Transitional Spaces: The Phenomenology of the Awayday

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Abstract

In this paper I want to investigate the phenomenon of the awayday – what does it mean? How is it perceived and experienced by employees? And how does it fit into management discourse? I also want to investigate its potential as a transitional space. Much had been documented about the peculiarities of an awayday in an individual organisation but the awayday as a sociological or managerial phenomenon has been undertheorised. My empirically based research will be conceived of theoretically within terms of a rite of passage, or more specifically Victor Turner’s appropriation of liminality as a space of potential. In the transition from the instrumental conventions and constraints of working life to the fluidity of the transitional space offered in the everyday, the potential for communitas is a distinct possibility, where people have shared goals and values and people are not viewed instrumentally but holistically. A more negative interpretation would view the awayday as a paternalistic gesture to enforce control.

Biography

Dr Rina Arya is a Reader in Visual Communication at the University of Wolverhampton. She is particularly interested in aesthetics and the role of the sacred in secular organisations and has published in this area.