organization, and obscure in the Post-Modern. Because of the almost

manifest perversion of ZMP it was also a natural act of spontaneity to deconstruct it, even if it was a difficult act, an act of true courage, and impossible to do when the totalitarian Stalinist system was as strongest. The other organizations are more sophisticated: they are not a single mirror to smash, they are Houses of Mirrors.

People participating in kitsch-organizations are not supposed to experience anything, they are actually expected to exclude this participation from the domains of their private lives and feelings, to adapt and to conform. Time is important: it is streamlined too, a straight line that has to be stuck to. Surprise takes time, creation is timeless - both do not fit in the kitsch-organizations' map of reality. The kitsch reality is two-dimensional, like an animated movie. Everything that happens: pain, happiness, ambition, dignity, etc., has two correlates and can be presented in a quantitative mode. There is just one rationality reigning in those organizations, and that Rationality is god. The god worshipped in the "surrogates for churches" is omnipotent, but one-dimensional.

The Kitsch-Organization is what it is meant to represent: immortal, eternal, but this is the immortality of kitsch: infinite because of the failure to come alive or to die, infinite because it is a non-being.

I do not believe there is an "essence of organization". But I think that the discourse people engage in quite often when they organize, in modernity and postmodernity alike, is founded on a metaphor, which often remains implicit: *organization as kitsch*. A way of taming, not framing experience.⁹

THE KITSCH METAPHOR: WHAT IS THERE TO UNDERSTAND?

The kitsch metaphor is a second level metaphor in Alvesson's (1993) terms, while the cultural metaphor is first level. Organizations are cultures, but cultures seen in a particular way.

Cultural metaphors can be used in many different ways: as an independent and dependent variable, or root metaphor (Smircich, 1983). Culture can be an organic metaphor, emphasizing the "biological" and "natural" in social systems ("living culture"). It can also be used in the way e.g. Czarniawska-Joerges (1991) uses it - to point at the processes of social construction.¹⁰

The kitsch metaphor is related only to the constructivist cultural perspective. Kitsch is, then, constructed, and organizations seen as kitsch are constructed collectivistically. This metaphor emphasizes the construction and the collectivist dimension. By lifting out this dimension, it also draws attention to the inevitability and significance of façades. The collective construction materializes at the "façade", and as the "façade". This is how organizational action is made possible. But kitsch also implies that in the process of organizing, symbols become degraded and degrading. It is the critical, expressive quality of this metaphor which makes it radical at the same time that it is constructivist.¹¹ It is a reasonable combination, because the kitsch metaphor corresponds well with a language of criticism: not social criticism, however (as Knorr Cetina, 1994 remarks, constructionism does not promise a more "truthful truth and a better nature" as modernist theories and critical theory have done), but literary or art criticism.

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<p>The kitsch metaphor only constructed power supporting role use of construct the collective façade collectivistic construction</p>

The cultural metaphor:		
* Culture as independent variable Comparative management "environment"	* Culture as internal variable Corporate culture "subsystem"	* Culture as root metaphor: Organizations are cultures, - "natural" or - constructed. Constructed culture can be also analyzed in aesthetic terms, e.g. organizations as art

Tab. 1. The metaphor of kitsch as a second-level metaphor in studies of organizations.

Organizations create icons to reduce complexity, in order to enhance common motivations and expectations with respect to action proposals. The larger the masses of participants, the more important the icons. Rationalistic decisions do not provide a good basis for action (Brunsson, 1985). This paradox represents some of the most salient features of organizations. The kitsch metaphor enables to pursue this line of thought, by drawing attention to the different practices and consequences of rational use of "irrationality". Kitsch can be more or less intentionally used. Intentionality can be analyzed, and so can power relations, without the individualization of social actors: institutions do not become psychologized. The individual perspective does not fade (in which the metaphor differs from many collectivistically oriented cultural perspectives): it surfaces through an aesthetic rather than psychological quality of the metaphor. In this it differs from many research perspectives focussed on the individual, being rather psychodynamically oriented (see Alvesson and Berg, 1988 for an overview of research perspectives rooted in the cultural metaphor).

The kitsch metaphor is also interesting in that it enables narrating and comparing organizations of different epochs: from premodern, through modern to postmodern. From the point of view of kitsch construction organizations throughout all these epochs tend to reveal nontrivial similarities.

Finally, the metaphor opens further the possibilities for the use of literary and art criticism as a research methodology (see e.g. Czarniawska-Joerges and Guillet de Monthoux, 1994). Art is a special form of symbolism and has a special meaning for people who engage in it. Through criticism this meaning can be again the issue of scientific discourse (see Guillet de Monthoux, 1993).

However, as Gareth Morgan (1986) observed, all metaphors that enlighten some aspects of reality, inevitably obscure others. This holds true for the kitsch metaphor which is not much suitable for more process oriented studies.¹² I would also discourage the use of this metaphor in its purely evaluative (labelling) mode, and particularly as a way to judge individuals. Kitsch can be a harsh label, judgmental, and used to show oneself in better light (what others do is kitsch, never what we do ourselves, etc.). This kind of use of the metaphor is, in my opinion, misuse, a way of strengthening stereotypes instead of critically examining them.

The metaphor can open an important discourse as organizations cheat people of their experience, and do not even leave them the possibility of direct reaction, even the dignity of "exit". Kitsch has a particularly oppressive and pervasive quality (god-like): it is "the transit station between being and forgetting" (Kundera, 1989: 189).

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ENDNOTES

1. What I am doing is unpardonable, so I will not even ask Milan Kundera to forgive me: I know his aversion for untalented translations. However, I do not have the access to authorized English translations of his *Unbearable lightness of being*, just a Polish one. Therefore I decided to translate it myself into English, which allows me to make my point. Doing so I act in accordance to my preference for the epic over the lyric, wherefore I hope Milan Kundera would have some understanding for what I do anyway.
2. There were, of course, many reasons why they were in the 1950-ties, the most obvious being: the directness and magnitude of terror.
3. The student, a teenager, got drunk and loud, but did not make any real damage, during a ZMP "help to farmers" camp.
4. Case developed by the author after conversations and interviews with ex-members of ZMP.

5. Case developed by the author on the basis of interviews and conversations with 3 informants: one currently working for the firm, one having once worked there, and one student engaged in a project including the firm; I have also read texts written about the enterprise in question.
6. Case developed by the author, during her contacts with the school lasting over 2 years.
7. Although already Coser (1974) argued that many different types of institutions and organizations function as "greedy institutions".
8. Many churches are experts of talented and purposeful use of kitsch. These organizations offer interesting and challenging opportunities to study kitsch (perhaps a "pre-modern" variant). It is, however, beyond the scope of this paper which focusses on non-religious forms of organizing (the substitutes for churches, not the churches themselves).
9. Pierre Guillet de Monthoux' exquisite book, *Det sublimas konstnärliga ledning* (1993), is for me an example that we can engage in discourses of beauty and experience when we organize and talk about organizing.
10. For a thorough review of the use of the cultural perspectives, see Alvesson and Berg (1988).
11. I do not mean radical constructivism, that is something else, but critically minded constructivists.
12. However, it does not necessarily need to imply reification of organizational processes. The metaphor of kitsch can be also used as second level with the theatrical metaphor as first level metaphor. Then the focus would be more on dynamics and processes, than in my examples in this paper.