Notework
## May 2004

Museletter of the Standing Conference on Organization and Symbolism

SCOS is an international and interdisciplinary network of academics and practitioners interested in organizational symbolism, culture and change. The SCOS philosophy of 'serious fun' is articulated throughout the network's activities, particularly in the encouraging of unusual and groundbreaking ideas in the analysis of organizing and organization. We are committed to providing a forum for research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries, and a reflective space for the development of new forms and new voices for this work.
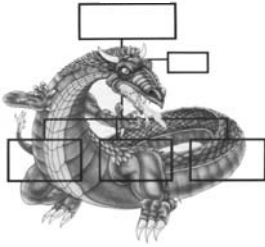
MORE MADNESS AND 'MAY'HEM FOR THE MEMBERSHIP!

Sam Warren &
Damian O'Doherty

Ahoj! Sziasztok! Labas! and Sveiki! and welcome to *Notework…*

In a historic month that bore witness to the birth of the EU as the world's biggest trading bloc, you might wonder what we can possibly offer you to rival such unparalleled excitement in the organizational world?! Not a lot to be fair, but hey, 25 member states with a combined population of 455 million don't look as pretty on the coffee table we think, no?

Well… weren't we proud of our first born? Now a mewling, squawking, kicking 6 months old, the 'new look' *Notework* has learned to sit up and recognise its parents – and what a lovely lot you are! Seriously folks, thanks SO much to all of you who took the trouble to e-mail Notework towers with your comments, and reactions to the new style - one member even read us cover to cover in the bath! How do **you** read **yours**?

A special welcome too to new SCOS members attending their first conference who will have stumbled upon a real hard copy of *Notework* (it ain't no wimp…) in their conference pack – sit back, buckle up and enjoy the ride! There's a little more info about who we are and what we're about coming up. And, of course, heartfelt thanks to Albert and Jean Mills for arranging for the printing and distribution that's made this return to the real possible.

In this issue, then, we continue the post-modern (con)fusion we began last year – all our regulars are back, as well as some great contributions from you, our raison d'étre. As always, we remind you that *Notework* is your forum, and we'll publish any old thang you fancy sending us. For the British contingent, rumour has it that *Notework* will figure highly in the RAE 2008 rankings – and is an **exemplar** of the knowledge transfer process, publish or perish? – we can help ☺

Dr Zoé Bertgan joins us once more with the next thrilling instalment of '**Tales from the Field**', what wonderfully sagacious observations does she have in store for us this issue? Her career continues to effervesce with the glittering success we have come to expect from such a prominent and well respected academic – her methodological text *"Mixin' with the Method – circular triangulations for a global world"* is now available in all good bookshops and some rubbish one as well (thanks, to Soccer AM, Sky One for that very bad joke.) And what's lurking in **Bataille Corner** this month? You can bet its not big but it will be clever! Find out with Tony O'Shea as he dissects the 'Tombola's Choice' with usual Batailleist skill and aplomb.

The regional reps are back, shaking their booty from the corners of the globe and we're delighted to have Professor Hugh Willmott, Chair of Judge Institute, Cambridge and father of the Critical Management Studies conference joining this issue, kindly laying his work bare for a young up-coming doctoral student to critique in **Point-Counterpoint**. It does what it says on the tin. Simple. If you'd like to act as reviewer or writer in this much commented on section of *Notework*, please get in touch.

The Musery is stuffed like a late-night Doner kebab oozing with spicy little tit-bits from the SCOS massive, special thanks to Alf Rehn for supplying us with the future of Organizational Jargon. A new round of competitions lie in wait, as well as the answers to last edition's – there were no winners so prizes roll over from November! Woo hoo hooplah!

The countdown to SCOS 2004 in glorious Halifax, Nova Scotia is of course well underway, **remember to book that flight!** To keep you updated we've provide an update for you, "that should do the trick!" we thought. And perhaps most amazingly of all we unveil advance-preview-never-seen-before-remember-where-you-saw-it-first details of SCOS 2005. Clue: Its in a nice place, with great people and a top theme. Geddit yet?

So let us begin! As always, we open the issue with **Notes from the chair,** from Prof. Peter so we'll sneak off quietly now so we don't interrupt his preparations as he takes the stage – over to you Peter.

See you all in Halifax – there'll be a *Notework* stand in the hotel – so come and see us because we're giving away free candy…
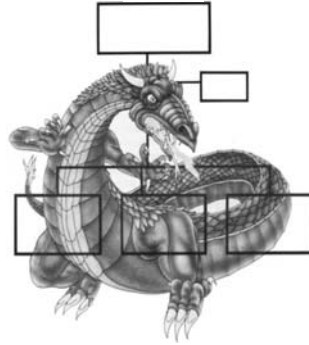Love
Sam and Damian
xx

In this issue…

SCOS: the Standing Conference on Organization and Symbolism
(oo-r-ya?)

We are…
…an international and interdisciplinary network of academics and practitioners interested in organizational symbolism, culture and change. Formed in 1981 as an autonomous working group of the European Group for Organisation Studies, SCOS has grown to become a global research network comprising of hundreds of members.

Philosophy: scosophilia
The SCOS philosophy of 'serious fun' is articulated throughout the network's activities, particularly in the encouraging of unusual and groundbreaking ideas in the analysis of organizing and organization. Since its formation, SCOS has run annual international conferences and regular workshops, producing both critical debate and a considerable output of original scholarship. SCOS has always been committed to a critical approach to qualitative research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries as well as to reflection on the forms and voices that this work takes.

Research
Moving into its fourth decade, the SCOS network continues to develop innovative views of organization and management, taking inspiration from a variety of different fields and disciplines. SCOS has always been committed to providing a forum for research that crosses traditional disciplinary and functional boundaries, and a reflective space for the development of new forms and new voices for this work. The SCOS Network also aims to produce and develop theoretically and practically innovative views of organization and management and seeks to:

- encourage and foster new approaches in the study of culture and symbolism of everyday life in organizations
- provoke discussion of marginalised perspectives on the understanding of organized life
- provide an arena where the boundaries of conventional thinking about organized life can be challenged and blurred
- sustain continuity and development in this fast-growing field of study
- enable the continued exchange of information and the development of community amongst a highly dispersed group of researchers, scholars and practitioners
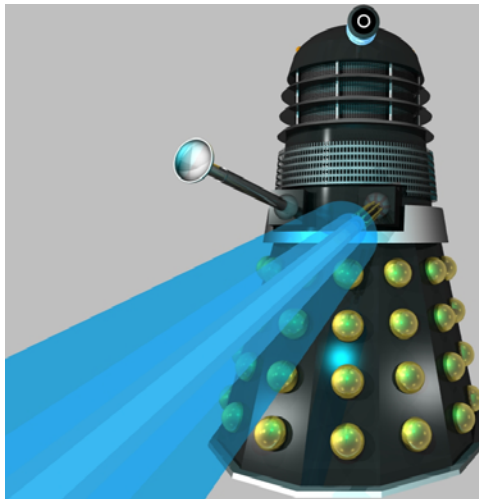
Notes from the Chair

I'm happy to report that SCOS seems to be in pretty good shape overall. On 8th May the SCOS Board met in London and, amongst other matters, discussed future conference venues. For the first time in many years there are choices to be made from the list of kind offers from colleagues and institutions to host future annual conferences. The Board has agreed that The Royal Institute of Technology of Stockholm will host the 2005 conference on the theme of 'Excess and Organization' and plans are already well developed for this event. 2005 should be something of a celebration as two founding members of SCOS – P.O. Berg and Claes Gustafsson – join forces with Alf Rehn to bring the conference back to Scandinavia, site of SCOS's launch twenty-two years ago. The favoured location for 2006 is Holland, but we have yet to finalise arrangements with the institutions involved. One thing is for sure; thanks to the hard work and imaginative efforts of this year's hosts – Jean Helms Mills and Albert Mills, both based at St. Mary's University – we can be assured that 'Sensation and Organization' is set to be a huge success. I look forward to meeting those of you who make it to the conference this summer in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

It's a Scream

As some of you may know, last October I moved posts and took up a new chair in leadership and organisation studies at Exeter University's Centre for Leadership Studies. Since taking up the job I've been constantly surprised – not to say astonished on occasion – by the doors that have been opened by a relatively subtle titular change: from professor of 'organisation studies' to that of 'leadership AND organisation studies.' Okay, it's not just the title that's changed; I've also moved from a, 'new university', in UK terms, to an 'old university' with a reputation for its Establishment links and an admissions profile that – despite efforts to reform – is decidedly skewed toward middle and upper-middle class students. The combination of these two institutional changes means that I come into contact with a whole different cadre of people who, in turn, make all manner of assumptions about me, my motives, likely political affiliation, research interests and so forth. A job change is simultaneously a change in form of life; a sharp shift in the semiotic attractors and signifiers that accrue from and facilitate sets of professional relationships and interactions. I swim in a different semiotic ocean, in some senses richer for its corals and plankton but also home to a host of larger and potentially dangerous pelagic life.

Two Fragments:

(1) The Centre for Leadership Studies (CLS), for which I now work, recently held a promotional Leadership Forum event at the opulent headquarters of the Prudential plc (one of our long-term sponsors). It consisted in a series of breakout workshops sandwiched between two talks by keynote speakers: Henry Minzberg and Claire Short. My guess is that an account of either of the latter addresses would be of potential interest to readers of *Notework* but I'll focus on just one of Claire Short's anecdotes that caught my attention. As many readers will know, Claire Short was, until her (belated) resignation over the UK's involvement in the Iraq war, Secretary of State for International Development within the Blair cabinet. Although she spoke at length and in an informed way about the seminar theme, 'Leadership in Democratic Society' – outlining, for example, the many lost opportunities for geopolitical reconciliation squandered in the post Cold War era - she seemed inexorably to gravitate toward discussion of Blair's leadership, painting him

as an ambitious autocrat. Listening to her, I was reminded of a passage from Machiavelli's *The Prince*, in which the 'wise ruler' is held to be one who can maintain the *appearance* of trustworthiness, honesty and integrity yet who is able to drop the disguise, as circumstances demand; someone, in short, who is capable of being 'a great hypocrite and a liar.' The tone of Blair's leadership was set in 1997, she recalled, at the very first cabinet meeting when the controversial question of the Millennium Dome was discussed. Apparently, after protracted debate, the cabinet consensus was gradually moving toward ditching the Dome project – which, after all, was a costly initiative set in train by the Tories under John Major – in favour of some more egalitarian form of popular celebration. Claire Short described Blair as growing increasingly edgy as the meeting went on, shifting in his seat and consulting his watch at frequent intervals. Eventually he piped up: 'this discussion has gone on far longer than I thought it would… [*Turning to the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott*] John, would you mind chairing the rest of the discussion as I have another engagement.' While the cabinet continued to rehearse the arguments, Tony Blair gave a press conference in which he announced New Labour's unequivocal endorsement of and commitment to the Millennium Dome project. Incidentally, the Dome turned out to be a major financial and political embarrassment for his Government. So much for leadership in a democratic society.

(2) Later that evening, exhausted by the sheer number of interpersonal interactions at the CLS Leadership Forum and head swimming with paradoxical impressions, joys, excitement, misgivings, concern, shock, despondency… I make my way from the City, via Paddington to Bath Spa, a train station near my home. As I wait for Susan to collect me, I am just able to stand but, in my tiredness, would have preferred to lean against one of the Bath stone colonnades outside the entrance door. I wear an expensive suit and full-length cashmere coat. It's early April and there's still a chill in the air. A diminutive male figure in bedraggled clothing, white with what I take to be malnourishment and (I infer) some form of alcohol or drug dependency comes up to me and, in a barely audible, plaintiff voice asks for some money with which to buy food: "Spare some change 'guv for a bite to eat?" The scene and dialogue are straight out of Dickens and I find myself looking to perform some kind of reality check. The hood of his smock emphasises the gaunt, pallid face and I find myself overlaying my perception of his visage with the image of Munch's *The Scream*. "This is *dukkha*, *dukkha*," I find myself thinking. I give the man some change – a few pounds from my pocket. He walks off with some cursory acknowledgement – "cheers 'guvnor." A few minutes later another homeless person approaches me for money. I dole some more out. Then comes another, and another. I am running out of change. Meanwhile, one of the homeless men I'd been approached by is now standing outside a hotel opposite the train station. He has acquired a supermarket shopping trolley – the sort which takes coins– and is vigorously bashing the coin box with what, from a distance, looks like a makeshift iron crowbar. The money
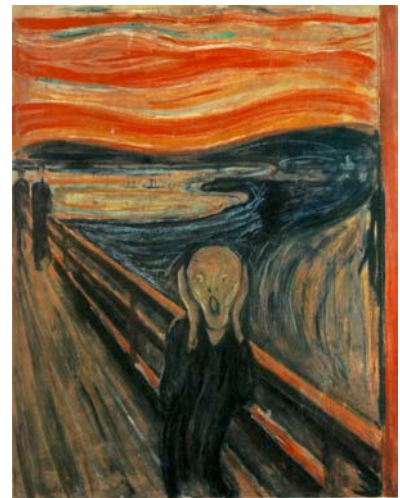
Edvard Munch *The Scream* 1893

is reluctant to yield to his efforts. The hooded figure who'd been the first to approach me, catches sight of this spectacle and, summoning energy that had been absent in our previous encounter, begins yelling loudly at the man with the crowbar. He dashes past me, almost knocking me over, and runs across the street. A violent altercation ensues between the two homeless men, in full view of an audience of rail travellers and taxi drivers who look on with combined expressions of faint disbelief and disapproval. No one, including myself, seems moved to *do* anything about the scene. We simply watch.

Ex cathedra
Peter Case
Exeter, May 2004

Through the bookshelf...

Congratulations to Cary Cooper who correctly identified his own bookshelf despite the removal porters having emptied his shelves in preparation for his move from UMIST to Lancaster. Well done Cary!

*"… it was extremely **stressful** clearing these shelves of over 1000 volumes…"*

This month was an emotional one for the editors as we asked an old friend of SCOS to take this photo of his bookshelf. So….. who learns through a bookshelf like **this**?
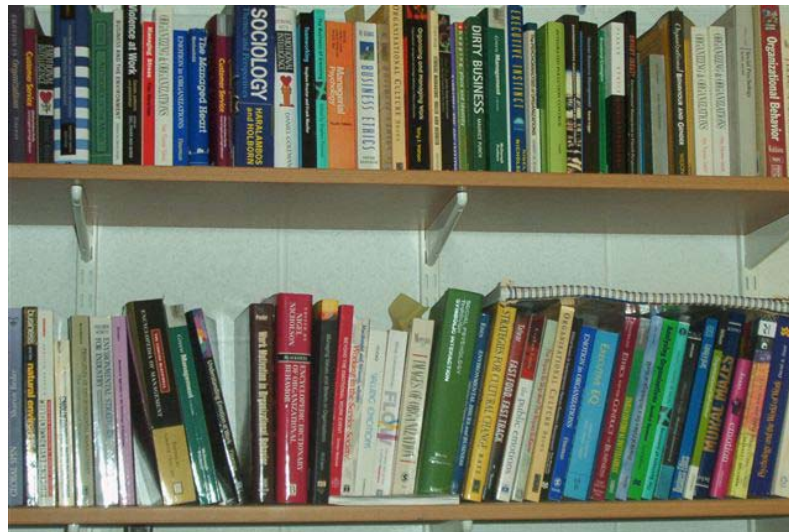
SCOS 2004 – 'Sensation' Halifax, Nova Scotia

With over 100 papers accepted for the conference in July, SCOS this year looks certain to be a sensational success and a worthy follower of Cambridge 2003. We understand there is still some time left for those of you who still wish to submit your full paper for inclusion in the conference proceedings and CD-Rom. Please contact jean.mills@smu.ca and check the web-site for further updates and details about paper submissions, programme, accommodation and social events. We know you'll all be rushing for the lobster supper and brushing up on your French ready for whatever might happen next! Ooh la la, les SCOS-ers arriverant….!!

Sensation and Organization

7th-10th July 2004, Lord Nelson Hotel, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
Organized in collaboration with the Sobey School of Business, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
http:://www.stmarys.ca/SCOS

sensation

/sen"se͡ɪʃ(ə)n/ noun **1** feeling in one's body. **2** awareness, impression. **3** intense feeling, esp. in community. **4** cause of this. **5** sense of touch.·**1,2**awareness, feeling, perception, sense. **3**commotion, excitement, furore, outrage, scandal, stir, thrill.

No *overnight sensation*, SCOS themes have provided a focus for those interested in symbolism for over 20 years: this year's conference focuses on *the senses which those symbols arouse, and the sense we make of them*. In world which seems to have an endless appetite for sensation and the sensational, some of us constantly push the *extreme* in sport, entertainment or experience – bored with reality, we may seek our thrills in the *virtual* or attempt to extend our physical and sensory capabilities through technological or other prostheses. A good part of the world's information, communication and entertainment industry is geared to titillating our thirst for the latest fad or fashion; the new sensation; the latest exposure; the latest or longest hidden secret; the most romantic myth; the greatest risk; the peek into the forbidden or the unknown, or, like Big Brother, the processes of the mundane, all on a mass scale. The Disney Corporation has long known how to stimulate or simulate feeling or emotion in its audiences; our appetite for dreams and illusion seems to have no bounds. Indeed the world could be viewed as one big spectacle in which we are all performers – and where the deceivers and tricksters are never what they seem. Even the domestic is now the subject of fame: celebrity chefs in unprecedented numbers offer epicurean tools and techniques to constantly re-animate jaded palates. Has our accelerated sense of the extreme, of excess, luxury, pleasure and desire easily gratified rendered our senses *numb* in the face of ordinary experience? Do we have to re-organize our lives in order to get anything out of them?

Or is the challenge to recognize the extremes of crisis, catastrophe and disaster with which we still rub shoulders and the degree of *sensory deprivation* which much of the world still experiences – pain, famine, torture, disease, violence or simply the lack of human company. How do we *make sense* of the *non-sense* of the world, and do we need to? Are our *sensibilities* appropriate for the job they have to do? How do we seek to organize the world *rationally* to deal with our *sense* of it? How do governments, organizations and institutions seek to control and manipulate our sense of the world, and our sense of *identity*? Although we are exposed to surveillance in myriad ways every day, are there any sensational exposures left that have not already been exposed? Is, as Niklas Luhmann implied, secrecy the unspoken condition for social organization?

Papers will address all aspects of the idea of *sensation and sense* in connection with organization and organizations and will focus on the following themes:

Sense and sensibility	Deception, Trickery, Lies
Feeling and emotion	The Power of Positive Emotion
Sensemaking	Shock and Scandal
Non-sense	Sensuality and Sexuality
Sensory deprivation	Dreams, Illusion, the Surreal
Pain and Fear	Identity and Control
Synesthesia and Disorientation	Prostheses
Spectacle , Kitsch, Melodrama	Uncovered Histories
Fads and Fashions	Guilt, Retribution and Reparation
Secrecy and Mystery	Detection and Exposure

This list is intended to be indicative only; we actively encourage innovative takes on the conference theme, as well as those that focus on more than one of the above areas. SCOS with a long tradition of inter-disciplinary reflections -- encourages papers that draw insights and approaches from across a range of disciplines. Contributions can be theoretical, empirical or methodological, but should address their subject matter in a critical and rigorous fashion.

The Venue

The City of Halifax, on Canada's spectacular Atlantic shore, is the conference site and exemplifies the various relationships between the development of the modern organization, the nation state, imperialism, and post-colonialism. During the time that Jane Austen was writing *Sense and Sensibility*, Halifax was caught up in the long war with Revolutionary France and the War of 1812 with the US, events that shaped Canada and its developing commerce. On the long shore known to the Mi'kmaq First Nation as *Chebookt*, the city was founded in 1749 as a deliberate act of British imperial policy in the ongoing struggle with France for North American empire. Named after Lord Halifax, President of the Board of Trade and Plantations, the city took shape through the British Government's inducement to colonists that brought to Halifax tradesmen, merchants and "gentlemen anxious to improve their circumstances" whose descendants can be found in contemporary Halifax and Nova Scotia. The sense of the city and its emerging companies was shaped not only through periods of imperial expansion, warfare and the development of Canadian statehood but also marginality, with Canada being politically remote from the nexus of power in Great Britain, while dominated by its powerful US neighbour to the South.

... stop press ...

You're going to be as excited as we were on receiving these details about next year's SCOS conference. Oh yea, oh yea, oh yea! All hail Stockholm for 2005...

Stockholm. Alf-float on water, this Venice of the North will be home to the SCOS 2005 conference, hosted by Profs. Alf Rehn, Claus Gustaffson and P.O. Berg at the Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, Sweden. Any more editorial would be sheer excess… read for yourself:

SCOS 2005 – 'Excess and Organization'

SCOS has never focused strict boundaries, dogmatic exclusion or limiting oneself to one predefined mode of inquiry. Neither has it been concerned with the bare minimum, or the unending quest for efficiency. It is in this dynamic spirit of creation and passion, freedom and abundant intellectual energy that SCOS 2005 has chosen "Excess" as its theme. Rather than efficiently finding the core competence of SCOS and reengineer it into a slim and slender set of theorizing, we therefore want to invite a cornucopia of papers on excess, redundant layers, surplus, overabundance, passion, waste and the superfluous.

Regardless of all the talk of an "experience economy" and the "post-industrial society", organizations are still often seen as attempts at efficiency. We may acknowledge irrationality and various political and social agendas, but there still exists a notion that organization would somehow, by logical necessity, be about saving resources and creating more efficient systems. At the same time, we see a world around us where a multitude of products, services and unnecessary activities seem to proliferate. This cornucopia of the excessive has often been seen as a fundamental flaw in the modern world, the creation of luxury for some while most live their lives in want and squalor. But although such dismal views have their place, there is also much more to the notion of excess.

Excess stands for that which is above and beyond the bare necessity, the barren land of utility, and harsh puritanism. It can be found in exuberance, in inebriation, in obesity. It can be found in redundancy, in emotion, in romance, in aesthetics. Everywhere that there is more of something than is *absolutely needed,* there is excess. Consequently, we can find excess almost everywhere **(especially at a SCOS conference! – eds.)**, and in a plethora of different constellations. Possible interpretations can be seen in the following (far from exhaustive) list:

- the excessive organization: from battling organizational anorexia to the obese firm
- marketing excess or marketing excess?
- excesses in leadership: from ebullient leaders to "too much leadership"
- excessive management: massive micro-management or management as performance art?
- the economics of excess, the luxury industries, and the business of frivolity
- organizational responses to abundant choice
- redundancy in organizations: multiple layers, multiple players
- consumption in an age of plenty
- accounting for excess: from company picnics to CEO expense accounts
- excessive corporations: the good, the bad and the ugly
- the ethics of excess
- debauchery, decadence and dandies: pre-modern mode or post-industrial pose?
- the general economy: waste and squandering as economic functions
- gendered excess? sexual excess? excesses of race and class?
- problems of excess: the politics of sharing and scarcity

As always, creative and excessive interpretations of the theme are invited and encouraged.

Location:
The conference will be hosted by the department of Industrial Management and Organization at the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Sweden, and the conference will be held on campus. The campus is centrally situated in Stockholm, so that the city center is easily reached on foot.

Accommodation:
There will be a choice of hotels, so that the participants will have the possibility to choose according to their individual budget. Special attention has been paid to the limited budgets of doctoral students.

Organization:
The main organizers are professors Alf Rehn, Claes Gustafsson and P.O. Berg. They are supported by a league of young scholars at the department, and the support functions of STOCON (a leading conference arranger in Stockholm).

The Bataille Corner

A regular feature of Notework, readers are invited to nominate a symbol, artefact, even a mood or smell, as a leitmotif of current concerns and anxieties of researchers working in organizational analysis. Our cub reporter, and specialist Batailleist scholar, **Dr. Tony O'Shea** will then interpret the artefact in 150 words, providing clues as to how we might come to terms with its phenomena and significance.

This month the Tombola has discharged the phrase **Swollen paper cuts.** Thanks to Professor Gareth Morgan for this suggestion, I think we can all empathise with this occupational hazard.
But what would Bataille make of this, Tony? Your 150 words start…. NOW!

"Thank you Gareth (if I may be so familiar?) for your suggestion.
Turning the book page I slice my finger open. Blood seeps out and pools on my finger. I'm both fascinated and repulsed by it; wiping the blood away I stare at the incision in my skin. The top flap has turned off white and has swollen so that now it exceeds its original self. The cut stings slightly, it's not painful, not entirely unpleasant, more a sensation on the threshold of my awareness. I return to my book and think, 'Shit, there's blood on the page!' The blood turns rust coloured spoiling the cleanliness of the paper. Swollen paper cuts – an occupational hazard as work contaminates the aesthetic…Next!.

Summary board meeting minutes from June 2003

In the spirit of egalitarian community, as always, we give you a taste of the SCOS inner sanctum (**eeougghh! – a candidate for next issue's Bataille Corner? eds.)** and see what your Board's been discussing. Heavily edited of course to save on digital trees… Just the one meeting to report on this issue, last edition's double whammy was a one-off, sorry folks!

Cambridge July 10th 2003
The annual 'conference meeting' with swollen attendance! Peter Case, Alison Linstead, Anne-Marie Greene, Dave Crowther, Peter Pelzer, Robyn Thomas, Anette Risberg, Simon Lilley, Tuomo Peltonen, Steve Linstead, Julie Wolfram-Cox, Sam Warren, Bob Westwood, Jean Helms-Mills, Albert Helms-Mills, Davide Bubna-Litic, Alf Rehn. Apologies received from Jo Brewis and Gavin Jack (aka Mavis and Queenie) Damian O'Doherty present to discuss *Notework* **(Damian thinks this is very funny, something about a Miss on a beam? – ed.)**

Matters Arising:
In the interests of needing to get back to the end-of-conference gala celebrations the board unanimously decided to experiment with 'speed-meeting' on this occasion, anyone taking more than 10 minutes over their agenda item was well and truly sanctioned!

Officers' reports:

Robyn Thomas (Treasurer):
- The interim accounts were presented and show a changed method of reporting to more accurately reflect SCOS financial position
- There is a change of signatory needed on the accounts

Alison Linstead (Notework editor & Communications):
- The latest issue is behind schedule

- There continue to be problems with contributions from the membership
- The board thanked Alison for all her hard work as she steps down from this role **(hear, hear! – eds.)**

David Crowther (Membership secretary):
- Membership is up from 640 to 700 on the database.

Anne-Marie Greene (Elections Officer)
- Nominations close for the post of Notework editior on 8th Aug. 1 nomination had been received and Simon and Peter Pelzer proposed and seconded Damian O'Doherty at the meeting. The board would be made aware if there was a need for an election.
- Damian and Sam presented a proposal for joint editorship of NW should they be successful **(and you know the rest! – eds.)** The board were unable to comment on the proposals given that nominations were still open.
- It was decided to take chair's action to elect Peter Elsmore to the board as UK rep in the event of Sam assuming the role of Notework editor.

Review of the Cambridge Conference
The board agreed that the conference was a great success and thanked Jo and Gavin for all their hard work. A more detailed report was delayed for a subsequent meeting given Jo and Gav's absence.

Halifax Conference 2004

The date and venue has been confirmed on the theme of 'Sensation and Organisation' with Doug Kellner confirmed as one keynote speaker, and one social event already planned. Some funding has been obtained from the organiser's institution and a grant has been applied for from the Canadian government on the understanding that promotional material is published in English and French.

Stockholm Conference 2005

Alf reported that the theme was still undecided but that administrative infrastructure is in place. Accommodation is likely to prove an issue given the timing of the conference. The issue of flexibility was discussed and it was noted that several other major conferences are due to be held that year.

Future venues

Peter advised that several people had approached him with offers of conference organisation and ideas for locations. These included Cyprus and Turkey for 2006, Helsinki for 2007, and Brazil for 2008. The merits of each (and other suggestions from the board) were briefly discussed and it was decided to consult the membership at the AGM.

Journal issues

Steve reported that the special issue on 'Violence' from the Dublin conference would be published in Nov 2003 and Simon advised that 'Speed' issue from Budapest should be sent to Steve by the end of 2003. The new cover for the journal has been approved and the first issue of 2003 was now being printed with the next 3 being sent out by the end of the summer.

Any other business

The next board meeting will be held at the end of 2003 in Helsinki to coincide with Albert & Jean's trip there and the May 2004 meeting will take place at London Met. Anne-Marie requested it be minuted that unacceptable comments of a sexist nature had again been made to a female delegate during this year's conference. It was agreed that such behaviour was unwelcome within the SCOS community and that the board had a duty to act. Peter Case agreed to speak to the individual concerned.

Minutes from December 2003's meeting in London to appear in next edition of *Notework* but here's a little taste…

- New *Notework* editors appointed!
- All change for the web-site!
- 2005 conference plans well under way…
- Budapest special issue of C&O on its way!
- …and much more….

Some **very** cold board members standing in Senate square, Helsinki, under the watchful gaze of the Cathedral
(why is Albert holding a big lolly-pop? – eds.)

Point: Counterpoint
A sneaky peek at the review process

This feature lifts the lid on the review process for anyone who's interested in the development of knowledge through dialogue - new researchers, doctoral students, and 'old-hand' reviewers alike! This month's reviewer, Daniel King, a doctoral candidate at UMIST, takes on the mighty Prof. Hugh Willmott (Judge Institute, Cambridge) who was kind enough to submit his paper 'Renewing Strength: Corporate Culture Revisited' to *Notework*. This paper reflects on his 1993 Journal of Management Studies paper 'Strength is Ignorance, Slavery is Freedom: Managing Culture in Modern Organizations' JMS 30(4) pp.515 – 552 to which Daniel responds.

This paper is published elsewhere as:
Willmott, Hugh. 2003. Renewing Strength: Corporate Culture Revisited, M@n@gement, 6(3): 73-87.
http://www.dmsp.dauphine.fr/Management/
Thanks to the editors of m@n@gement, Martin Evans and Bernard Forgues for allowing us to reproduce Hugh's paper.

Remember, if you would like to submit a working paper for a future issue, or have any comments on the review process that you think would benefit those new to research, please **do** send them to us…..

…the paper…

Renewing Strength: Corporate Culture Revisited
Hugh Willmott

Introduction

What prompted the writing of `Strength'? Reconstructing motives is an inherently hazardous business. Well, here goes.

During the 1980s, consultants' popular potions, bottled in Total Quality Management (TQM) and Human Resource Management (HRM), and later decanted into Business Process Re-engineering (BPR), promised to construct consensus in organizations. The power of such potions was distilled and diffused through the design of values and habits of thought - a `normative framework of work' (p.522) - that aspired to align individual and corporate `needs' and priorities. Such `Corporate Culturism', I wrote, `expects and requires employees to internalize the new values of "quality", "flexibility" and "value added" – to adopt and cherish them as their own' (p. 519)[i].

For many managers the desirability of having employees identify with (or even better `internalize') the values of  `"quality", "flexibility" and "value added"' was, and probably remains, uncontentious. It is surely self-evident that these `new values' are also good values. After all, who is going to defend bad quality, inflexibility or negative value-added? It is precisely because it is difficult to question what is pursued in the name of  the `new values' that critical thinking is invoked to scrutinise it.

Back in the 80's management academics were not thinking critically about the `new' management philosophy being extolled in influential guru texts – notably, In Search of Excellence and subsequently revisited within `soft' variants of TQM, HRM and Organizational Learning (OL). These ideas were regarded as the latest, re-heated managerialist panacea that merited no serious consideration. Such ideas made no substantive contribution to our knowledge of work or organizations as cultures, so they could safely be ignored as objects of scholarly examination. Even a decade after the publication of Peters and Waterman's In Search of Excellence (1982), there was little sign of interest in scrutinizing the idea of `strong culture' as advocated by such influential management gurus, and subsequently diffused into countless practitioner and student texts.

I too am disdainful of the twaddle contained in such books as In Search of Excellence. But I also marvelled at their popularity and apparent influence. As an aside, the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of Aston University, where I worked during the 1980s, sent a copy to all heads of department. I daresay that most of these were binned, conspicuously positioned within their offices in the unlikely event of a visit, or perhaps they were inspected, like tea leaves, for signs of the mistrusted VC's intentions. Still, this gesture suggested the positive value being attributed to the 'new' thinking and, of course, anticipated the spread of 'new public management' ideas across the public sector. Given the ostensible success of Corporate Culturism in informing, if not capturing, the imagination of senior managers, I thought that it was important to reflect upon whether it had anything new to say. What might its popularity tell us about emergent philosophies of management control? How might its claims be critically reinterpreted? At the very least, I believed that Corporate Culturism warranted more than a dismissive groan of distaste.

I suspected that there was something (comparatively) `new' and seductive, but also disturbing, in Corporate Culturism that invited closer consideration. Yes, there were continuities with earlier, normative streams of management thought laid down in the writings of Barnard, Mayo and McGregor (see Barley and Kunda, 1992). But I sensed some mutation or shift; and I wanted to identify, explore, clarify and critique its novel features. I hoped also to communicate and illustrate my critique in a lively and memorable manner by making connections with central ideas – newspeak and doublethink - found in Orwell's novel 1984. I believed that this would make the analysis less dry as well as more accessible and memorable (see also Knights and Willmott 1999).

The following reflections on 'Strength' are organized as follows. I begin by distilling some of the central ideas and arguments of the article for readers who are unfamiliar with its contents. I then locate its thesis in the academic milieu of the 1980s, focusing upon my frustration with the purism of academic studies of culture and symbolism and connecting the positive reception of 'Strength' to the development of critical management studies. Finally, I make a case for the continuing relevance of its central argument. Before offering some concluding comments on the connection of 'Strength' to my current research interests.

Trials of Strength
Corporate Culturism, I argued in `Strength',

`seeks to construct consensus by managing the culture through which employee values are acquired…corporate culturism [advocates] a systematic approach to creating and strengthening core organizational values in a way that excludes all other values. `Self-direction' is commended but, crucially, its scope and course is dictated and directed by the construction of employee commitment to core corporate values' (p. 524)

In `Strength', critical traditions of thought are invoked to make the argument that Corporate Culturism aspires to extend management control by colonizing the affective domain – the hearts as well as the minds of employees – in an innovative, oppressive and paradoxical manner – by claiming to expand their practical

autonomy (p. 517). The implicit <u>intent</u> of Corporate Culturism, I argue, is to establish monocultures in which choices and decisions are made within a normative framework of core values that are established, or at least sanctioned, by management. At the same time, I sought to indicate why such intentions encounter resistances that frustrate their realisation.

Peters and Waterman's <u>In Search of Excellence: Lesson's from America's Best-Run Companies</u> (hereafter, <u>Excellence</u>) distilled and promoted Corporate Culturism by commending the development of common, corporate-wide values. Omitted was consideration of how such values might be received and operationalized within specific settings or by particular work groups. <u>Excellence</u> assumed that the establishment of `a set of shared values and rules' (ibid: 323) <u>by management</u> would be necessary <u>and sufficient</u> to ensure that employees would act autonomously but also compliantly and responsibly so as to maximise corporate performance. This, Peters and Waterman claimed, was the inner secret, or chief 'lesson', of America's 'best-run companies'.

Why should employees be inclined to internalize a framework of values selected by management? Because, Peters and Waterman argued, they then benefit from the security of knowing what is expected of them while simultaneously enjoying the self-confirming space in which individual initiative can be exercised. The `strong culture' attributed to this preferred arrangement is, as I argued in 'Strength', conceived to `enable each employee to confirm a modern (humanist) sense of self, as a self-determining individual, without the burden of responsibility – the angst – that accompanies the making of (existential) choices between ultimate, conflicting values' (p. 527).

The individuality of each employee is ostensibly respected but this individuality is carefully constructed and circumscribed by management. To describe this contradiction, I borrowed Orwell's (1989) idea of `doublethink'. Doublethink involves forgetting what it is necessary to forget (e.g. that individuality cannot be programmed) but then to draw it back into memory when it is needed for rationalizing purposes, and then to forget the entire process. My suggestion is that ideas of autonomy, individuality and/or self-determination are seized upon for the instrumental purpose of extending and deepening control over employees' hearts and minds. As I wrote in 'Strength' the appeal of the 'technocratic information' advocated by <u>Excellence</u> resides in the crypto-catholic anticipation that employees will

> `discipline themselves with feelings of anxiety, shame and guilt that are aroused when they sense or judge themselves to impugn or fall short of the hallowed values of the corporation' (p. 523)

How, then, does this prescription differ from other, earlier ideas about how to enlist the cooperation of employees in work organizations? Other formulae for 'humanizing' the workplace, including those developed by Mayo and McGregor assume an underlying consensus of values and interests between employers and employees. They emphasise how an underlying mutuality of interest is unintentionally unsettled by managers untutored in the basics of social science. The advocates of such ideas are confident, nonetheless, that cooperation will spontaneously arise once managers gain an adequate understanding of, and respond effectively to, employees' sentiments and need for self-actualization. [
Corporate Culturism also provides a prescription for employee cooperation and motivation that is claimed to remedy the shortcomings of earlier formulae. However, in contrast this, its prescriptions do not rely upon a consensus of values spontaneously emerging when managers become attentive to the non-economic 'needs' of employees and/or remove controls that restrict the scope for self-actualization. Instead <u>Excellence</u> assigns to management the task of <u>actively building</u> 'strong cultures' where consensus and cooperation are engineered managerially, rather than emerge spontaneously. The building of `strong cultures' is prescribed as a precondition for enlarging employee discretion while minimising the risk that increased opportunities for self-actualization will be pursued at the employer's expense.

It is questionable whether many managers believed - outside the feverish atmosphere of Tom Peters' Excellence gigs at least - that the production of `strong culture' would be straightforward in its implementation, or even unequivocal in its benefits. Seasoned managers know only too well how difficult it can be to secure deep commitment, as contrasted to expedient, dramaturgical compliance from their subordinates. They may also anticipate how changing circumstances can render specific values less relevant for, or even disruptive of, their purposes. Nonetheless, the basic idea of Corporate Culturism struck a chord with many. For it seemed to place a powerful force – culture – in their service; and, of course, it chimed gratifyingly with the espoused mission of managers to raise corporate performance. What's more, for managers who may have qualms about engineering employees hearts and minds,' there is the reassuring suggestion that Corporate Culturism expands individual autonomy as it improves corporate performance, and therefore that it is 'morally neutral if not morally beneficial' (p.531). As Barley and Kunda (1992: 383) have observed,

'Although shared beliefs and values might blur the boundaries between self and organization, such commitment was said to imply no loss of individualism or autonomy'

In `Strength', I identified a number of reasons why attempts to manage culture were likely to fall short of their promise of corporate salvation. Most significantly, Corporate Culturism assumes that the core values of the organization will be given priority by employees, at least during the hours of their employment. This claim is based upon the questionable view that employees' other values and associated priorities are weak and are therefore malleable. Yet employees bring diverse affiliations and identifications to the workplace, and also develop and incorporate these at work. From an employee standpoint, efforts to 'strengthen culture' may therefore be experienced and resisted as unacceptably manipulative and intrusive upon their sense of identity and dignity. Where the introduction of Corporate Culturism does not provoke direct opposition moves to 'strengthen culture' can produce cynical, calculative compliance rather than increased commitment. Of course, pragmatic managers may be more than happy to settle for a workable degree of cooperation; but the recognition of other allegiances points to an unresolved tension between the values ascribed by managers to organizations and the preferences of employees.

Even so, does it matter that the claims of Corporate Culturism were not wholly convincing for many managers? At least they could not be criticised for striving to wrap their staff in an authoritative mantle of Culturism that promised to boost corporate performance. My objection to Corporate Culturism, however, is not that it struggles to attain what it sets out to achieve; but, rather, that it seeks to promote and achieve an outcome that is ethically dubious and, arguably, inconsistent with the practical autonomy that it aspires to engender. Crucially the idea that 'practical autonomy' will `take place routinely' (Peters and Waterman, 1982: 323) within a normative framework of shared values favoured by management denies the employee's role in determining the framework within which s/he is enabled or permitted to exercise discretion. In effect, practical autonomy is equated with corporate conformity – an example of 'newspeak' where the meaning autonomy is transformed and inverted as the conditions of autonomy are negated through their affirmation.

`In the newspeak of corporate culture, autonomy is represented as a gift that can be bestowed by (strong) culture upon employees rather than something that individuals struggle to realize…[It assumes that] autonomy can be realized within a monoculture that…systematically suppresses ideas and practices that might problematize the authority of core corporate values…Through the strengthening of culture, the space within organizations for expressing and developing awareness of, and allegiance to, alternative norms and values is reduced and, ideally, eliminated' (p.527, p.531, p. 532)

As a counterpoint to the Corporate Culturist to idea of practical autonomy, `Strength' presents Weber's conception of value-rational action where, instead of taking the established system of values as given, individuals explore diverse systems of values and make a deliberate choice, or series of choices, between and within them. Through value-rational action the autonomy of the individual `is forged as s/he plays and

struggles with the question of which (value) standpoint s/he will consciously strive to enact' (p. 533). I connect the conditions of possibility of engaging in such struggles with the democratic (as contrasted to totalitarian) organization of institutions where, in principle, a diversity of value standpoints is celebrated and interrogated. Whether they are interpersonal or institutional, democratic practices invite and encourage each participant to discover, communicate, and debate their preferred values. This understanding of the development and exercise of 'practical autonomy' poses a direct alternative to initiatives intended to establish or preserve `strong cultures' in which there is a systematic screening out of values (and people) that are assessed to depart from, or that pose a challenge to, corporate authority : `you either buy into their norms or you get out' (Peters and Waterman, 1977 : 77).

Having outlined some central themes of 'Strength', I now return to the question of what prompted its production.

Towards Critical Management Studies
Beginning in the mid 1970s, an abiding theme of my thinking has been the analysis of subjectivity and identity for the study of work and organization (e.g. Knights and Willmott, 1983; 1989; 1999; 2002) that is simultaneously attentive to their construction within relations of power. I remain, interested in developing studies of management – empirical and conceptual - that are informed by critical traditions of thinking – Marx, Habermas, Foucault, Derrida, etc – traditions that, in different ways, aspire to disclose how, for example, knowledge (e.g. of personal, social and corporate identity) is enabled and constrained by relations of power through which it is generated and legitimised.

One of the vehicles for this project was the Annual Labour Process Conference which David Knights and I jointly established and organized throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s[ii]. Participants at the Labour Process Conferences had a distinctive `take' on cultures created by management, viewing them as ideological smokescreens for concealing fundamental conflicts of interest and/or as a supplement to the economic rationalism found in versions of Taylorism. In this intellectual context our attentiveness to subjectivity and culture, as contrasted with economics and structure, antagonised many orthodox labour process analysts who interpreted our work as a (neo-Human Relations) move to psychologize politico-economic relations. Their gripe has been that a focus upon subjectivity distracts attention from the production of oppressive relations through which capital exploits labour. Our response to this has been to argue that the reproduction of these structures does not occur independently of subjectivity, and it is therefore necessary to reconstruct labour process analysis in a way that more adequately addresses the presence and significance of subjectivity.

Looking across, as it were, from the Labour Process Conferences to the work of academics whose work focussed upon 'organizational culture', I was irritated and bemused by the paucity of critical analyses of 'Corporate Culturism'. More specifically, I was dismayed by the lack of critical commentaries emanating from a conference dedicated to the study of organizational culture and symbolism (SCOS) – a venture that had been spun-off from the worthy but plodding European Group for Organization Studies (EGOS), the principal forum for specialists in this field. I admired SCOS's deft cocking of a snook at the EGOS juggernaut. SCOS promoted bottom-up engagement and, despite difficulties and set-backs, developed a community of scholars with a distinctive, collaborative research ethos. But analysis of organizational culture presented at SCOS conferences rarely extended to the study of how managers were being urged to `strengthen' organizational cultures, as a means of management control, by requiring employees to share a common normative framework. Those undertaking research on organizational culture and symbolism were seemingly indifferent to the appearance of Corporate Culturism and/or airily dismissive of its claims. They seemed to regard the normative, instrumental conception of culture, which was the hallmark of this latest management philosophy, as beneath contempt, or at least beyond the reach of respectable academic analysis. At that time, at least, many participants in SCOS did not seem politically engaged or even politically self-aware. I do not mean that SCOS members lacked an engagement with established or alternative political parties or movements. Even

less do I mean that the instigators of SCOS were naïve about the political nature of their break from EGOS. Rather, I mean that SCOS proceeded without recognition of the political relevance and effects of a stance that excluded critiques of Corporate Culturism. All too often, for my liking at least, participants in SCOS conferences addressed the culture and symbolism of organization primarily as an aesthetic, without giving sufficient attention to its political implications or significanceiii. I found the reluctance to engage critically with Corporate Culturism somewhat precious and exasperating. It smacked of academic elitism, myopia and positivism. Elitism and myopia because certain forms of knowledge were, seemingly, beyond the pale and [?] unworthy of critical examination; crypto-positivism because the purists believed that Excellence texts could reveal nothing about the real culture of organizations. This stance seemed distinctly odd and occasionally self-indulgent to those of us, including participants in labour process conferences, who were inclined to regard Corporate Culturism as a distinctive and dangerous species of `political philosophy' (p541).

I thought it important to explore the limitations of, and resistance to, Corporate Culturism as well as to explicate its distinctive features and seductive appeal. The first outing for 'Strength' was at the 5th SCOS Conference. The paper took the form of a polemic that, given its antagonistic content, was surprisingly well, or at least courteously, received. Perhaps I delivered it poorly or maybe the ideas were rather crudely or vaguely formulated. Whatever the reason, it did not arouse the anger, or stimulate the debate, that I had, perhaps naively, fantasised. I was simultaneously relieved and disappointed. It felt a bit like farting in a lift. The (rather small) audience studiously ignored the noxious message as they patiently awaited their release. Requests for copies were not overwhelming.

Undaunted, I submitted a somewhat 'de-polemicised' and `academicised' version of the conference paper to the Journal of Management Studies (JMS). The comments from referees were attentive, penetrating, tough. Their constructive criticisms, combined with comments that I had received from other colleagues, enabled me to transform the paper – for better or worse – from a polemical rant directed at purist organizational culture researchers into a somewhat less polemical, critical examination of the phenomenon of Corporate Culturism. When, after a series of revisions it was finally accepted, I recall feeling pleased with it, rather than simply relieved to see the back of it. I was pleased because I felt that 'strength' had something distinctive to say; the referees had really helped me develop and finesse the arguments; and despite complying with the conventions of academic journals, it seemed to retain something comparatively fresh and engaging. Uniquely, I invited my wife to read it when it appeared in print– an unprecedented request which I take to be indicative of an intuitive sense of having written some prose that conveys some passion for the power of critical thinking. I believe that the paper illustrates how such thinking can disrupt received wisdom, can illuminate widespread experiences of working in organizations and can reach beyond a narrow audience of fellow management specialists. It is somewhat ironic, then, that readers of `Strength' often seem to fasten upon my appreciation of the seductive appeal of Corporate Culturism without noticing or acknowledging my discussion of sources of resistance to it. Still, despite being pleased with it I never imagined that 'Strength' would become something of a "One Hit Wonder". At that time, the critical turn taken by a growing number of management academics was not foreseen. It is this move to which the widespread use in teaching and frequent citation of 'Strength' is, I surmise, principally attributable. Had it not engaged with a general area – 'culture' and 'control' – at a time when it was picked up by the growing wave of 'critical management studies' (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992;1996; 2003), it would, very likely, have sunk without trace.

Corporate Culturism – Dead and Gone?
There is a tendency, to which I have partially acceded, to associate Corporate Culturism with the excesses of the 1980s. Wasn't it simply a fad, a managerial fashion that boomed and then busted? Hasn't it been overtaken by other crazes – for process re-engineering or knowledge management? Well, yes, it was very fashionable but I would say that it has not been discarded so much as assimilated into contemporary thinking about culture change programmes, organizational learning and teamworking, etc. The thinking of Corporate Culturism has been rolled into these more recent developments, rather than washed out of them. What I wrote

about Corporate Culturism `infusing diverse change programmes' during the 1980s can be said of thinking that has been popularised in the 1990s. While expectations about the effectiveness of Corporate Culturism have no doubt been lowered and qualified, the basic philosophy of pseudo or managerial humanism continues to be invoked - perhaps for want of an <u>ideologically</u> acceptable alternative for the `best practice' of managing `human resources'.

Let us admit that the idea that corporate culture can be completely managed is no longer (if it ever was) widely credible. The ignominious fate of many of the `strong culture' companies celebrated by Peters and Waterman is perhaps the most damning indictment of its limited or partial effectiveness. Managers have recognised, if they did not already know well enough, that employees are less amenable to internalising corporate values than might be wished in their more triumphalist or desperate moments. Or they have discovered that changing circumstances render previously privilegedvalues dysfunctional or even counter-productive for current managerial and/or corporate objectives. Nonetheless, a strong residue of Corporate Culturist thinking lives on in the idea that the key to retaining and motivating staff resides in the development of work group, if not organizational, cultures which encourage (high performance) employees to identify strongly with values and priorities defined by management.

This is not the place to review the myriad of ways in which Corporate Culturist thinking has seeped into contemporary prescriptions for management. Increasingly, there is a requirement that employees, at all levels, are `team players' - which effectively means demonstrating a willingness to play the game according to managerially favoured values and norms. In its most extreme, doublethink form, this thinking commends and anticipates the very demise of management. Here I will consider one, comparatively articulate example of such thinking : Cloke and Goldsmith's <u>The End of Management and the Rise of Organizational Democracy</u> (2002). `Management', Cloke and Goldsmith argue, is becoming redundant as `organizational democracy' (note the relevance here of Orwellian `newspeak') ostensibly supersedes its historical function;

> `Managers are the dinosaurs of our modern organizational ecology. The Age of Management is finally coming to a close…Autocracy, hierarchy, bureaucracy and management are gradually being replaced by democracy, heterarchy, collaboration and self-managing teams…This is not just wishful thinking but a reality in many organizations, where strategic associations of self-managing employee teams are collaborating as members of complex, matrixed, high-performance networks…' (ibid : 3-4)

The claim, repeated by a number of other advocates of management's demise (e.g. Koch and Godden, 1996; Purser and Cabana, 1998), is that organizations are evolving from an outmoded bureaucratic form - in which managers exist and operate as `overseers, surrogate parents, scolds, monitors, functionaries, disciplinarians…' (Cloke and Goldsmith, 2002 : 3) -  to a more mature, less infantile form where `responsibility is a prerequisite for growing up' (ibid : 5). On this account, the existence of management as a top-down, coercive function is irrational and anachronistic as:

> `<u>All forms of managing</u> other people's work hinder their responsibility, creativity, flexibility, responsibility, effectiveness, and growth, even in small, subtle ways. They prevent employees from being deeply connected and passionate about their work and keep them in a state of childlike dependence' (ibid: 17, emphasis added)

What Cloke and Goldsmith characterise as `managing' and `management', I submit, very closely resembles what Peters and Waterman (1982) mean by, the rational model' of management (Ch3) which, they argue, 'causes us to denigrate the importance of values' (ibid: 51, emphasis in original), and for which a very similar remedy is prescribed.

Cloke and Goldsmith follow Peters and Waterman in stressing the centrality of values, arguing that `values, ethics, and integrity play a defining role in every aspect of organizational life' (ibid : 122). But, in addition, their advocacy of `organizational democracy' emphasises the importance of employees' <u>active participation and consent</u> in the choice of values. They retain Peters and Waterman's basic thesis that maximising the performance of employees can be most effectively accomplished through the development of an appropriate culture but Cloke and Goldsmith move beyond Peters and Waterman's top down specification of the normative framework by stressing that employee value commitment involves complex and paradoxical social processes; and that gaining commitment necessitates active employee involvement in the process of choosing values. Accordingly, Cloke and Goldsmith reject the (simplistic) view that values can be readily imposed or imprinted from above. `Any effort to manage values [recall here Cloke and Goldsmith's restrictive and pejorative conception of `manage' and `management'] will quickly become counterproductive', they argue, as it will elicit the kinds of infantilism. <u>Contra</u> Peters and Waterman, winning hearts and minds is understood to involve more than identifying and institutionalising a set of values that managers believe will be attractive to employees, as well as effective in improving performance. Cloke and Goldsmith advocate a more subtle, seemingly dialogical approach to the development of culture in which `consensus on shared values' (ibid : 125) is accomplished through a process of constructive debate:

> `We need to stop trying to manage values through coerced uniformity and instead <u>encourage employees to take responsibility for defining and implementing their own values in concert with others</u>' (ibid : 117, emphasis added)

Cloke and Goldsmith are responsive to the criticism that the imposition of a <u>managerially specified</u> organizational (mono)culture - the approach commended by Peters and Waterman - tends to impede the creativity, flexibility, etc. deemed essential for securing and maintaining innovation and competitiveness. For them, the nurturing of `diversity, autonomy, and a respect for individuality' is directly connected to `the idea that employees need to develop their own values' (ibid : 117). Yet, at the same time, we are told that

> `(Organizations) can bolster value-based relationships by recognising and encouraging the behaviours that uphold their values and discouraging and eliminating those that undermine them' (ibid : 125)

It is at this point in <u>The End of Management</u> that `management' returns with a vengeance, albeit by the backdoor, in the form of `organization(s)'. `Organizations' of course, can do nothing. Only their members are capable of acting to `discourage' or `eliminate' the behaviours that are assessed to undermine particular values. In effect, Cloke and Goldsmith's blueprint of `organizational democracy' does not advocate `the end of management' so much as the complete internalisation of managerial values by employees who, it is anticipated, will commit to these values when they are given the opportunity to make such a choice. Any further need for 'management' is thereby eliminated. Why will employees choose to internalise managerial values? Because, Cloke and Goldsmith claim, this commitment will release them from working in a vicious circle where they are infantilised by overbearing managers who keep them in a state of `psychological immaturity…perpetuated by never learning to think or act for oneself, in concert with others…' (ibid: 5).

From Cloke and Goldsmiths's standpoint, it is `management' as an outmoded idea, and associated set of practices, rather than issues of ownership or life-chances, that is conceived to stand in the way of a more enlightened form of organization in which `hierarchy and bureaucracy, autocracy and injustice, inequality and privilege' (ibid : 38) are systematically dissolved and eventually removed. Movement towards this utopia is checked only by diehards who remain attached to obsolete thoughts and deeds that assume the necessity of managers imposing their agendas upon employees who resent and resist such tyranny, thereby perpetuating a viscous circle as managers are provoked into redoubling their efforts to micromanage recalcitrant employees. Cloke and Goldsmith give a graphic account of the everyday problem, or struggle.

`(Employees) view discipline and termination as arbitrary and harassing, engaging in gossip and spreading rumours, see managers as insensitive, secretive, and manipulative, and accuse them of using organizational power to achieve personal ends. They block information from flowing up the organization, allow managers to make mistakes, and blame other employees for failures. They make untenable demands for higher wages and better working conditions, make fun of managers behind their backs, and challenge their decisions…They avoid responsibility, file technical grievances, form adversarial unions, bring lawsuits, and disregard or resist efforts to bring about change' (ibid : 39)

This syndrome, Cloke and Goldsmith contend, has prompted the search for new forms of work, facilitated by new technologies, where management is replaced by `organizational democracy', resulting in an `end of forcing people to work in ways they do not choose' (ibid: 42). For their readers, and certainly for any employer or executive, Cloke and Goldsmith's vision of `organizational democracy' prompts the question: how and why are people going to choose in ways that are consistent with continuing their employment? In other words, in the absence of 'management' that directs their activity either by close supervision or the imposition of a normative framework with which they instrumentally comply, why should employees choose to act in ways that coincide with the profitable application of their labour?

My answer to this question is that `organizational democracy', comprising new forms of organizing envisaged by Cloke and Goldsmith, can develop within capitalist firms only where employees are successfully enjoined to identify with a culture that is consonant with the privileging of capitalist values and practices. A condition of possibility of `the end of management' is the establishment of a `strong culture' wedded to capitalist priorities in which `values', `ethics' and `integrity' are defined in ways that are consistent with the legitimation and reproduction of these priorities. Increased `participation' and `involvement' may render employees' working lives somewhat more interesting and satisfying by attenuating elements of what Cloke and Goldsmith term `management'. But it is disingenuous to use the terms `participation' and `involvement', let alone `democracy' to describe processes for facilitating employee consent to values and practices favoured by executives hired to do the bidding of employers.

Cloke and Goldsmith assume that value consensus and commitment will emerge through a process of open discussion. In contrast, I conceive of the process of value commitment within capitalist organizations as mediated by relations of (inter)dependence that are endemic to the employment relationship. On the one side of this relationship, managers acting on behalf of owners and employers generally prefer to `encourage' employees to embrace or, at least overtly comply with, values that they conceive to be consonant with corporate profitability and/or their own career advancement. This assessment may include a more or less rational calculation about how much resource to devote to such `encouragement', and how to make it attractive to its targets. On the other side, and except in cases where employees are openly antagonistic or fully compliant, the inclination of employees is either to suppress or mask the expression of oppositional values, or to seek employment elsewhere.

In very unusual circumstances - for example, where alternative employment is either abundant or very scarce – something superficially comparable to Cloke and Goldsmith's vision of a developing, uninhibited discussion of values may occur. In such cases, employers or employees are in a weak position to contest the values favoured by the other party. And so, by default, a kind of consensus can emerge, the maintenance of which is highly contingent upon fluctuations in the labour market. In the vast majority of cases, however, `consensus' is likely to be patchy and flimsy at best - resulting, inevitably, in interventions from management (or, sometimes, failing that, by employees or their representatives) to ensure compliance with certain values and, more importantly, the maintenance of productive activities. To say, as Cloke and Goldsmith suggest, that `organizations' will, for example, `encourage individual and team responsibility for implementing (values)' (ibid: 125, emphasis added), exemplifies Orwellian newspeak. For it is the owners or managers who routinely intervene to ensure such implementation, which, in the most extreme case, means closure or disposal.

Final Reflection: Structure and Autonomy

Since writing `Strength' I have become increasingly interested in, and influenced by, poststructuralist thinking advanced by Foucault, Derrida, Lacan, Laclau and Mouffe, etc. The attraction of their ideas resides, I believe, in their assistance in clarifying and developing the putatively poststructuralist thinking that in my case, emerged out of early flirtations with existentialism and critiques of structuralist Marxism (Knights and Willmott, 1982; 1983; 1985). As an aside, I recall a referee's comment on a joint paper with David Knights submitted to Sociology in the late 1970s. The referee noted its strong Lacanian flavour - which came as something of a surprise as neither of us had read Lacan at that time, and indeed had barely heard of him. For me, poststructuralist thought is appealing because the totalising tendencies of structuralism are problematized without being abandoned (as it is with radical deconstructionism). There is a retention of the basic structuralist insight that the social is structured through multiple relations of subordination; but the structuring or, better, structurings, of the social are conceived to be open, or overdetermined.

So, for example, if we follow Laclau and Mouffe (1985), identity is formed within multiple structures of subordination, none of which is determinant of its content or, relatedly, of human actions. The employment relationship is one of these structures which interpolates the employee in a relationship of subordination to the employer. This relationship is not one of unqualified dependence, however. In capitalist work organizations, owners and their agents are themselves dependent upon the productive activity of employed labour to produce the goods and services from which, through a process of institutionalised exploitation, private wealth is accumulated and managerial overheads are paid. But because identities are overdetermined they cannot be read off from structure of subordination

From Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) poststructuralist standpoint, the relationship between owners of capital and suppliers of labour is structurally unequal but not inherently antagonistic. This admits the possibility that labour will not contest the demands of capital and, indeed, may actively support its values and priorities without being subjected to the charge of 'false-consciousness'. As I acknowledged earlier, there are unusual circumstances in which other interpolations are absent or are effectively suspended so that something resembling Cloke and Goldsmith's organizational democracy may appear. To repeat, such cooperation is not registered as `false consciousness' since no essential identity is attributed to 'labour'. The identity of those who supply labour – that is, those who are obliged to sell their productive capacity within capitalist firms in return for a wage – remains open and contingent. There are other determinations of their identity – gender, communal, religious, etc. arising from other structures of subordination – that compete for their identification, and which may be privileged over those of the employment relationship. So, for example, the (hegemonic) struggles to establish and retain a religious, gendered or communal identity may be differentiated from, and prioritised over, any struggle to resist exploitation, in the form of work intensification, or any campaign to improve terms and conditions.

Given this de-centring of the employment relationship in the formation of social identity and, by implication, the transformation of social relations (as envisaged by Marx), post-Marxist poststructuralism associates radical change with the political process of articulating demands in a particular way (e.g. as `workers' and by forging alliances between groups whose dominant identifications are formed within alternative relations of subordination). Through such political practices, interests are recurrently constructed and partially pursued, rather, than affirmed and realised as a predetermined, essential destiny. Instead of pursuing competing and often mutually obstructive objectives, the challenge of `radical democracy' is to work, or struggle, in precarious alliances to change structures of subordination in ways that create greater space and scope for the development of a plurality of identifications. It is of course, precisely the elimination of such plurality that advocates of corporate Culturism and the End of Management seek in the name of extending the 'practical autonomy' of involved, 'self managing' employees. And it is for this reason that such thinking is a prime target for critical management studies.

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…the review…

Writing from a position of Strength

Dear Hugh,

The writing of *Strength* was undoubtedly an important occasion for the development of critical management studies. It has been heralded by Timothy Clark (*General Editor of JMS*) as "represent[ing] the guiding principles of JMS … [and has become a] … citation classic". In it you subject one of the most significant themes of organizational studies, namely corporate culture, to critical scrutiny, simultaneously unveiling and challenging its central premises in the best traditions of critical thought. It is an excellent dissection, cutting to the heart of *Peters and Waterman's* account of strong cultures and their co-option of the discourses of values, autonomy and culture, revealing the workings of power relations, and the production of identity and of truth. This is precisely what is downplayed or over-simplified in *Peters and Waterman* and provides you with a target to begin exposing the darker side of what *Peters and Waterman* are talking about. In many senses the critique seems as timely today, with articles such as Bowen and Ostroff still being produced, which argue for a strengthening of HRM systems and where we find the oft-repeated assertion that "individuals share a common interpretations of what behaviours are expected and rewarded" (2004:203). Yet, through reading

23

your reprisal, I am left wondering if *Peters and Waterman* were your target at all. The dialogue, albeit at first one that others did not want to participate in, appears to be with LPT, SCOS and EGOS. By putting this ostensibly shallow and academically frail concept into the territory of critical management (a seemingly difficult task by your own account), the concepts of identity, subjectivity, autonomy, culture and new operations of power were given room to manoeuvre and grow in prominence within CMS. I am left wondering if it is possible to consider that without *Peters and Waterman et al.* critical management would not have played so much attention to the concepts of corporate culture, indeed could they be, albeit unconscious, surrogate parents of CMS' interest in culture and its fellow sibling concepts of identity and values, a move that has arguably extended critical thought beyond the confines of LPT's structuralist focus on economies and structure. When the histories of CMS are written what part will the likes of *Peters and Waterman* play in its production?

In the original paper you make appeals to Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, in particular the concepts of *Newspeak* and the totalitarian impulses, which you now describe as a device to "communicate and illustrate my critique". Whilst this may have had positive rhetorical power in connecting and increasing the accessibility of your ideas, I am left wondering if the adoption of this device lead to the construing of *Strong cultures* as monocultures, totalitarian, and ultimately oppressive. Strong cultures are described in ways that are prescriptive, but this prescription proves to limit the possibility for critical thought and action and therefore ultimately prohibits genuine alternatives. Whilst I have a great deal of sympathy with this perspective I wonder if even within the make-up of *Peters and Waterman* the imposition of values has more subtlety. The values they describe seem, on the surface, to be ones that we can all agree with. Autonomy, gaining meaning through work, belonging and achieving ones personal goals, all seem very appealing ways in which we can gain self-determination. Indeed it could be argued that they have co-opted concepts directly from the critique of Taylorism born from liberal humanist values. I am caught by two thoughts in this area.

Firstly, in the rush to critique, I wonder if a significant opportunity for engagement with mainstream management theory and practice was lost. One is left with little doubt about the position you hold regarding the question of culture. Yet, I am left to wonder if the explosion in the discourses of values, culture, meaning through work and autonomy, might have provided critical discourses with potential leverage into the debates around management theory. *Peters and Waterman,* through adopting these concepts, could have inadvertently opened up a crevice in management thought for broader discussions around the question of the meaning, significance, the contestability of values, autonomy and the imposition of culture in ways that might have been utilised by CMS. Although this might be a messy affair and not one for the academic purist, a critical take on values, etc., might have found ways to broaden this discourse, increasing the resources open to mainstream and critical theorists and practitioners to make sense of the concept of values. Although it may not change the basic economic labour-capital relationship, it could have given more scope for resistance and the pluralism of available discourses that your paper convincingly argues for.

Secondly, it raises questions concerning what positions are available within which CMS can take its stand. The paper, as I read it, seems to argue that *Peters and Waterman* simply offer us a bastardised version of autonomy, meaning through work, etc., merely using them for organizational ends, "masquerading as a 'therapy of freedom' as Rose (1990:257), for example, has recently claimed" (Willmott 1993:524). The job of the critical scholar is presented as a task of unravelling the masquerade and trying to rescue the true meaning of autonomy. However, could this use of autonomy allow us to 'reflexively' question our own stand? What is the space from which this critique is made possible? Does the critical scholar have access to a plane of pure reason from which claims are made and from where the authenticity of autonomy can be judged, or is the critique only made possible from the vantage point of vested interests, the privileging of particular interpretations of the world? Moreover, what is the role of reason within this discourse? To be autonomous, implies a *responsiveness to reasoning* - a governing of one's thoughts and actions within the remit of reason. As Foucault and Nietzsche alert us, this retreat into the safety of reason to overcome oppressive forces is not

the safe haven we might have imagined. Enlightenment reason and knowledge will not straightforwardly lead to liberation (in other words, the unveiling of the masquerade will not lead to true autonomy) but rather set into play a whole set of problematic forms of control.

Rose is of course working from an understanding he has gained through an engagement with Foucault. It is not through totalitarian imposition of a mono-discourse that we are governed but through our desires for freedoms, autonomy, empowerment and self-fulfilment. To be free and autonomous necessitates a high degree of self-governance made possible through various "technologies of power" (Foucault 1980) producing an autonomous self as political actor who demands to be governed as an autonomous agent. It is therefore through *these* liberal humanist impulses, one I would argue shared by your paper, that we are governed. This is not a negative or oppressive power, a dark side, but one that is productive, through which people are seduced and secure purpose, meaning, and identity. I share with you the concern that within the world of *Peters and Waterman* it is the *manner* in which this is achieved that is questionable, that ready made answers seem available to the employee, reducing the anxiety and uncertainty by these readily available discourses. However, I am left to reflect that given the strength of your argument, and the all-too-ready availability of 'critical discourses', might the critical management scholar now find themselves equally barricaded from an open engagement with the world, as ready made critiques enable us to quickly make sense of the world. Seduced by dreams of utopia and/or liberal-humanist values that are enwrapped in the same set of signifiers – autonomy, achievement, empowerment and self-fulfilment - could a strong critique eventually lead to disengagement, idealism and a monoculture of its own? Does *Strength* have a dark side?

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…and the response…

Dear Daniel

I have only 200 words. Make that 192.

I agree that my critique of Corporate Culturalism appealed to a liberal concept of autonomy, underpinned by Weberian ethics (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996, Ch 2). Now, I would problematise that position (see Knights and Willmott, 2002 ; Willmott, 2003). But I might stick with it as I think it resonates with the values of many potential readers. Ditto the use of Orwell. Both serve the purpose of interrogating and challenging the meaning of autonomy favoured by Peters and Waterman. But, as you rightly point out, they have limits – limits that were not (reflexively) acknowledged in *Strength*.
I would hesitate to claim that I was trying to rescue the `true meaning of autonomy'. I would rather say that I was attempting to offer an alternative to the closure that P&W put on it. In Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) terms, I was engaging in some gentle `dislocation' in an effort to disrupt the hegemonic equation of autonomy with the responsible (to the corporation) exercise of discretion.
I very much agree that `critical management' must be inclusive if it is to avoid becoming `barricaded from an open engagement with the world'. A question this poses is : what practices – teaching, researching, administering, debating, being – and associated disciplines can facilitate such engagement? Oops, that's 219.

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Many thanks to our author and reviewer this month, we hope to make this a regular feature to help new researchers navigate their way through the Very Frightening Review Process so anyone who feels they might contribute as either an author or a reviewer, please do contact us. Likewise – tips and comments from established writers, journal editors or reviewers are very welcome

The Musery

Grab your chance to share anything you fancy with the rest of the membership – letters, comments, jokes, cartoons, you name it, we'll print – well almost!

Jargon 2020!

Thanks to Alf Rehn for finding these gems of future 'Management Speak' in the pages of 'Business 2.0' – apparently an in-flight magazine for business executives on some Scandinavian airline… **(what were you doing with the business execs, Alf? – eds.)**

Anyway… we discover that:

Dark Castle is an automated shipping and distribution complex staffed only by robotic gantries and forklifts. So named because of the dim lighting used in such facilities to improve energy efficiency.

Imperfectionists are those employed as "customizers" in small distribution centres who add quirky human touches to mass produced items. The imperfectionists in Juarez, apparently, have been adding Dalmatian spots to Del Packard's home network appliances, and they're now outselling other models 2 to 1!

Insourcing. Management consultant speak for he practice of hiring employees aging parents and bored spouses to provide nurturing, "home-style" services within an office complex. At an insourced company cafeteria, for example, a small team of "den mothers" maybe on hand to bake cookies, encourage exercise, or offer a shoulder to cry on during stormy office romances.

Other words which we haven't space for include:
The preference fairy
The sieve; and
The tinfoil beanie
SCOSers are invited to send in their suggestions as to what these corporate artefacts might be in practice!

SCOS offspring?

At the last San Antonio annual conference of International Academy of Business Disciplines a new - actually SCOS kin - organizational platform has been born: Standing Conference on Management & Organization Inquiry (scMOI). You can see their call for papers for next year's **scMOI** conference in Philadelphia at:
http://scmoi.org
(Thanks to Slawek Magala, at the Erasmus University Rotterdam for bringing this to our attention)

may fly

It's been four years since we had the idea to start *ephemera*, and we can't quite believe that we are about to publish the second issue of the fourth volume of the journal. When we started the journal we did not really know how long we wanted this project to go on. As the name of the journal suggests, and as we said in our first editorial, we were quite happy for it to simply be a mayfly – an ephemeral intervention or, as one says in the theoretical jargon of today, an 'event'.

Of course, some might think that the mayfly has become a fossil – a monument of ephemerality. The journal has got too big the day that our readership reached the thousands. But we are now thinking that there is life left in this mayfly. Perhaps. But only if it continuously transforms and mutates itself.

Part of this transformation process is our recent decision to involve more exciting young people to share the joy of editing this journal. We have therefore formed an editorial collective that increasingly takes collective responsibility for editing *ephemera*. The good old utopian spirit of collectivity has arrived at *ephemera*… (as if it was ever absent)…

So, exciting times ahead at *ephemera*. Perhaps. Hopefully. The mayfly dies a cruel death every day. But this death is also the beginning of a new life. Let's see what the new generation can produce…

The editorial collective of *ephemera*:
Steffen Böhm, Essex (editor-in-chief)
Christian De Cock, Exeter
Campbell Jones, Leicester
Bent Meier Sørensen, Copenhagen
Damian O'Doherty, Manchester
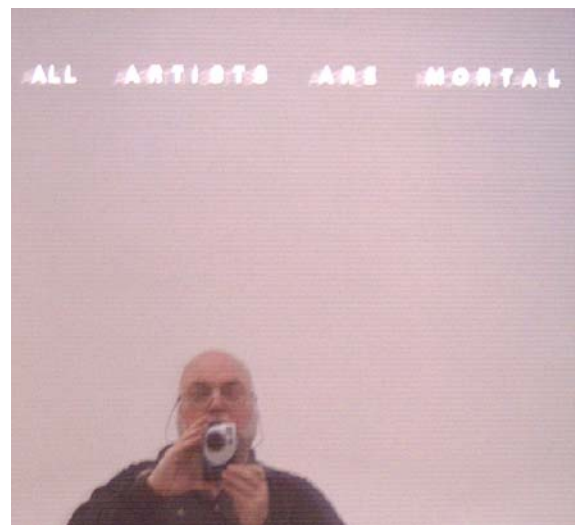Tony O'Shea, Sunderland
André Spicer, Warwick
Sverre Spoelstra, Leicester
Akseli Virtanen, Helsinki
Samantha Warren, Portsmouth

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Through the lens…

Many thanks to Professor Burkard Sievers who sent us this photograph. As some of you may know, Prof. Sievers is a keen photographer and has staged some of his own exhibitions.

Lazy Foreigners coming here to 'steal our jobs'?

It's been 45 years since my parents came to England. The recruitment of workers from the Caribbean to stem the shortages of workers in the manufacturing industry throughout the UK was successful. They came with hopes of getting jobs and earning a reasonable standard of living, gaining new skills and some with hopes of returning 'home' after a period of time. With expectations high they came to start a new life. They were welcomed not with open arms, tolerance and understanding. They were greeted instead with fear, exclusion and negative contact. This perception by the indigenous populations led to avoidance and antilocution, which resulted in signs being placed on boarding houses saying, "No monkeys here" and verbal assaults such as "Niggers go home". They didn't. Instead they stayed, lived and worked with the prejudice, discrimination, and humiliation from people who believed that the lack of their success in terms of their homes and careers lay at the feet of people coming to the UK to 'steal their jobs'.

The 1st May saw 10 other countries join the EU. An extremely proud moment for those of us who believe we are citizens of the world, that more communities would have increased access to the exchange of labour and to an improved choice of goods and services. The tabloid press in their wisdom reported that the UK should expect an influx of lazy foreigners coming here to 'steal our jobs' and abuse our hospitality by misusing our health service provisions and schools. A handful came. Not the stampede the tabloid papers led us to fear.

My local bar is usually the hive of activity that any local bar is when it is situated in a leafy, middle class area with a university very close by. It consists of a myriad of ethnicities from the learned to the pampered, from people who have worked very hard for their success to people who have never had careers but still enjoy a high standard of living through such things like parental inheritance. On one particular evening a man who hailed from the latter description, quite a lonely man because he always seemed to be sat by himself started a conversation with the landlord of the bar. My attention was transfixed when I heard him say, "The Queen had a 'Pole' at the Palace today. These people coming to take our jobs."

Four relational but worrying issues come to mind. The 100 BNP counsellors standing in council elections next month; the controversy over the asylum seekers and illegal immigrants; the 'war on terrorism' and all that it entails including the allegations of the abuse of prisoners; and the publishing of reports uncovering racism and institutional racism within public services such as the NHS and the Police. The man in question was indeed challenged and has not been seen at the bar again. It seems unfortunate that comments like this come from people who will not allow themselves to see the bigger picture, in that every action has a reaction. Every year thousands of Britons emigrate to other countries and there are also a number of jobs and levels of pay that seem unacceptable to some Britons especially when they have the social security system to buffer their lives. Employment currently stands at an all time high. However, there are still shortages of skills in certain professions such as teaching and nursing. In 2002 the government issued approximately 6000 work permits to teachers outside the EU and similarly the registration of overseas nurses increased from 3621 in 1998/1999 to 8403 in 2000/2001. This is the action. The reaction is a severe scarcity of teachers and nurses in some of the world's poorest countries that they can ill afford, according to the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO). This is food for thought for racist individuals who spout 'they're stealing our jobs'. Perhaps the reply can be 'well you're stealing our vital resources!'

Grace Miller

Keeping it in the family

Panagiota Koulouvari thought SCOS might be interested in a new scientific discipline at the Media Management and Transformation Centre, part of the Jönköping International Business School (south of Sweden).

FAMILY OWNED MEDIA COMPANIES.

More specifically, Panagiota and colleagues have designed a project on "Family-Owned Media Companies in the Nordic Countries" aiming to identify issues and challenges that family-companies face in the media industry in Denmark, Finland, Iceland,Norway, and Sweden.

Family business research is a relatively new scientific discipline and this project shows its relevance to the study of media companies. In a family firm, "the strands of the family system are so tightly interwoven with those of the business system that they cannot be disentangled without seriously disrupting one or both systems" (Kepner E. 1983, The family and the firm: A coevolutionary perspective). This situation creates unique sets of issues for family businesses, many of which have attracted more concentrated attention in the developing literature on these firms. Among the issues that are addressed in the literature are the issues of succession, family issues and family business, family business as a business, management issues, strategy and governance issues, and entrepreneurship.

Family-owned media companies are important because they play significant economic roles, providing employment opportunities and contributing turnover and value-added to the national economies. The first outcome of this project is a report that provides a foundation of issues found in general literature on family business and presents existing research initiatives on the topic in the Nordic region. It has also identified issues through direct contact with family and non-family members of media companies. Furthermore, research in the project has also focused on identifying family-owned media firms and creating a database of companies ranging from small- and medium-sized firms to large enterprises.

The report can be downloaded from:
http://www.ihh.hj.se/eng/research/publications/wp/wp_2004_2_panagiota_report2.pdf

For any questions/ comments/ proposals for collaborative research, please contact the project coordinator Panagiota Koulouvari at: Panagiota.Koulouvari@ihh.hj.se, or at: juliek@kth.se

Speculations on Strategy and Organisation Theory
David Bubna-Litic
University of Technology, Sydney

From Grid to Network to Iraq and Back.

SEPTIMUS: Geometry, Hobbes assures in the *Leviathan*, is
the only science God has been pleased to bestow on mankind.

LADY CROOM: And what does he mean by it?

SEPTIMUS: Mr. Hobbes or God?

LADY CROOM: I am sure I do not know what either means by it.

THOMASINA: Oh, pooh to Mr. Hobbes! Mountains are not pyramids and trees are not cones. God must love gunnery and architecture if Euclid is his only geometry. There is another geometry which I am engaged in discovering by trial and error, am I not, Septimus?

-Tom Stoppard

(from Mark C. Taylor (2003) *The Moment of Complexity: Emerging Network Culture* **University of Chicago Press)**

Grid thinking is very effective for gunnery and other forms of military action, but it clearly has its limits in understanding what happens after the war. The complex interconnectedness that underlies Mark C. Taylor's network metaphor is a better way of seeing the potential problems and hopefully future solutions to the "free fall" that the Coalition partners in Iraq find themselves. Two core elements of the new turn to complexity are the notions of novelty and interconnectedness. Whilst we are all looking on in horror at the revelations about torture and humiliation perpetrated by the Coalition forces – at least by those who had responsibility for prisoners (Australia did not have such a role), one consolation is there may be some broader learning going on for Organisation Theorists about complexity. Clearly the abuse situation in Iraq came as a complete surprise to US military strategists, demonstrating the significance of novelty, as yet no other single event so far seems to have as much potential to damage the coalition's resolve and the smooth transfer of power. As an observer, complexity and a number of other so called *post-modern* theoretical notions seem to be highlighted. A salient one is how historical events are so intimately connected with the situation in Iraq. Why have the Coalition partners got themselves into such a mess? After a while the historic perspective seems to loom into prominence - could this be happening without the allied betrayal of the Arabs at the end of WWI, or the Crusades – history is not irrelevant. The universalizing tendencies of traditional Organisation Theory tend to belie the historical uniqueness of organizational and other events. Iraq is a case in point of how we emerge from history, and as Gadamer points out, we need to understand social science from this hermeneutic. A second aspect of the current revelations is that they are so symbolically potent, after the simulacra of war staged on television: from the journey to Bagdad with graphic, but bloodless pictures of bombs exploding and the Bagdad sky alight with anti-aircraft fire, we are finally presented with brutality in a simple form which we can understand. Polyani's view that knowledge truly is personal and is not abstract is illustrated by the way that the pictures embodied what was happening in a way that suddenly brings into focus the horror. How can we express what it is like to be attacked with modern weapons such as cluster bombs or be in the firing line of an A-10 aircraft with cannons firing at 3,900 rounds a minute? It is beyond the capability of our media to represent, but simple torture is not so far away. These are powerful illustrations of the dynamic nature of symbolism. Perhaps we fail to recognise the same dynamics in organisational symbolism when we regress into abstract and disembodied language on new technologies to make our lives in organisations more worthy of living – we don't move people to action. Finally, perhaps we underestimate how interconnected the social world is and it is particularly ironic that now US prison activists are saying that these abuse revelations are nothing new and simply reflect the way prisons are still being run in the US. This points to mimesis at work in the organising of detention. When we revile these horrors we might also ponder how this interconnected trail linking Iraq to the US prison system might reflect the very structure of the Western economic model – of which we as Organisation Theorists have had some role in creating – even if only by our silence.

Tales from the field

Dr Zoé Bertgan… over to you Zoe

Judging from my mail-bag over the past few months it seems a number of readers, notably the British it must be said, are confused about precisely what it was I meant when I used the term "wet-patch" in my previous column (Notework, Nov. 2003). Now, my experience of English university libraries is that the general standard of roofing is pretty poor, what with the legacy of decaying Victorian buildings and the withdrawal of public funding in recent years, and so I imagine that many more of you are indeed familiar with the problem of the wet-patch, the puddle, the 'dark zone', the slip-rink, or whatever euphemism you wish to call it, than you care to let on. However, it is possible, I suppose, that with the election of Danny Harkin as the new regional chairman of the National Federation of Roofing Contractors there is an infectious spread of up-beat mood over there in the UK, and with his stirring and triumphant inaugural speech to NFRC members at the Fitzwilliam International Hotel at Belfast International Airport last year, there is a genuine possibility for a greater degree of optimism.

'Our message to the industry in general', Danny is quoted as saying in the Summer 2003 News Update of the NFRC, 'is to make sure when you employ a roofing contractor you employ a company that is competent and one that has proper insurance in place'. I also note the increasing use being made of Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer (EPDM) materials in roofing construction, which, derived from a sulphur cure system for polymer formation, produces a synthetic rubber similar to heavy-duty pond liner that is very flexible, boasting over 300% elongation capacity (up to 400% according to some analysts! (see PMS Ltd., 2004)). In addition, my colleague Dr Peter-Andreas Gilthong, who swung by the office the other day, recollects reading, somewhere in the press, about the upsurge of interest in Mushroom head technology.

All this might explain the confusion concerning the wet-patch. I might have asked: are you Brits in denial? Yet, maybe the wet-patch is becoming an anachronism, an evolutionary throwback over there in the UK; quite simply, it might have disappeared. Selecting just one of these letters, this one from an 'Alf Rehn', it seems I may have verged on the offensive: 'To insinuate as you do with your faux-casual tone (sic) that the appearance of the wet-patch is a common sight in the university library borders on the distasteful, if not vulgar'. Well! I cannot quote at length but it seems reading between the lines that Alf represents a significant number of you. For this offence I am sorry, but his over-excited syntax and almost breathless and giddy tenor suggests to me the clear dangers of the wet-patch and therefore the relevance of my discussion and indeed the urgent need for further sharing and discourse.

On the other hand I must confess to being a little hurt by some of you scossers who have had the temerity to suggest that my preoccupation with the wet-patch belies the influence of some perverse fetishism. Let me repeat, I am a humble methodologist who has agreed to write a regular column for your newsletter, free of charge I might add, and no doubt you are going to find me an easy target for all your clever symbolic and psychoanalysing discourse. And that reminds me of what my painter friend Donald used to say about his psychoanalyst, 'I call him an ass-hole, and he says I've got an anal fixation!' If you don't want me to write for you, just say so. I'd be *so* bothered. And like, this isn't easy you know!? I sit here at my desk worrying about the cracks in my ceiling, the threat of a rain-shower this afternoon - and now I note, damn it, I forgot to bring my Mackintosh, let alone an umbrella – an unfinished methodology chapter humming away in the background as document 2 on my PC, and like all good ethnographers and anthropologists, my knees and feet are bloody

sore after a weekend traipsing around and sometimes on all fours crawling through the sealed-off tunnels and grottoes in the NY subway system, which, incidentally, harbours a cult-like organization of what I believe, after Garfinkel, might be evidence of a community of folk-methodologists.

So when I say there are serious methodological issues regarding the wet-patch, **I mean it!** None of your oh-so-clever post-modern (is it?) ironising here. Why do you lot insist on making us all so self-conscious? I think it was somewhere in Nabakov's novel *Bend Sinister* that the protagonist, through the proximity of his reflections to the authors' descriptive prose, comes close to discovering the key to his dystopic labyrinth in what slowly transpires as a mise-en-abyme opening to a resonant-like communication/interference that migrates across puddles, ponds, stains and mirrors. From the dark unspoken undercarriage of methodology the wet-patch calls out for greater attention and tolerance. I can almost hear its siren-like drip now, lulling us sailors of organization into a glazed stupor. Oh yes, I can.

Oh dear…darling, poor you. Thanks anyway – eds.

News from the SCOS regions

Recognising the truly global nature of the SCOS membership, this regular page is given over to **your** regional reps to tell us what's happening in their part of the world. Again, we're unable to bring you reports from **all** the regions, but we hope the South American reps will have some news for us next issue in November 2004. Special welcome to Saara Taalas who has been appointed as regional rep for the Nordic region, who replaces Tuomo Peltonen, whose sterling work will be missed. Thanks Tuomo, bye!

SCOS caucus down under
Inaugural Colloquium
Boundaries, Bounded, Unbounded:
Positions in Organisation Studies.

The impetus for this colloquium rests in an experience we feel many of us may have had. Every year we make an annual trek from Australia to Europe to attend a SCOS or Critical Management Studies conference, or possibly to the US to join with the relatively recent Critical Management Studies Division meetings of the Academy of Management. We do so to seek an opportunity to present our work and the possibility of meeting people whose intellectual interests might resonate with our own. At the last excellent SCOS annual meeting in Cambridge in 2003 the coordinators of this colloquium met and reflected on the fact that it seems to take a trip half around the world before critical organization studies scholars from Australasia assemble and get an opportunity to exchange. On this basis, we thought it was time that we facilitated something in our own back yard.

This colloquium is being held as a meeting ground for those broadly interested in what, for want of better words, is referred to as critical and postmodern management and organizations studies. We have positioned the inaugural meeting under the ambit of SCOS both in recognition of that body's long and innovative contribution to critical and avant garde organization studies and because we felt it important that SCOS

begins to work against its own Eurocentricism. We sincerely hope that Australian and New Zealand colleagues will respond to this call and help to generate a vibrant and productive mechanism for exchange.

Hopefully this event will be a catalyst for some deep reflection,as it does not take that much to recognize that Australians are bit too beholden to all things from the Northern Hemisphere. I still recall Lex Donaldson, in a fit of frustration at his critical UTS audience, pointing out how our convict legacy had led to culture of larrikinism, which he believed to have infected our academic institutions. We were all too gob smacked or polite to respond at the time, however looking back on it, I think the only person remotely related to convicts was myself and that was seven generations ago - on my Mother's side. Ironically, the audience consisted of people from diverse ethnic background and mostly curious mixtures, like myself (Czech/Scottish). Australia too is a curious mixture and does not sit so comfortably with the hermeneutic assumptions that characterize much traditional understandings of management that are dominant in the US nor perhaps those of Europe. Things look different from the far reaches of the so called Anglo-Saxon Diaspora and I am sure that this inaugural Colloquium will spark some extremely interesting discussions, not just for locals, but also for any Northern visitors.

Referendums and refunding in the UK

UK definitely wasn't going to have a referendum on the new European Constitution as our government has told us that the matter wasn't important enough … and then last night we learned, suddenly, that we are to be consulted via referendum. Does it matter and does anyone care? On the last point, this morning the UK's tackiest tabloid newspaper led with an opinion poll that indicated … we don't. How anti-intellectual (I think …) Didn't Ted Heath call Britons "good Europeans" in the late 1960's early 1970's?

Closer to our homes though is all the exciting news about the refunding of undergraduate education (and so evertything else as well) in the British universities. Our brave government is fearlessly and boldly going ... towards a student self-funding model where each student will incur tuition fees liabilities of up to £3,000 per year to be paid out of earnings in the first zillion years of employment along with all of young (and middle aged)adult life's optional extras like setting up a home and paying for it, paying for kids and etcetera. There was hope by our political leaders that they would be able to establish a market in British Higher education ... by inserting a range of fees between £1,000 and £3,000 per year but the Vice Chancellors are so short of cash that they all seem to have elected for the maximum levy for most courses in most schools of just about all universities. And the participation rates inch higher and higher towards the target 50% of 18-25's in university education....

More centenary celebrations in Germany

Again a marvellous contradiction can be watched in this country. On the one hand it is Kant year, celebrating his work on occasion of the 200th day of the philosopher's death. On the other hand there is an offensive for innovation and as part of this a public discussion on the quality of German universities and how to catch up with the leading research institutions in the world. As usual, the notion of "*Elite*" comes up. Shall there be five universities in the whole country which are especially promoted and be the leading centres for research? And so on. Of course the discussion about innovation concentrates on natural sciences and engineering. This is where the celebrations of Kant could influence the current discussion. Nobody seems to consider the fact that Germany was a leading research nation at a time when important voices in the global discussion in philosophy and humanities also came from Germany. Or – to get to the heart of it: Is progress possible without reflection?

Nordic News

We look forward to welcoming Saara's first report for *Notework* later in the year. Saara joins us for three years as the Nordic regional representative, spreading the SCOS word in the colder parts of our reaches!

Calls & Announcements

Upcoming conferences, workshops, seminars, coffee-mornings, moves, journal news, achievements, parties – remember where you heard it first….

4th INTERNATIONAL CRITICAL MANAGEMENT STUDIES CONFERENCE
4 - 6th July 2005 Cambridge University, UK

Call for Papers: Space + Time (& Change) in Organizations

CONVENORS: Adrian Carr; University of Western Sydney, Australia   a.carr@uws.edu.au
Alexis Downs; St. Louis University, USA
Philip Hancock, University of Warwick, UK

Management and organization theory has a long history of recognizing space and time as significant resources. Frederick Taylor ('Speedy' Taylor, as some of us have dubbed him) immediately comes to mind in this context. Speedy Taylor viewed space and time as commodities factored into job design, organization processes and control mechanisms. In that era of 'Scientific Management', time and space existed within a broader framework in which epistemology was 'grounded' in the scientific method. As Lash and Urry (1994) suggest, clock-time was the modern organizing principle. Largely absent and certainly foreign to clock-time was any firm consideration of time and space as socially constructed.

Representative of late modernity, Giddens (1991) developed notions of time/space distanciation: i.e., the stretch of social practices over space and time. Telecommuters relying upon technological expert systems are distanced from social systems and follow subjective calendars. Just as technology constructs telecommuters, architecture and various spatial configurations construct the attitudes, values and beliefs of human subjects. In addition, time, physical objects and spatial configurations may be invested with emotional content and leave their traces within us. Thus, from the point of view of social construction, time and space become distinct from their measurement.

Despite their differences, the schools of scientific management and social construction explain time as continuous or interrupted, but still linear and, perhaps, laminar. On the other hand, theorists such as Michel Serres and Paul Virilio conjure alternative notions of time and space. Serres (1995) suggests that time is chaotic and turbulent. He notes that 'le temps' is the French word for both weather and time. For Serres, "time develops more like the flight of Verlaine's wasp than along a line, continuous or regularly broken by dialectical war" (1995, p. 65). Virilio turns his attention to the digital world and virtualized objects. For Virilio, as for Serres, the formation of the senses is critical.

Because the dynamics in which space and time are inter-related or become co-related in the organizational and management context have been neglected, we invite papers that highlight the manner in which we have neglected, or taken for granted, the dynamics of time and space in the organizational and management context.
Contributions will be screened for potential inclusion in special issues already committed on this topic in the journal Tamara: The Journal of Critical Postmodern Organisation Science and (for those papers that also address the significance of this topic in relation to change) Journal of Organizational Change Management. Papers will also be considered for inclusion in an edited book volume.

Call for Papers: Gender and Methodology Stream

Gender, Work and Organization
4th International Interdisciplinary Conference, 22-24th June 2005

Research as a social practice is, after Gherardi, a gendered process. Research methodology in organization studies has only recently begun to explore the gendered dimensions of the adoption of different research approaches, paradigms, and methods and to consider how men and women do research differently. This stream offers a forum for those interested in exploring any aspect of research methodology in relation to gender, work and organization – which may include the philosophical underpinnings of research methodology (such as gendered rationality); the gendered nature of the research process (such as linearity); the gendered implications for research methods (such as reflexivity) and how gender influences the ways we write (such as feminine or non-*author*ial writing) or may construct research accounts outside writing. The stream will enable researchers to explore any ontological, epistemological, political, ethical and methodological aspects of doing gender research. Contributions are welcome on how [gendered] epistemologies inform theory; the theoretical perspectives which organise methodology and the tensions between the two; what gendered methodologies govern our professional behaviour and use of methods. Often our research attempts to give voice to individuals which unknowingly reinforce the dominant, phallogocentric research paradigms, methodologies and methods which warrant gendered knowledges of work and organizing. Is it possible, to borrow from Wajcman, not to "research like a man" or is the masculine still the unacknowledged *lingua franca* of organization studies? Although this list is not exhaustive we welcome papers from across the social science disciplines, especially new researchers addressing methodological issues, in the following areas:

Philosophy in qualitative and quantitative research
Gendering "science"
Gender and actor-networks in the research process
Self and other in the research process
Voice, authenticity, accounts and accounting practices
Ethics in/of research & gender
The influence of audiences on gender research
Issues of representation

The gendered nature of the research process
How gender influences data collection, analysis, writing, research training
Gendered tensions between different methods/approaches
Reflexivity
Validity
Narrative, Storying
Cultural differences & methodology
Gender in researching technological change, new organizational forms and virtuality

Stream Leaders: Prof. Barbara Czarniawska (Gothenburg University, Sweden)
                    Dr. Alison Linstead (University of Durham, UK)

Please send abstracts of approximately 500-750 words (excluding any references) by **30th November 2004**. Prospective contributions will be independently refereed. Please EMAIL a copy of your abstract to Alison at alison.linstead@durham.ac.uk. Abstracts should include FULL contact details, including your name, institutional affiliation, mailing address, telephone number and email address. A special issue from the stream will be forthcoming and there will be other possible publishing opportunities.

Studying Leadership: 3rd International Workshop

Leadership Refrains:
Encounters, Conversations and Enchantments

Centre for Leadership Studies
University of Exeter, UK
15-16 December 2004

In December 2003 Yiannis Gabriel opened *Studying Leadership: the 2nd International Workshop* with an appeal to broaden the ground of leadership's active research base. His contention is that leadership studies have become extremely paradigmatic – there is simply too much agreement! He particularly drew attention to the possibility of shaking off the orthodoxy of the 'leader in the mind', of holding open the space between what we *experience* in our encounters with leadership, and the *explanations* that we offer ourselves. By delaying leadership in its symbolic space for a time, this workshop aims to create a place for enchanting encounters and conversations.

Leadership Refrains seeks to support conversations between different perspectives around common themes and so rehabilitate our enchantment with the experience of leadership. It seeks to foster the entry of new perspectives, reveal the lines of possible consonance, and thereby create important counterpoints for leadership studies. To do this it strikes a chord with philosophy, political theory, economics, sociology, anthropology and theology, in order to balance insights from the more obvious meters of psychology and business studies, which have dominated the leadership field in recent years.

This trans-disciplinary workshop will be valuable to those studying leadership, those affected by or responsible for improving leadership, or those designated 'leaders' in U.K. and international institutions. We invite papers on any areas of leadership that challenge the worlds of theory and practice to re-examine and revise their strategic and operational presuppositions.

Themes

Possible sites of enchantment today include:
- the power and importance of mimesis, impersonation and copying to personal and organisational leadership and the fundamental 'repeatability' of representations: the contemporary corporate world and the nomenclature of 'leadership', vision-' and 'mission-statements' as would-be points of return;
- the obvious comforting effect of the refrain to repeat, return, renew, react, refine, reconstruct, resolve, etc., ensuring adequate continuity in individual, organisational and community identity in times of change;
- and the calm-inducing powers of secular devices such as the leadership mantras issued by corporate gurus.

We could also explore:
- the place of emotional intelligence, competency frameworks, and other constructs of personality and individuality that express a much deeper desire for meaning, understanding and personal attachment;
- education and development strategies where these serve the function of 'meeting spaces' for a form of engagement that instils repeatable habits of behaviour, self-discipline or procedures.

A further effect of the refrain is to question:
- why the personality characteristics of leaders are often listed as if to establish a set of differences;
- why some of these differences fill followers with longing, desire, and envy that in turn require regulation, control, denial, exclusion;
- alternatively, why such differences require sublimation and catharsis;
- or, again, the function of these differences in sustaining contemporary modes of production;
- and how, by focussing on the figure of the leader, we might be colluding in these extant power relations, and thus singing another round of the refrain.

We might also conjecture:
- how a more positive emanation, not oriented toward a location of sameness or individualistic 'essence' , points to leadership's essential movement, as a 'process' of difference, alive with movement and change, constantly being formed and reformed;
- why we can become disenchanted with ideals once held or heroes once admired, leading to certain contemporary forms of resistance and anti-leadership;
- and how new ways of thinking about leadership, at work through often dissonant movements, deconstruct the refrain as a breakaway.

Abstracts and Paper Submission Details

Authors are requested to submit an abstract of no more than 500 words by 1st September 2004. Decisions on acceptance will be made within six weeks. Final drafts of paper should be submitted by November 15th Please submit abstracts as email attachments, in word format wherever possible, to **Deborah Williamson** at leadership@exeter.ac.uk , or at the Centre for Leadership Studies, University of Exeter, Crossmead, Barley Lane, Exeter, EX4 1TF.

Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility 2004
21-23 November 2004
Penang, Malaysia

hosted by
Ansted University

Call for Papers
The second annual conference will be hosted by Ansted University. The conference will take place in Penang, Malaysia during 3-5 December 2004. As usual the conference is intended to be interdisciplinary and welcomes contributions from anyone who has a perspective on this important issue. Papers are welcome on any topic related to this broad issue and suggested themes for papers include:
- Environmental auditing
- Ethics and corporate behaviour
- Globalisation and corporate activity
- Governmental influences on corporate behaviour
- The influence of taxation upon corporate behaviour
- Protests concerning corporate activity
- Regulation of corporate social behaviour
- Social responsibility and marketing
- Stakeholder activism
- The role of accounting in corporate accountability
- The role of corporate governance

Offers to run workshops, symposia, poster sessions. themed tracks or alternative events are especially welcome. Please contact David Crowther (davideacrowther@aol.com) with suggestions.

Abstracts of 500-1,000 words should be sent by 1st July 2004 (preferably by email to davideacrowther@aol.com) or by post to Professor David Crowther, Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility, London Metropolitan University, Stapleton House, 277-281 Holloway Rd, London N7 8HN, UK.

Full details of this and future conferences can be found on the conference website:
www.davideacrowther.com/csrhome.html
We look forward to welcoming you to Penang in 2004.

Roger Haw	David Crowther
Organising Chair	Chair of Scientific Committee
Founding President	Professor of Corporate Social Responsibility
Ansted University	London Metropolitan University
Malaysia	UK
bnhaw@tm.net.my	davideacrowther@aol.com

TAMARA
Special issue call for papers
Corporate social responsibility, stakeholder activism and the role of protest

Edited by David Crowther, London Metropolitan University, UK & Dian Marie Hosking, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Over the last decade the question of the relationship between organisations and society has been subject to much debate, often of a critical nature. The decade has seen protests concerning the actions of organisations, exposures of corporate exploitation and unfolding accounting scandals. At the same time ethical behaviour and a concern for people and the environment have been shown to have a positive correlation with corporate performance. The nature of corporate social responsibility is therefore a topical one for business and academics.

Increasingly stakeholders are showing the discontent with the actions of corporations and are deciding to take action to express their opposition to the status quo. In this issue we want to explore the relationship between corporations and their various stakeholders in the context of socially responsible behaviour – or its absence. In doing so we wish to further the theorisation of these issues and further the discourse of critical postmodern critique.

Papers are invited which address the theme of this issue. Possible aspects include:

- Ethics and corporate behaviour
- Pressure groups and direct action
- Corruption amongst elites
- Human rights and corporate activity
- Media representations of activism
- Employee activism
- Trust and legitimacy
- Injustice and oppression
- Globalisation and corporate [mis]behaviour
- Protests concerning corporate activity
- Stakeholder activism
- Challenging the role of corporate governance

All papers will be subject to normal refereeing process. Authors wishing to discuss their paper prior to submission may contact either of the Special Issue guest editors. The deadline for submission of papers is **31 March 2005** but earlier submissions are encouraged. Authors should submit their manuscripts electronically (in word or word perfect format) to David.

David Crowther
London Metropolitan University
UK
davideacrowther@aol.com

Dian Marie Hosking
Utrecht University
The Netherlands

Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility 2005
23-25 February 2005
Udaipur, Rajastan, India

The third conference in this series will be hosted by Mohan Lal Sukhadia University. The conference will take place in Udaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Call for Papers

As usual the conference is intended to be interdisciplinary and welcomes contributions from anyone who has a perspective on this important issue. Papers are welcome on any topic related to this broad issue and suggested themes for papers include:

- Environmental auditing
- Ethics and corporate behaviour
- Globalisation and corporate activity
- Governmental influences on corporate behaviour
- The influence of taxation upon corporate behaviour
- Protests concerning corporate activity
- CSR in the Insurance Sector
- CSR in the Banking Sector
- Regulation of corporate social behaviour
- Social responsibility and marketing
- Stakeholder activism
- The role of accounting in corporate accountability
- The role of corporate governance

Offers to run workshops, symposia, poster sessions. themed tracks or alternative events are especially welcome. Please contact David Crowther with suggestions.

Abstracts of 500-1,000 words should be sent by 30th November 2004 (preferably by email to David Crowther) or by post to Professor David Crowther, Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility, London Metropolitan University, Stapleton House, 277-281 Holloway Rd, London N7 8HN, UK.
Full and updated details can be found at the conference website: www.davideacrowther.com/udaipurhome.html

Renu Jatana
Head of Department
College of Commerce & Mgt Studies
Mohan Lal Sukhadia University
(email renu_jatana@yahoo.co.in)

David Crowther
Professor of Corporate Social Responsibility
London Metropolitan University
(email: davideacrowther@aol.com)

Australasian Caucus of the Standing Committee on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS)
Inaugural Colloquium
Boundaries, Bounded, Unbounded:
Positions in Organisation Studies.
2nd. – 3rd. December 2004.
University of Queensland,
Brisbane
Queensland 4072

Bob Westwood
UQ Business School, University of Queensland
Carl Rhodes,
University of Technology Sydney
Loong Wong
University of Newcastle

We invite papers that explore the boundaries of organization studies, particularly as they relate to the Australasian context. The papers may address, but are not limited to, the following topics and questions:

National Boundaries
The first topic is concerned with the national boundaries of Australasian countries as they relate to the intellectual possibilities of organization studies conducted outside of the US and Europe. Questions include:
- What is the present state and status of management and organization studies (OAMS) in Australasia?
- Does Australasian OAMS enjoy a position of marginality and if so what is the nature and consequence of that?
- Does our location (historical, cultural, geographical, symbolically) provide any ground for a distinctive, critical OAMS?
- Does OAMS participate in a neo-colonial project – fostering and extending a monolithic, modern, homogenizing, socio-cultural economy emanating from the elite economies and seducing, appropriating or marginalizing others, or:
- Is Australasian OAMS uniquely placed to construct a postcolonial or other radicalized critique of OAMS as constituted by the dominant orthodoxy.

Organizational Boundaries
The second topic concerns the boundary of organizations themselves. As a starting point such boundaries are problematised, for example, by Cooper's (1990) demonstration of the reliance of organization on disorganization, or Chia's (2003) ontological reflections on organization as a process and a verb rather than a 'thing' and a noun. Relevant questions for the colloquium are:
- What is the ontological status of organization, and does it make sense to conceive of organizations not as entities but as process(es)?
- How can we problematise organizations as bounded entities and/or critically reflect on organizations relationship with any kind of externality or non-organization?
- What are the significances of running along the edge – what is the edge – and what happens in the folds betwixt and between?
- Is it meaningful to talk of, in a non-trivial way, the boundaryless organization or is that part of the rhetoric of contemporary capitalism and its desperate search for increasing flexibility?
- What are the relationship between cultural boundaries and the boundaries of organizations?

Bounded Selves
The final set of issues we would like participants to reflect upon is the boundaries, boundary and unbounded nature of selves and identities. The postmodern has railed against the logocentric fallacy and the valorization of a philosophy of presence, it has alerted us to the fragmented and fragmentary nature of identities and problematised the self, it has pointed to not persons but subject positions and noted their embeddedness in discourse and in knowledge-power matrices. What does this mean for the study of management and for explanations of action in organizations? Questions might include:
- In the growing interest in identity and subjectivity in organization studies, is location considered as relevant and how so?

- Do we, as academics and/or as organization members in Australasia, occupy distinctive subject positions, and what does that imply?
- What is the relation of Australasians to its Other, and who are those Others. What practices of alterity do we engage in and with what consequences?
- How do we write ourselves into our accounts of OAMS from our locations and subject positions?
- In our research and writing practice how do we construct, represent and/or appropriate the identities and subject positions of others and with what consequences?

Guidelines for Submission

Two forms of submission are invited for the conference: abstracts of up to 800 words or full papers of up to 7,000 words.

Full Papers: Full papers will be independently peer reviewed in accordance with the DEST guidelines. Accepted papers will be published in conference proceedings. Selected papers will be considered for a special issue of *Culture and Organisation.*
Abstracts: Abstracts will be peer reviewed, and made available to delegates prior to the colloquium.

Papers or abstracts should be submitted to Bob Westwood at mailto:b.westwood@business.uq.edu.au by 1 September 2004. Notification of acceptance will occur prior to 19 October 2004.

Venue

The colloquium is being hosted by the University of Queensland Business School and will be held at the University's St. Lucia Campus in Brisbane.

Fees and registration

The full fee for attending the colloquium is A$110. This includes all conference materials, refreshments, lunches and a dinner on 2nd. December. To participate in the colloquium, fees must be received by 19th. November 2004,

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Critical Management Studies 4 (Cambridge)   Forswink/Forswunk stream call

CONVENORS
Norman Jackson, The Management Centre, University of Leicester, UK
Email: carterjackson@carterjackson.karoo.co.uk
Pippa Carter; The Management Centre, University of Leicester, UK
Email: carterjackson@carterjackson.karoo.co.uk
Peter Pelzer, Independent Consultant, Frankfurt, Germany
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Marianne Afanassieva, The Business School, University of Hull, UK
Email:M.Afanassieva@hull.ac.uk
Gianluca Andresani, The Business School, University of Hull
Email: G.Andresani@hull.ac.uk
Shi-Wei (Bill) Hsu, School of Management, University of Newcastle,
Email: bill197112@yahoo.com.tw

Stream Description

These words mean, respectively, 'to exhaust by labour' and 'overworked'. They originate from the 13th century but are still extant and there is even a web address at forswunk. Overwork, it seems, is not a new problem but it is a problem that remains.

CMS has flourished as a scholarly activity for more than 2 decades, yet what has been its impact on practice? Arguably, the more critique there is, the worse 'organisations' become. Is there a 'paralysis of analysis'? Should we be turning our attention to prescription? This stream seeks to explore the issues raised by these questions.

Prescription is, of course, a very thorny issue. How do we go about prescribing? What is the role of the knowledge producer? How should knowledge claims be assessed? How is legitimacy established? What areas can, or should, prescription address? What are the risks, and what the prizes? Who should be the beneficiaries? These are big questions!

Our primary interest is in developing the idea of what we call 'labour extensification'. We are taking our usage from agriculture, where it is well understood that there are benefits to be gained by **deliberately reducing** the productivity of resources **below** what is theoretically possible (as opposed to Marx's usage, which refers to increasing labour exploitation). If this is desirable for land and animals when considered as resources, is it not extensible generally to 'the human resource'? What might be the costs and benefits? How might such extensification be achieved? There is no doubt that there are many well-documented costs arising from the problem of overwork, but, in the current state of (the critique of) organisational and managerial activity, where are the mechanisms that would enable an organic, evolutionary solution to the problems of overwork to emerge? Are there any? Given that it is known what the problem is, and its effects, not only are solutions lacking, but the constant mantra is that we should all work harder. So perhaps it is time for critical management studies to develop a more openly prescriptive approach.

However, overwork is obviously not the only issue that might be addressed by a prescriptive approach. Nor are the questions about the very possibility of prescription resolved. How and about what one might be prescriptive may differ from one discipline to another. What seems to be a solution from one perspective may itself seem to be a problem from another. The problems, and the solutions, may, or may not, vary across different global locations. We would particularly welcome contributions from a range of disciplines.

Call for Papers

We invite papers that engage with one or more of the following areas:

- **labour extensification** (which could include costs/benefits, arguments for and/or against, possible forms and mechanisms, potential sources of resistance, desirability, issues arising at, e.g., personal, organisational, social, global, etc., levels of analysis, etc.).
- **prescription** (which could include hows, whys, whos, about whats, arguments for and/or against, already existing examples, to whom prescription is and/or should be addressed, paradoxes of prescription, ethics of prescription, etc.).
- **implications of (prescription about) overwork from perspectives other than organisation theory** (which could include economics, ethics, development studies, production management, IT, finance, occupational health, gender, culture, etc., also studies based on the particular conditions in a geographic area, etc.).
- **applicability of prescription to other aspects of organisation** (which could include areas which are already prescriptive, areas which might benefit from a prescriptive approach, paradoxes of prescription, ethics of prescription, etc.).

These examples are intended merely to indicate possibilities, and papers addressing other aspects of the issues are also welcome.

Call for papers
A special issue of *Culture and Organization*

Organizational Wellness

Guest editors: Gavin Jack (University of Leicester) and Jo Brewis (University of Essex)

Wellness seems in many ways to be the zeitgeist of our age. The most cursory of online searches throws up thousands of references to wellness councils, foundations, centres, institutes (etcetera etcetera etcetera) – all of which speak of a contemporary preoccupation with fitness, goodness, beauty, mental stability, health, happiness and hygiene. Work that body, tell me about your childhood, crunch those abs, flex those pecs, lose a dress size, discover your inner God/ dess, get buffed, get ripped, get a six-pack, get some therapy, get a boob job, get a life … the exhortation to BE WELL (and not sick, overweight, unhealthy, unfit, unstable, unhappy, unattractive, unclean) echoes across (post)modernity.

We invite contributions to this special issue which might explore one or more of the following areas of organizational wellness:

- *aesthetics, ethics and spirituality:* the architecture, artistry and artefacts of organizations; the workplace as a sensory experience; caring for the self in an organizational context; ethical codes and lived moralities in organizations; the erotic and the fantasmic nature of organizing and organizations.
- *bodily interventions and interrogations:* drug and alcohol testing at work; the regulation of the employee's physical body – eg grooming and weight checks, dress codes and uniforms and how they are interpreted and lived out; attempts to ensure an able-bodied, fully sighted, sentient organization.
- *boundaries, borders and balance*: the benefits and disadvantages of insider/ outsider status in organizations; the interface between `home' and `work'; `having it all' and its gender implications.
- *corporate citizenship and social responsibility*: truth telling and whistle-blowing; organizational stakeholders, rhetoric and reality in CSR; global carrying capacity, sustainable development and the `triple bottom line' (economic, social and environmental considerations and concerns); human rights and social in/justice.
- *crises and disasters:* blame finding and the social construction of accountability at work; the reportage and reception of organizational `incidents' in the wider social context.
- *death, disease and contamination*: occupational symptomatologies and syndromes; health and safety at work; organizational cannibalism; the permeability of organizational boundaries – invasions and infections like the Lovebug virus and Legionnaire's Disease, emissions and contaminations like greenhouse gasses and toxic waste.
- *fitting in:* the continuum between the organizational melting pot and `diversity management'; the symbolism of workplace difference; having the right credentials and plays of acceptability versus suitability; being `well behaved' and 'playing the organizational game'.
- *organizational lifecycles*: organizational births and deaths; buoyant and stagnant organizations; models of organizational wellness and illness, of performance, prosperity and decline.
- *self, other and community:* organizational identity work, alterity and narcissism; workplace story-telling and narratives of goodness/ wellness; organizational heroes and villains, survivors, scapegoats, victims and champions.
- *selling well-being:* the marketing of products and services by the slimming industry, the exercise industry, the organic food industry, the cosmetics industry, the therapy industry (alternative and otherwise); commodifying and consuming wellness lifestyles.
- *subjectivity, surveillance and resistance:* organizational efforts to maintain certain forms of wellness at work – encouraging employees to be fitter and happier in order that this translates into harder,

faster and smarter ways of working; the distinction between workplace fitness and workplace wellness.

- *violence, bullying and harassment:* occupational di/stress; grievances at work; the role of trade unions in promoting organizational wellness.
- *wellness in the academy:* turning the lens back on ourselves and our practices in teaching and research; the relationship between what we say about other organizations and what we do in our own; critique, collegiality and careerism; impostor syndrome; cultures of individual indispensability; reflective academic practice.

We welcome papers from any disciplinary, paradigmatic or methodological perspective as long as they directly address the theme of 'organizational wellness'. Papers should be compiled following the *Culture and Organization* house style, details of which can be found at http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/gscoauth.html, and should not exceed 8000 words.

Please submit your paper, as a Word 97 attachment if possible, by 1 August 2004 to Gavin Jack at the following address. We also welcome informal enquiries about the special issue:

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UK

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Jo Brewis moves to the University of Leicester from August

Edward Wray-Bliss takes up a post at University of Nottingham from July

Theo Vurdabakis moves to Lancaster University as Chair of Org Analysis

Going somewhere? Let everyone know!

Sight the citation...

Correctly identify the origin of this fine and dramatic opening statement to a classic sociological work and win your very own symbolic artefact…. No winners in the last issue, although Peter Case came the closest with his suggestion that the following quote came from Margaret Thatcher's autobiography!

"Social theorists today work within a crumbling social matrix of paralysed urban centers and battered campuses. Some may put cotton in their ears but their bodies still feel the shock waves. It is no exaggeration to say that we theorize today within the sound of guns. The old order has the picks of a hundred rebellion s thrust into its hide."

Unfortunately Peter it was of course the opening lines to 'The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology' by Alvin Gouldner…. Prizes roll over to this issue, so get your thinking caps on! Try and identify the following famous opening lines:

"Effective managers and professionals in all walks of life, whether they be business executives, public administrators, or organizational consultants, politicians, or trade unionists, have to become skilled in the art of "reading" the situations that they are attempting to organize or manage."

Correct answers will be drawn from the metaphorical hat on September 5th 2004 and winners published in the November edition of *Notework.*

Reviews

Desiring dissent: bodies and/ of/ in resistance
University of Essex, 5th-6th May 2004

In the very best traditions of compact and bijou but also intellectual stimulation and informality (very SCOSsy in fact, now we come to think of it), the Essex Management Centre welcomed 22 delegates from a variety of geographical locations (Brazil, Spain, Italy, the UK, the US, Greece, Germany and Sweden) and academic disciplines (anthropology, politics, international relations, organization studies, philosophy, literature and art theory) to discuss issues of the theory/ practice of dissent/ resistance and the implications for bodies, identities and subjectivities over a busy twenty four hours in early May.

The organizers - Steffen Bohm, Olga Belova and Jo Brewis - divided the papers into three streams. Firstly, discussion in `Conceptualizing dissent and the intellectual' centred on how we might understand resistance and dissent, what constitutes 'effective' resistance and how the role of the intellectual might be conceptualized in this regard. Secondly, `Capitalist productions: hegemonies and resistances' took as its key themes the possibilities and conditions of opposition to capitalism, and the extent to which such opposition can be said to vary from locality to locality. Finally, the contributors to 'Sexes, genders, ethnicities: bodies in/ of dissent' looked broadly speaking at the issue of identity politics, the ways in which gender, sexual and ethnic differences are mobilized (and potentially also co-opted) as a form of dissent, as well as exploring the implications of such resistances/ co-optations. Debate was lively in all three streams despite the (as ever) limited time available for presentations and questions, and indeed continued over dinner - which for a good half of the delegates ended at around 5 am (again, a particularly SCOSsy feature of the event ...

A publication of some kind - probably a journal special issue – is planned as a result of the conference, and the organizers would like to thank the Essex Management Centre and the Department of Accounting, Finance and Management for their financial support, which enabled us to keep the fees down to a bare minimum. Oh, and the lunch on the second day was fab ...

Anderson, S. C., Tabb, B. H. (eds.) *Water, Leisure and Culture : European Historical Perspectives.* Oxford : Berg. £14.99, 256pp.
by
G. Coates
University of Leicester.

Water, Leisure and Culture is a very interesting book. It examines the myriad ways of delighting in water and the cultural meanings therein. The sixteen contributions take us through spa towns, ice skating, to saunas and through economic, political and environmental issues involved in the enjoyment of water.

Within the book a number of perspectives present water as class based, as communal social experience. The second section uses work from art historians and landscape architects to focus on the role of water in transforming social and political perceptions of Europe. The final section focuses on water as a marketable product.

I found each chapter easy to read and engaging in a way history should be, but at the same time I learnt how 'water figures in notions of hygiene, health, the sacred, and sublime' and how this constructs leisure experience. Water is viewed as a means of shared leisure experiences which are spiritually gratifying. The use of water has helped forge bonds between people whose paths would not otherwise have crossed. Jill Steward specifically makes reference to the flirtatiousness of mingling with the 'lower orders' in spa towns – much like 18-30 holidays today.

Despite the multi-disciplinary and national focus, I found that the editors had pulled these different strands together into a coherent argument for the historical development of water in European society.

This volume thus presents both a multitude of meanings ascribed to water and leisure in Europe as well as a variety of 'European' and 'American' approaches to European cultural history.

We learn that Europeans bathed in mineral waters in the belief that they could cure disease or improve fertility - providing an aura of sacredness, drawing pilgrims to visit for both spiritual and physical regeneration. Then spas were built around the waters reserved for the wealthy travellers (Walton). This market for health

was constructed around Enlightenment ideas (Blackboum) such as health clubs today (Steward). This view of water sees Europeans interconnected through a medical, philosophical, social and religious discourse.

Water can also construct a national identity such as ice in Holland. Here ice skating had a democratising function refuting elitist attempts to create exclusive skating rinks based on class or gender differences (Fumeé). Such was the national identity and stereotype of the Finnish sauna tradition (Leimu).

The 19th century design of the environment for water also contains political tensions, which contain 'possess an ideological dimension affecting notions of political affiliation'. Art and literature reflected and propagated ideas about the English and Swedish seaside as symbol of freedom (Payne)(Facos).

All this use of water requires an industry to market and exploit it; hotels, restaurants, rental equipment, swimwear, etc. Water has become a recreational commodity to be marketed, advertised and sold. Holidays appear disconnected from the realm of work only under the careful supervision and planning of the tourist industry, and the success of tourism threatens, through pollution and overcrowding, the natural assets that attract tourists in the first place (Marinov and Koulov). This tourism also prices residents out of the market for water leisure experiences (Vodenska) and causes pollution (Battilani). In this class has reasserted itself as holidaying furthest from pollution is a factor of wealth.

Water, Leisure and Culture is a fascinating book illustrating the lack of a single European concept of recreational water. However, this is not a problem because we can see how water is intimately linked to culture, region, ideology, etc., which discloses ways of thinking and living in specific places and times. These explanations allude to broader changes in European society displaying facets of the 'fluctuating, interactive relationships of people, cultural discourses and marketing practices that comprise modern Europe'.

Crossing Frontiers in Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methods – An International Conference co-sponsored by Institue de Socio Economique d'Organization Recherche (ISEOR)
by
Pete Elsmore
University of Lincoln, UK

Went to a fun conference in Lyon, on research methods, last month (how worthy!) I think that British teenagers might call it "very fun" – if they thought that it was. I did. Anyway, bumped into a large number of scossers there … that made it all the better. Steve Linstead gave us what 'qualitative people' reckoned was easily the best and most inspiring plenary presentation … about Euan McColl as ethnographer. (Sorry Steve, but how could I do justice to what you said in so few words!?) Steve's presentation came with all the whistles and bells and was an excellent antidote to some other material. David Boje (presently working on Bakhtin and the grotesque) and Hugo Letiche (on complexity) made an interesting Saturday morning early session … Foodies weren't disappointed in my view, in Lyon, either … we got to eat at Paul Bocose (the geezer who trained Anton Mossiman and several score other rated chefs).

***ephemera* reviews:**   **a review**

Entry:	<mark>review</mark>
Function:	verb
Definition:	criticize
Synonyms:	assess, discuss, evaluate, examine, inspect, judge, knock, lay out, needle, pan, put down, rap, rave, re-edit, read through, revise, rip, scrutinize, skin alive, slam, study, swipe at, take down, weigh up, zap, zing
Concept:	criticizing

(adapted from http://www.dictionary.com)

ephemera is at the sharp margins of academic life: organised by young enthusiastic scholars engaged in the publication of high-quality, peer-reviewed articles that challenge and provoke. In keeping with the spirit of the journal, as a forum for political and theoretically informed dialogues on organization, the review editors of *ephemera* invite contributions that dissect and reassemble, 'zap and zing' their subject matter in a way that goes beyond the traditional academic 're-view'.

We publish pieces from 1000 – 5000 words on anything from classical works of literary greatness to contemporary motifs of popular culture, novels, film, current events, music, sport, the arts, food and anything else of contemporary "organizational" concern – however broadly or narrowly defined.

Instead of a short summary stitched together with a smattering of critical opinion, we encourage 'parasitic' reviews that feed from their hosts to grow into something new, separate… different. In short, *ephemera* reviewers use their subjects as springboards from which to explore and critique broader, more far-reaching debates that intersect with the object-text-artefact-event-motif-? under review.

Articles should be theoretically informed and fully referenced, submitted in Word format, however the electronic nature of the journal means it is also possible for us to include multi-media, sound files and image-based submissions. Please e-mail your contribution to the ephemera review editors:

André Spicer   andre.spicer@wbs.ac.uk
Sam Warren   sam.warren@port.ac.uk

Full instructions to authors and published reviews are available to browse at www.ephemeraweb.org

Hope you've enjoyed this edition of Notework. Given the short time frame we've had to put this baby to bed (yeah, right!!) rest you can be assured this issue continues to be the flavour of things to come!

Send us your comments, articles, news and views (not forgetting your competition entries!) at Notework HQ (a decentralised hive of editorial effervescence...)

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... that's all folks

NOTES to Hugh Willmott's paper

[i] All unascribed page numbers refer to the article 'Strength is Ignorance; Slavery is Freedom': Hereafter this article is identified as 'Strength'.

[ii] As organizers of the Labour Process Conferences, David Knights and I were interested in promoting and advancing the development of analyses that challenged mainstream thinking and established forms of management practice. At that time, Braverman's Labor and Monopoly Capital (1974) had been published to critical acclaim, and labour process analysis offered a fresh and challenging alternative to the orthodoxy of functionalism and contingency theory. So the choice of conference title was somewhat opportunistic as, prior to its establishment, neither of us had a deep acquaintance with the literature – Andrew Friedman Tony Elger, Craig Littler, Anna Pollert and Paul Thompson were amongst the leading non-US contributors to the emergent debate in which the nature of management control was a major area of investigation.

[iii] The events, which incorporated `happenings' as well as more traditional papers - were exceptionally well presented and highly enjoyable. when avoiding more experimentalism and/or pretentiousness they were culturally as well as intellectually challenging in a way that sought to engage the body as well as the mind.