Restoring Dialogue to Political Debate

A Modest Proposal

October 2005

Summary

ISCE proposes to hold two one day events in Washington DC, a one day event in Budapest Hungary, and a three day conference in Naples Florida to experiment with the technique known as Buberian Dialogue. The goal of these experiments is to see if the use of Buberian Dialogue can provide transformative experiences for prominent political commentators and therby transform the quantity or quality of political stridency demonstrated in the media.

Stridency and polarization dominate the conduct of political debate in the media. Like the endless repetition of a bad song, the melody becomes stuck in the public's consciousness and like a squeaky wheel attracts undue attention and energy. Many recognize this problem but as with the problem of drug addiction feel mostly powerless to contain it ... never mind stop it. When the head of a political party can claim, "This is a struggle of good and evil. And we're the good." the visceral stridency is nearing crescendo.

Something needs to be done.

Attempts to promote "dialogue" have traditionally been conducted along one of two paths – the line promoted by the Nobel prize winning physicist David Bohm – participants in a dialogue must attempt to put aside their partisan differences and enter into a "cooperative space" open to the generation of new ideas or the line promoted by "political realists" where the goal is compromise and partial victories. Neither of these approaches have been very successful.

Americans turn on their televisions and see "screaming talking heads" who yell at one another. As one media critic put it, "The commercial success of the newspapers and news shows depends on good story lines, and conflict is a good story line. "Americans agree on core values" is not a headline that editors expect to sell newspapers. "Citizens describe themselves as moderates" is not a good lead for the evening news." Instead, "Stridency sells, because, for many, polarization feels good."

Stridency and the polarization of communicative messages are a powerful reductive technique to use a term from the philosophy of science. Although reductionism is usually associated with Newton, who, in effect, codified it in his laws of motion, the term is rooted in Greek philosophy and Aristotle, who emphasized "illumination through disaggregation." By reducing an argument to its symbolic extremes one can paint the picture as good versus evil. As Herbert Simon told us, "Because of limits in human mental capacity . . . the mind cannot cope directly with the complexity of the world. Rather, we construct a simplified mental model of reality and then work with this model. We behave rationally within the confines of our mental model, but this model is not always well adapted to the requirements of the real world." Stridency is a reductive model – great for media portrayals but poor for constructing policy.

The study of complex systems tends to offset the use of reduction with an equally powerful force: emergence. Emergence is the recognition of new attributes of organization by a shift in levels (person to family, family to group, group to town etc.). Emergence techniques have rarely been applied to political debate. This proposal aims to change that.

The emergence technique proposed herein is sometimes called "Buberian dialogue." The technique calls for two discussants, a moderator and an audience. The discussants each say their initial piece. It is the role of the audience to listen for what the two discussants have said or implied which might be in common. The audience is called upon to inform the discussants of these commonalities (which the moderator captures on a white board) and then for the discussion to turn to the revealed items. This occurs through three or more rounds. The aim is for a transformational experience. There is no effort to reach consensus or conclusion. Rather, the goal is for a transformation to take place in how the discussants view each other in the context of the debate. If a more human based respect emerges, the technique is successful.

Traditional approaches to curtailing the stridency and its dangers have not succeeded. It is time to try something new. Such is this proposal.

Background

If the media in America are right, politics in America is about stridency in the making. As Robert Samuelson of the Washington Post puts it, "One of today's popular myths is that we've become a more "polarized" society. We're said to be divided increasingly by politics (liberals vs. conservatives), social values (traditionalists vs. modernists), religion (fundamentalists vs. everyone else), race and ethnicity. Today's polarization exists mainly on the public stage among politicians, TV talking heads, columnists and intellectuals. What's actually happened is that our political and media elites have become polarized, and they assume that this is true for everyone else. It isn't."

> "As for media and intellectual elites -- commentators, academics, columnists, professional advocates -- they're in an attention-grabbing competition. They need to establish themselves as brand names. For many, stridency is a strategy. The right feeds off the left and the left feeds off the right, and although their mutual criticisms constitute legitimate debate, they're also economic commodities. To be regarded by one side as a lunatic is to be regarded by the other as a hero -- and that can usually be taken to the bank through more TV appearances, higher lecture fees, fatter book sales and larger audiences and group memberships. Polarization serves their interests. Principle and self-promotion blend." (Samuelson, 2003)

> "Polarization and nastiness are not side effects. They are the game. You feel good about yourself because the other side is so fanatical, misguided, corrupt and dishonest. Because real differences between party programs have narrowed, remaining differences are exaggerated. Drab policy debates become sensational showdowns -- one side or the other is "destroying" the schools, the environment or the economy. Every investigation aims to expose the other side's depravity: One side's Whitewater becomes the other's Halliburton."

> "Entertainment and politics merge, because both strive to satisfy psychic needs. Rush Limbaugh and Michael Moore are more powerful political

figures than most senators, because they provide more moral reinforcement. Politicians, pundits and talking heads all heed the same logic: By appealing to their supporters' strongest passions and prejudices, they elevate their standing. Of course, much of this is essential to legitimate debate. But it's also a marketing strategy and a formula for power. Stridency sells, because, for many, polarization feels good."

"Politics should reflect and, at its best, conciliate the nation's differences. Increasingly, it does the opposite. It distorts, amplifies and inflames conflicts. It's a turnoff to vast numbers of centrist voters who do not see the world in such uncompromising absolutes. This may be the real polarization: between the true believers on both sides and everyone else." (Samuelson, 2004)

The yelling, the stridency, and the moral clams reach all the way to the heads of our political parties:

I think there's an enormous market for somebody who says what he thinks.... Look, Harry Truman was campaigning in 1948, and a guy went up and said, "Give 'em hell, Harry!" And Harry Truman said, "I don't give 'em hell. I just tell the truth and the Republicans think it's hell." ....I can be overbearing to people whose ideas I don't agree with or respect." (Howard Dean)

While the citizenry may be sick of stridency its proliferation continues. Politicians are unlikely to be of much help. An . . . even more potent source of social and existential mistrust is the widespread tendency to polarize the concrete reality of our situation into a set of catchwords, a life-destroying, life-denying Either/Or that demands one be for the Establishment or against, for the Free World or against, for Black Power or against, for the state of Israel or against, for America or against. . . . Our life together has become so politicized that abstract slogans are taken for concrete reality and qualifications of these slogans for equivocation. (Friedman, 1974)

Stridency polarization and labeling seem to create meaning at least for a moment. Thus complexity is reduced and decision making eased. But, at what cost? The reduction of complex problems to polarized labels does not address the complexity of the underlying problem itself.

Rejecting an interdependent view of human community invites a deceptive simplification of a conflict by splitting people into separate camps. This "us" versus "them" rhetoric is inherent in any revolutionary viewpoint that seeks to benefit from a class conflict or ideological confrontation. Polarized communication neatly organizes events into contrasting categories, giving the illusion of sharpness of perception, when in reality there is a refusal to gain new insights by listening to the other's viewpoint.

If our leaders had clearly defined easily articulated black and white choices to offer the electorate, the stridency and polarization displayed in the media would reflect an underlying reality. They do not, and thus the media is feeding us distortions whose

noxious effects are as yet unknown. At a minimum the media is reinforcing a distortive cognitive bias ("mental errors caused by simplified information processing strategies") which in turn has an impact on decision making. Stridency has no room for equivocality for

> ".... ambiguity to mean its ability to represent simultaneously, on the same canvas, not one but several truths, each one of which has equal value with the others....This gives ambiguity a different, and neurological, definition: not the vagueness or uncertainty found in the dictionaries, but on the contrary, certainty - the certainty of many different, and essential, conditions, each of which is equal to the others, all expressed in a profound [picture], profound because it is so faithfully representative of so much. (Zeki, 1999).

Efforts to deal with strident polarization have been repeatedly tried and failed. Projects and lobbying groups have tried to promote consensus building, compromise, and Bohmian dialogue. Unfortunately these efforts tend to be of the "preach to the choir" variety. Those committed to putting aside differences in the spirit of dialogue can dialogue, but the effect on those who promote stridency seems nil.

What is needed is another approach.

Buberian Dialogue

The philosopher Martin Buber, best known as the author of *I and Thou*, devoted much of his life to the practice of dialogue. Buber believed that community had to happen initially in small groups and organizations. It cannot be imposed on a whole group or country. Community cannot be forced, nor expected to emerge without a common purpose for which people can gather.

> The real essence of community is to be found in the fact—manifest or otherwise—that it has a centre. The real beginning of a community is when its members have a common relation to the centre overriding all other relations: the circle is described by the radii, not by the points along its circumference. . .

If we are left with voluntary commitment to community and recognition of the importance of a center out of which community can emerge, then narration or communication must carry the essence of our center. It is a communicative vision of where we are going and why that keeps a community vibrant and healthy. Time is needed for people to tell their stories and to retell them.

In the midst of crisis or a change, there is a clash of narrations. The dynamic of this situation is that rival stories are being told. Any story, any form of rhetorical communication, not only says something about the world, it also implies an audience, persons who conceive of themselves in very specific ways. If a story denies a person's self-conception, it does not matter what it says about the world. In the instance of protest, the rival factions' stories deny each other in respect to self-conceptions and the world. The only way to bridge this gap, if it can be bridged through discourse, is by

telling stories that do not negate the self-conceptions people hold of themselves. Buber referred to this as treating the other as "Thou" rather than as "it." I-Thou relations are built on respect; I-it relations are built on power and self-absorption. By definition the two conceptions conflict.

> It is only when reality is turned into logic and A and non-A dare no longer dwell together, that we get determinism and indeterminism, a doctrine of predestination and a doctrine of freedom, each excluding the other. According to the logical conception of truth only one of two contraries can be true, but in truth reality of life as one lives life they are inseparable… . The unity of the contraries is the mystery at the innermost core of the dialogue.

Buber would label much of what passes for dialogue in the media as "false dialogue," or "monologue disguised as dialogue." In false dialogue the participants do not really have each other in mind, or they have each other in mind only as general and abstracted opponents and not as particular beings. There is no real turning to the other, no real desire to establish mutuality. False dialogue is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding and has no real concern with the other person as a person. It belongs to the inalienable sterling quality of `modern existence."

> I know three kinds [of communication]. There is genuine dialogue—no matter whether spoken or silent—where each of the participants really has in mind the other or others in their present and particular being and turns to them with the intention of establishing a living mutual relation between himself and them. There is technical dialogue, which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding. And there is monologue disguised as dialogue, in which two or more men, meeting in space, speak each with himself in strangely tortuous and circuitous ways and yet imagine they have escaped the torment of being thrown back on their own resources. The first kind [dialogue], as I have said, has become rare; where it arises, in no matter how "unspiritual" a form, witness is borne on behalf of the continuance of the organic substance of the human spirit. The second [technical dialogue] belongs to the inalienable sterling quality of "modern existence." But real dialogue is here continually in all kinds of odd corners and, occasionally in an unseemly way, breaks surface surprisingly and inopportunely—certainly still oftener it is arrogantly tolerated than downright scandalizing—as in the tone of a railway guard's voice, in the glance of an old newspaper vendor, in the smile of the chimney-sweeper. And the third [monologue disguised as dialogue] . . . a debate in which the thoughts are not expressed in the way in which they existed in the mind but in the speaking are so pointed that they may strike home in the sharpest way, and moreover without the men that are spoken to being regarded in any way present as person; a conversation characterized by the need neither to communicate something, not to learn something, not to influence someone, not to come into connection with someone, but solely by the desire to have one's own self-reliance confirmed.

Man can become whole not in virtue of a relation to himself but only in virtue of a relation to another self. This other may be just as limited and conditioned as he is; in being together the unlimited and the unconditioned is experienced. . . . And monologue may certainly disguise itself ingeniously for a while as dialogue. . . . [But] when the man who has become solitary can no longer say "Thou" . . . then there certainly remains for him the sublime illusion of detached thought that he is a self-centered self; as man he is lost.'

In the hopes of putting Buber's ideas into practical application members of the British Mensa society organized a series of "dialogues" in the 1960's and 70's structured around the idea that use of an audience as a collective "Thou" would change the dynamics of a dialogue so that the participants who may have arrived in a polarized "I-it" relation had the opportunity to leave having engaged in an "I-Thou" experience. From a complex systems perspective, the dynamics of a two party interaction are altered not merely by the interdictions of a moderator but by the active intervention of audience as filter. The rules for such dialogue are roughly as follows:

1) Participants: two discussants, a moderator and an audience.
2) The discussants each say their initial piece. (The moderator must keep the second speaker from addressing the first).
3) It is the role of the audience to listen for what the two discussants have said or implied which might be in common. The audience is called upon to inform the discussants of these commonalities (which the moderator captures on a white board). (The moderator must keep the audience members from soliloquy and from addressing the discussants).
4) The discussants are then to discuss the items on the white boards.
5) Repeat three or more rounds.
6) There is no effort to reach consensus or conclusion.

The British Mensa series ended sometime in the 1970's and was mostly restricted to academic subjects.

ISCE believes it is time to resurrect the technique and apply it to today's political disputes. The goal would NOT be to transform the debate directly, but rather to offer participants in those debates a transformative experience. It is hoped that several such participants having seen the value of "I-Thou" dialoging will then transform their media oriented behavior. And, from such a seed .... may lie a fruitful orchard.

Practicalities

ISCE proposes to hold a series of three meetings where the Buberian dialogue technique is attempted. Our proposal is that the first two of these meetings be held as one day events in the Washington DC area with university students as the audience. This will allow for minimal costs and for the format and approach to be examined before proceeding wit a major event. The third such meeting is proposed to be a three day event in Naples Florida.

Event One:

- Organizer: ISCE and a DC based University

- Timing: November for one day

- Format: Introduction, 2 Two hour Buberian Dialog Sessions, Wrap-up Session

- Topic: School Choice and Vouchers

- Audience: 100+ University students and locals

- Speakers: TBD

- Moderator: Michael Lissack and Jack Cohen (please see cv's attached)

- Media: To be videotaped and web rebroadcast

- Location: Auditorium at the DC based Institution

- Related activities – Speaker meals and a Wrap-Up beer session

- Publication planned: Web rebroadcast and academic papers

- Evaluation of the conference: audience/participant survey

Event Two:

- Organizer: ISCE and a DC based University

- Timing: December for one day

- Format: Introduction, 2 Two hour Buberian Dialog Sessions, Wrap-up Session

- Topic: Intelligent Design

- Audience: 100+ University students and locals

- Speakers: TBD

- Moderator: Michael Lissack and Jack Cohen (please see cv's attached)

- Media: To be videotaped and web rebroadcast

- Location: Auditorium at the DC based Institution

- Related activities – Speaker meals and a Wrap-Up beer session

- Publication planned: Web rebroadcast and academic papers

- Evaluation of the conference: audience/participant survey

Event Three:

- Organizer: ISCE and the CEU

- Timing: December for one day

- Format: Introduction, a two-four hour Buberian Dialog Sessions, Wrap-up Session

- Topic: A Flat Tax for Hungary

- Audience: CEU Faculty, CEU Students, Hungarian businessmen, politicians, and media

- Speakers: TBD (provided by he Hungarian government and its opposition)

- Moderator: Michael Lissack

- Media: To be televised live

- Location: CEU, Budapest

- Related activities – media coverage and debate

- Publication planned: Web rebroadcast and academic papers

- Evaluation of the conference: media and government reaction

Event Four:

- Organizer: ISCE and a corporate sponsor

- Timing: March for three days

- Format: Introduction, 6 Two hour Buberian Dialog Sessions, Wrap-up Session

- Topics: Health Care, Social Security, Tax Reform

- Audience: 100-200 educated political people, media, and business people

- Speakers: TBD

- Moderator: TBD

- Media: To be videotaped and web rebroadcast

- Location: Ritz Carlton Naples

- Related activities – Conference dinner and education sessions (academic speakers will be invited to provide educational sessions during conference)

- Publication planned: Web rebroadcast, academic papers, and a book. The proposed scholarly book would not duplicate the conference exactly. Instead, it would use the conference as a springboard. The volume will contain some reviewed and revised conference material as well as specially commissioned articles, along with integrative material written by the editors to examine key themes and identify the implications of the Buberian approach.

- Evaluation of the conference: audience/participant survey, media coverage, post event speaker reaction and media coverage

- Budget: $150,000 for speakers, travel, room rental, video taping, transcription, and meal sessions

What We Hope To Accomplish

By engaging both the speakers and the audience in Buberian Dialogue we hope to effect a transformation in how each of the participants perceives the process of engaging in political debate. If we were to consider, for example, Event Three, "Consideration of a Flat Tax in Hungary," the goal is *not* for the participants to emerge with some sort of consensus on the topic. Instead the goal is for the speakers to realize that there are commonalities which underlie what they are saying, that they can actually dialogue about those commonalities and that through the commonalities treat each other with a modicum or more of mutual respect. In addition we hope that the audience will be able to both realize that they too can have a role in such dialogue merely by articulating back to the speakers what it is that they are hearing and to realize that there is much in common held by both sides of the otherwise seemingly incommensurable positions.

Complexity theory makes much reference to the potential potency of weak signals as organizers of resonance which then help to create boundaries within which coherent action can occur. In the case of strident polarized political debate the weak signals we hope Buberian dialogue will create are aimed at overcoming the boundaries of stridency and instead opening up a new field of action based either on the revealed commonalities (content based boundaries) or newly found mutual respect emerging from the dialoging process itself (process based boundaries). While there has been much writing about how to retrospectively infer the potency of weak signals as an organizing force, to our knowledge this will be one of the first attempts to effectuate such an experiment in practice.

ISCE

The *Insititute for the Study of Coherence and Emergence* (I.S.C.E.) originally grew out of the New England Complex Systems Institute's Organizational-Related Programmes department in mid-1999. The main aim of ISCE is to faciliate the conversation between academics and practitioners regarding the implications of complexity thinking for the management of organizations. To support this aim I.S.C.E. organizes a variety of events and also publishes the international interdisciplinary journal, *Emergence: Complexity and Organizations* (formerly known as *Emergence*), or simply, *E:CO*.

In December 2004 ISCE was renamed the ISCE Group and our main activities were split into different divisions to facilitate the management of these separate (though certainly not independent) activities. The ISCE Group comprises three divisions, namely: ISCE Research, ISCE Publishing and ISCE Events.

ISCE Research is primarily concerned with co-ordinating the research activities of the ISCE fellows to ensure that each fellow is aware of each other fellow's research to faciliate cross-discplinary collaboration and synthesis. We also maintain a list of the research publications that emerge from this group of complexity researchers. ISCE Research also provides a legitimate academic home for freelance researchers who would like to apply for government research grants concerning the application of complexity thinking. ISCE Research also maintains a small inhouse research capability which is concerned with a range of different research issues including: the philosophical implications of complexity, the role of language in understanding organizations, coherence in organizations, the simplification of the irreducible, complexity-based tools for policy analysis.

In 2000 the ISCE Group, in conjunction with the Centre for Practical Humanistics of the University for Humanist Studies, proposed to offer a part-time Ph.D. program in the area of corporate anthropology. The program culminates in a Ph.D. in humanistic studies (granted by the University for Humanist Studies, Utrecht, the Netherlands). This program delves into complexity theory as applied to the creation of reflective space in organization(s), communicative management, and emergence.

The program encompasses three fields of study: post-structuralism and complexity theory, ethnographic research into organizing, and organizational studies with an emphasis on questions of significance and meaning. The program seeks to address such questions as: When and how will organizational participants make meaning out of the change process(es) they experience? What are relevant criteria for meaning creation and destruction in organizational interaction? How do the actions of organizational actors affect, constrain, or determine the meaning they create surrounding their actions and how does that meaning affect, constrain, or determine the possibilities for further act

The Ph.D. program was created to pursue teaching and research around the processes of defining, assessing, and strengthening the human quality of work and organization. A focus on how meaning is generated, exchanged, and maintained – both individually and in groups – allows organization studies to be grounded in humanist considerations. Increased attention to problems of organizational coherence has defined a need for rigorous investigation into the human value and significance of the organizing process. Practitioners often need to attend to issues of meaning when dealing with organizational

(re)structuring and technological change, but too often an experiential meaninglessness of organizational change defeats and frustrates any intended progress. Often, the inability to ground local concrete work activity in an experiential meaning structure makes organizational action appear absurd and unwarranted. Organizing based on participative shared meaning creation is gaining ground amongst practitioners, but because any such organizing requires a complex feel for social ethical questions it has not been championed by the technocratic and hierarchically inclined American business schools. The ISCE program thus expands upon traditional business doctorates, and upon economics and sociology degrees, by examining labor, organization, and management. As compared to a more traditional program:

1. The roles played by social Darwinism and conceptual linearity in restricting organizational thought and action, are laid bare.

2. Alternative schools of radical relationality, post-structuralism and complexity theory are taught and investigated.

3. Research is focused on specific organizational action and how meaning creation structures social interactivity.

4. Qualitative research is the preferred research technique, with grounding in anthropological methodology and action research.

5. Attention is directed to both the discourses of mainstream managerial thought as well as alternative organizational studies, to ensure that the discussion and research is adequately contextualized (even if as a critique) in practitioner activity.

The program is linked to current practitioner thinking, and senior practitioners who, on the basis of their experience, want to define and further investigate meaning creation in the organizing process, will find a sympathetic platform for undertaking research.

ISCE Events endeavours to bring together complexity researchers from all over the world to discuss the profound implications of assuming complexity for our understanding of such systems. Each event has a particular mode of interaction - either conference, workshop or seminar, as well as a particular thematic focus such as policy analysis, management, philosophy, etc. ISCE Events provide an environment for both furthering the field and diffusing the concepts and tools that emerge from the complexity community.

ISCE Publishing is where much of the content from ISCE Research and ISCE Events is published for wider consumption. The heart of our publishing activities is the international journal *Emergence: Complexity and Organization* which is read by both academics and scholars worldwide. ISCE Publishing also publishes in collaboration with Information Age Publishing the *Managing the Complex* book series which is due to debut in April, 2005 with its first volume. Volumes 2 and 3 are both expected before the end of 2005. In January 2005 ISCE Publishing also developed the capacity to publish complexity related book inhouse. We now provide the necessary support for authors of complexity-related literature to get published in a professional and timely manner. Lastly, later this year (2005) ISCE Publishing will start offering audio and video papers to further faciliate the dissemination of complexity-related research from around the world.

Emergence: Complexity & Organization (*E:CO*) is an international and interdisciplinary conversation about human organizations as complex systems and the implications of complexity science for those organizations. With a unique format blending the integrity of academic inquiry and the impact of business practice, *E:CO* integrates multiple perspectives in management theory, research, practice and education. *E:CO* is a quarterly journal published in print and online by The Complexity Society, the Institute for the Study of Coherence and Emergence, and the Cynefin Centre for Organizational Complexity in accordance with academic publishing standards and processes.

E:CO's niche is the opportunity to bridge three gaps:

- The distance beween academic theory and professional practice;

- The space beween the mathematics and the metaphors of complexity thinking; and,

- The disparity between formal idealizations and actual human organizations.

Organizations of all kinds struggle to understand, adapt, respond and manipulate changing conditions in their internal and external environments. Approaches based on the causal, linear logic of mechanistic sciences and engineering continue to play an important role, given people's ability to create order. But such approaches are valid only within carefully circumscribed boundaries. They become counterproductive when the same organizations display the highly reflexive, context-dependent, dynamic nature of systems in which agents learn and adapt and new patterns emerge. The rapidly expanding discussion about complex systems offers important contributions to the integration of diverse perspectives and ultimately new insights into organizational effectiveness. There is increasing interest in complexity in mainstream business education, as well as in specialist business disciplines such as knowledge management. Real world systems can't be completely designed, controlled, understood or predicted, even by the so-called sciences of complexity, but they can be more effective when understood as complex systems. While many scientific disciplines explore complexity through mathematical models and simulations, *E:CO* explores the emerging understanding of human systems that is informed by this research. Engineered and emergent views of human systems can coexist, creating a useful tension that drives organizational evolution. However, neither academics nor practitioners can leverage complexity alone. Academic discussions about complexity are often biased towards quantitative research and mathematical models that are inappropriately prescriptive for systems comprised of actors endowed with free will, who are simultaneously part of and aware of the system. The metaphors of complexity have a usefulness of their own as well, but too often they are applied without adequate reference to the mechanisms, models and mathematics behind them.

Readers of *E:CO* are managers, academics, consultants and others interested in developing and applying the insights of complex systems theories and models to analysis and management of private-, public- and social-sector organizations and applying insights derived from organizational experience to understanding complex systems theories.

All of our activities benefit greatly from the involvement of the <u>ISCE Fellows</u>. In short, the ISCE Fellows keep the ISCE Group intellectually honest - they provide the expertise to support the development of relevant and interesting event topics, and many of them

serve on the review board of *E:CO* as well as provide technical expertise in the reviewing of the book manuscripts we receive for consideration. Without the ISCE Fellows and the involvement of our conference attendees and readers it would be impossible for the ISCE Group to remain relevant.

Past ISCE Events

1) 1st International Workshop on Complexity and Policy Analysis
   Co-hosted by ISCE Events, Department of Government University College Cork ETHOS Project, and School of Public Affairs, Penn State, Harrisburg
   22-24 June 2005, Cork, Ireland

2) 2nd International Workshop on Complexity and Philosophy
   18-19 November 2004, Rio de Janerio, Brazil

3) Inquiries, Indices and Incommensurabilities: Managing Emergence, Complexity and Organization
   18-19 September 2004, Washington DC, USA

4) Managing the Complex IV
   7-10 December 2002, Naples, Florida, USA

5) 1st International Workshop on Complexity and Philosophy
   July 29-30, 2002, Norwood (near Boston), Massachusetts, USA

6) Past/Future, Research/Practice, Science/Metaphor: Does Research Add Value to Management Practice? The Complexity Perspective
   6-9 August, 2000, Academy of Management Meeting, All Academy Session, Toronto

7) Managing the Complex III: Mastering Complexity: Doing It Not Just Talking About It
   31 May - 4 June, 2000, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

8) Entanglement at the Human Scale
   February 17-20, 2000 held at 'The Popes House' in Utrecht Holland Hosted by University for Humanist Studies, Utrecht

9) Managing the Complex II
   March 1999

10) Complexity and Management - Two Interacting Sciences?
   A Professional Development Workshop (PDW) for the Academy of Management Meeting, 7 August, 1999, Chicago,

11) Managing the Complex I
   October,1998, Boston, Massachusetts, USA

The Central European University

Central European University (CEU) came into being along with the sweeping social, political and economic changes of the early 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. The university was established in 1991 by a group of visionary intellectuals (many of them prominent members of anti-totalitarian, democratic oppositions) led by the philanthropist George Soros. CEU was to be an unusual graduate school for this region, an independent international institution offering a curriculum in the social sciences and the humanities, committed to promoting a new model of learning: serious and morally responsible intellectual engagement inspired by, and in the service of, pressing and challenging social needs.

CEU is a US-style graduate university with a focus on the social sciences and the humanities, accredited both in the United States and in Hungary, and located in Budapest, in the heart of Europe. The university is oriented to interdisciplinary research on, and the study of, social change and the policy implications of transition to open societies. In addition, emphasis is placed on European Union affairs, as well as on the special features of non-Western democracies.

The university's unique combination of American, Western European and regional intellectual and academic traditions enables CEU to place emphasis on the shifting boundary between the local and the universal in the theoretical, as well as the practical, aspects of research and teaching. Following the American model in research, teaching methods, and above all, in the training of doctoral students, the university also strives to become part of the European academic sphere, embodying long-standing cultural traditions of Western Europe as well as the "Central European" region. This combination has an impact on the curriculum and puts emphasis on the span of historical awareness for comparative purposes.

When CEU was founded in 1991, its mission was to promote the values of democracy and open society in the countries of Eastern Europe which were all in "transition." Broadly speaking, an open society is based on the recognition that no one has a monopoly on truth, that different people have different views and interests, and that there is a need for institutions to protect the rights of all people to allow them to live together in peace. It is characterized by reliance on the rule of law, the existence of democratically-elected governments, diverse and vigorous civil society, and respect for minorities and minority opinions.

CEU is a research-intensive graduate university which continues to be dedicated to the tradition of socially and morally responsible intellectual criticism. CEU aims at excellence in the mastery of established knowledge, excellence in the creation of new knowledge in the social sciences and the humanities, and excellence in developing the policy implications of both. In order to achieve this, the university has built on a combination of American and European, including regional, intellectual and academic traditions; on commitment to social service; and on its own academic and policy achievements in helping to transform the communist inheritance amidst strong regional inequalities.

CV's of Moderators

Michael Lissack is the director of the Institute for the Study of Coherence and Emergence (ISCE) as well as the founding editor emeritus of ISCE's journal, E:CO. Dr. Lissack is the founder of several Internet start-ups and has been an active angel investor in several more. Dr. Lissack lectures on business and public policy at the CEU, and is a frequent speaker on ethics and whistleblowing at universities throughout the United States.

Prior to 1995, Dr. Lissack was an investment banker where he assisted state and local governments in the United States with debt financings. His specialty was infrastructure project financings, from which he gained significant organizational acumen while running project teams of upwards of fifty professionals. Worth magazine recognized Dr. Lissack in 1999 as one of "Wall Street's 25 Smartest Players" and again in 2001 as on of the 100 Americans who have most influenced "how we think about money." He was Smith Barney's senior banker with overall responsibility for new product development, municipal derivatives, and the technical work produced by the firm's Public Finance Division. In 1995, Dr. Lissack began a five year campaign to prosecute the theft of more than $1 billion by Wall Street firms in a scandal known as "yield-burning." The Wall Street Journal refers to him as "the highest level defector Wall Street has ever known."

Jack Cohen is an internationally-known reproductive biologist who consults for test-tube baby and other infertility laboratories. He has devised a new method of contraception, now being tested on women. Dr. Cohen was a university teacher for some thirty years, and has published nearly a hundred research papers. Controversially, he believes that biology is about organisms was well as their chemistry. His books include Living Embryos, a classic textbook which has sold over 100,000 copies; Reproduction; Sperms, Antibodies and Infertility; The Privileged Ape, a popular book on the evolution of man; and The Collapse of Chaos and Figments of Reality written jointly with Ian Stewart.

Dr. Cohen acts as consultant to top science fiction writers (Anne McCaffrey, Larry Niven, David Gerrold, Terry Pratchett, Harry Harrison) on questions of scientific authenticity, especially in the design of alien creatures and ecologies — and has been called the UK's leading xenobiologist. He is frequently heard on BBC radio programmes, and has initiated and participated in the production of several TV programmes (e.g. Horizon: Genesis; the series Take Another Look, and the series Fancy Fish) for which he did much of the filming, especially time-lapse photography. Most relevantly, he appeared in Natural History of an Alien for BBC/Discovery Channel. For his many services to the series The X-Files, he was affectionately lampooned in the series in the form of UFO author Jose Chung.

Dr. Cohen conducted a series of Buberian dialogues for the British Mensa society in the 1960's and 70's.