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## Diana Winstanley: teacher, researcher and friend

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**Biographical notes:** Dr. James Ward is Visiting Research Fellow at Kingston University and Managing Consulting at PA Consulting Group. He has published widely in the area of diversity, minority identity and identity construction within work organisations, using narrative research techniques. He continues to pursue his research interests in this area as well as consulting in the area of the people aspects of change management.

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If anyone had any doubts about whether emotions played a part in the workplace, they must have been dispelled upon hearing about the unexpected death of Professor Diana Winstanley, who took her own life in July, 2006: shock, grief and sorrow reverberated around the academic world.

She was a highly talented researcher and teacher and a valued friend. I knew her first in the capacity of lecturer in Human Resource Management at Imperial College Management School, then as my PhD supervisor and latterly as Director of Postgraduate Programmes at Kingston Business School, where we published a number of papers together. She had a prodigious output, leaving behind five books and over 40 papers on management and management development. Much of her recent research utilised narrative and storytelling approaches, and much of this engaged with the area of emotion and organisation. Examples of her work in this area include myths of motherhood, covering stories around the experience of motherhood and issues such as postnatal depression and returning to work, (Winstanley, 2001); learning shock, presenting stories around international students' experiences of postgraduate study on management courses in the UK, (Griffiths et al., 2005); and diversity, including stories of the experiences of those who are in some way marginal or 'unheard' in work organisations, (Ward and Winstanley, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006).

But it was her treatment of the myth of Phaeton as told in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is perhaps one of the most poignant examples of her work (Winstanley, 2004). In her paper, she presents Ovid's version of the myth, and then discusses her own, emotional, response to it. She talks about her relationship with her famous father (Michael Platt Winstanley, Liberal MP from 1966 to 1974), saying,

"Like Phaeton, my experience of my father was that of a beaming presence, omnipresent to everyone, but not present to me. In discussing this story with the editor, he reminded me of Leonardo de Vinci's comment that the sun can never see a shadow. If you are the sun, you are inevitably always in the sunshine, and maybe you cannot see what lurks in the shadows. Likewise, if you are the child of the sun, it can be hard to see yourself as a separate human being." (Winstanley, 2004, p.180).

She continued,

“It is not easy for an ordinary mortal to create a mature identity through identification with a father who is a Sun God, who is omnipresent and absent at the same time; Phaeton failed in his attempt to become his ego-ideal, while I abandoned mine when I found it to be unattainable,” (Winstanley, 2004, p.181).

Further, she talks about the deep inner turmoil and crisis when the image we have of ourselves becomes severed from the way that others actually see us, and it is this theme of ‘splitting’ which makes a frequent appearance in her latter work. Whilst it must have represented a painful, personal exploration of the subject, she also made a major contribution in taking our understanding forward of the construction of identity at work, as well as the emotional theme of fragmented identities within work organisations, and raised both as critically important topics in present-day management research.

She finished her Phaeton paper with the following concluding comment,

“Myths, more than any other type of story, expand beyond the boundaries of their authors: they are gifts from one generation to the next, and belong to us all,” (Winstanley, 2004, p.191).

Diana’s work has also expanded beyond its own boundaries: she has left behind a tremendous gift to us all, particularly in the area of emotion and organisation. No less a gift, however, was the emotional response she carried through her everyday interactions with people, characterised by friendship, care and warmth.

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