

# Museletter of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism

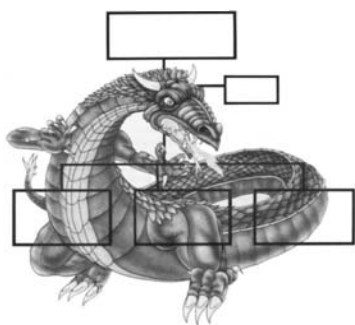


## *Notework*

November 2007

*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.*

## Just in Case you didn't Jo...



Hello again to all our avid readers and a special hello to those who read us out of duty and/or pity. *Notework*, as you know, is for you all!

Just before we embark upon another epic/apathetic journey, we would first of all like to raise a glass to **Peter Case** as his term as SCOS Chair comes to an end. We will miss his Notes from the Chair and the great verve and enthusiasm with which we has steered our modest organisation for the past five years. His hard work has made SCOS a shining light in the calendar of many academics and we will miss him terribly.

Ushering in a new age, we say a big welcome and hello to **Jo Brewis** of the University of Leicester! As many readers of *Notework* will already be well aware, Jo is a veritable SCOS veteran, having been involved with the organisation, within a variety of capacities, since as far back as 1993! We wish her the very best in her term and eagerly anticipate whatever lies in store for us all during her tenure.

Yes indeed - SCOS has become a veritable case study for the change management textbook!

SCOS is maturing, no longer in its early twenties - it enters a second quarter of a century of organising conferences and associated events. Peter therefore reflects upon his term as Chair and upon the organisation's prospects for the future. Jo, taking up the reins, assumes Peter's task of prospecting upon our behalf. This edition of *Notework* commences, suitably, with a set of **Notes from the Chair(s)**: terminal from Peter, inaugural from Jo.

Otherwise, it is our pleasure to introduce a brand new feature to *Notework*, our very own sizzling debate section: **Note-wok**. This time out, we take Bent Meier Sørensen's plenary address at SCOS 2007 as our point of departure. We publish the text of Bent's presentation, followed by four responses to the presentation, which Bent then responds to in turn. We hope this feature will set the tone for a more regular debate section within *Notework*. Next time out: **Culture & Organization and the role of journal ranking**. Contact us for more information!

For SCOS 2008 we will be gracing the beautiful urbanity of Manchester and reflecting on the glory of **The City**. We include the call for papers in this issue. Whet your appetite for more at <http://www.scos.org/2008/>. Again on the more official side of things, we include the **board minutes** of our April 2007 meeting in Madrid within this issue.

**The Musery** finds Daniel King giving us another insight into **becoming a new academic**. This time Daniel turns his eye to the student/teacher dichotomy and considers a sort of identity

transition that many of us must undertake. Beatriz Acevedo-Robbins then treats us to another review of a recent exhibition at the **Tate Modern** and, given the fact that she has also joined us as the regional rep for South America, tells us about all things SCOS down her neck of the woods. We then take you, as always, on a trip around the world from Scandinavia to Australasia via mainland Europe with our **regional rep reports**.

From travel to the erotic, Zoe offers yet another tale from the field within which she subjects the topic of **crotch-less knickers, Marcel Mauss and academic practice** to critical interrogation. We close with a selection of what are quite arguably the greatest **calls and announcements** in the entire universe, of all time.

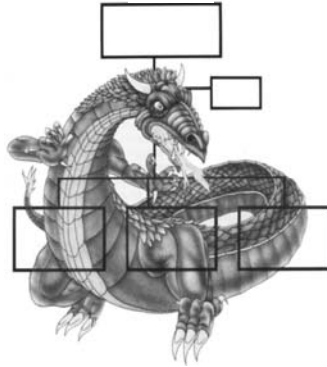
As editors we continue to express the opinions of the SCOS community. As such we would love to hear from any of you about issues facing yourselves as SCOSSers or more widely as academics in your respective countries.

Sheena and Stephen

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# 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(s)

Jo Brewis and Peter Case

Dear SCOS Friends,

Well, the time has come to step down as chair and say goodbye (*noises off*: a Greek Chorus laments or is it, perhaps, the Fates rejoicing?). It may sound somewhat clichéd, but it's been a genuine privilege to act as chair and I can honestly say that I've really enjoyed my five years at the helm. The tenure has not, of course, been without its occasional problems – SCOS would not be SCOS without the intellectual conflicts and political tensions that lend it vibrancy - but even in times of difficulty I never once seriously regretted being chair of this marvellous organization. I could turn all nostalgic at this point and wax lyrical about the past fifteen years of my involvement with SCOS but - you'll doubtless be pleased to hear - I'll spare you such indulgence. Suffice it to say that I think I leave the role with matters pretty well in hand. We've had a run of excellent conferences, a trend that looks set to continue with the Manchester SCOS next summer (thanks to the splendid efforts of Damian O'Doherty – conference organizer and new dad, to boot) and Malmo-Copenhagen in 2009 (to be run by David Crowther, Peter Elsmore and Annette Risberg). There are also some very promising ideas and possibilities for SCOS events from 2010 onwards, so we're set on a fair course, to pursue a tired nautical metaphor. (Didn't Nietzsche have something to say about dead metaphor? Maybe I should have paid more attention to it).

Over the past five years I've had the great privilege and pleasure of working with varying groups of committed and talented board members. It would be improper to single any of them out, but you each know who you are and how much I valued your support and wise counsel. As a consequence, I have forged friendships that will last a lifetime, or more.

Finally, I'm delighted to hand over the reins – Nietzsche eat your heart out - to Prof. Dame Josephine Brewis of Leicester University, and to wish her every success. As many of you will know, Jo has been involved with SCOS for many years and is an experienced board member having had a long spell as *Notework* co-editor and co-organizer of the highly successful 2003 Cambridge SCOS on the theme of 'Organizational Wellness'. Jo will slot right into the chairperson role and do an outstanding job, I'm sure.

I may be stepping down as chair but you don't get rid of me that easily. As of Sep 2007, I've taken up co-editorship of *Culture & Organization* and will remain on the SCOS board as an *ex officio* member. There's also a good chance that you'll see me at a future SCOS conference or two. Until we next meet,



Ex cathedra

Peter

Dear all

I am absolutely delighted and extremely honoured to be the new Chair of SCOS. And, if I am honest, more than a little daunted! I have been involved with SCOS since 1993, and the eclectic, creative, supportive, exciting, inspirational and usually downright bonkers group of people I have met (and continue to meet) as a result have been a central part of my development as an academic. Several of them have also become my closest friends. I genuinely feel that SCOS is unique in organization studies circles. Not only are we responsible for much of the work that has moved our discipline forward in the last 25 years or so, but we also really stand by our motto that research should constitute 'serious play'. This shines out of the pages of *Culture and Organization* and *Notework* and is also very visible at the conference - for me the only unmissable event in our packed OS calendar. I am also taking over at a wonderfully healthy point in SCOS history - to be sure we have had our ups and downs over the years, but at the moment we seem more robust than ever. This particular 'critical mass' (ha ha) looks set to go from strength to strength and I hope that I will be equal to the position of Chair for the next three years. I would also like to sincerely thank the Board for their faith in me, to congratulate Peter on a fantastic tenure as Chair and to ask everyone to let me know if there's anything you think we can do to make the organization even more vibrant and fabulous than it already is.

Big up the SCOS massive (etc.)!

Jo

# The City: Regenerating Management and Organization?

SCOS 2008  
Manchester Business School, The University of Manchester, UK

## A CALL FOR PAPERS

### Keynotes

- Professor Nigel Thrift, Warwick University, UK
- Professor Barbara Czarniawska, Göteborg University, Sweden
  - Philip Jeck, Sound artist

The city has become an obligatory reference in studies of management and organization. There are global-cities, postindustrial cities, dream cities, narcissistic cities, alphabet cities, and even messianicities, to name just a few. According to Baudelaire in the modern city the 'marvelous envelops and saturates us like the atmosphere', a lyrically intense dreamworld that for many remains suspended between imminent catastrophe and proliferating on-going repair and sprawl. 'Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else', Calvino writes in *Invisible Cities*. In terms of size and population, the concentration of productivity and wealth, cities have come to dominate the global economy. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century 10% of the world's population lived in cities; by 2000, an estimated 50%. In every hour Delhi grows by an addition of 47 people and Manila by 60; London acquires a rather more modest number of inhabitants growing by 12 individuals each year, whilst Moscow, by contrast, loses an average of 6 people every hour (Moriconi-Ebrard, 2000).

One typical approach is to treat the city as a context or a background, a space, a frame or place within which organization is formed. Factories, schools, banks, hospitals, the police force, churches, etc. might all be considered discrete organizations located in the space and time of a particular city. In cities people variously work, shop, walk, form 'encounters', interaction rituals, and seek what Goffman (1967) calls 'vicarious fatefulness', 'distraction', and 'killing time'. The city is also the site of the mob, the unruly mass, collective protest, barricades and the infamous massacre. It is at the heart of the 'society of the spectacle', and its street life a system of desire. On the other hand cities are not simply the space *within which* organizations are located – a simple background or frame; the city *is organization* – verb and noun. Like the arterial network of the human body, transportation systems regulate the movement of vehicles such bicycles, buses, cars, lorries, railroads, wheelchairs, and air-traffic. Road, rail, and footpaths are all specific 'organizations' in their own right, but crucially they also must inter-relate and interact in ways that allow cities to be 'organized'. Cities are literally traffic in motion – a complex, emergent and cyclical phenomena, a leviathan or doppelganger that seems to live and breathe a rhythm all of its own.

Context and text, subject and object, cause and effect, the city is a complex space and time within which to conceive, practice and possibly understand organization. What are the coming 'stories' of organization in the less sedentary times of the global airport city in which we travel without ever seeming to arrive, as we reside in the postmetropolis 'end of the city' (Soja), or dwell in the simulacra of cities that appear to roll up on themselves and take their leave from any shared sense of 'the social' or 'the real'? From Park Forest to South Park we can be sure that 'the city' continues to regenerate organization, but perhaps in ways that we are still waiting to discover.

Papers are invited that address the question of organization and city, and which may include the following:

- The City as Spectacle – a space of consumption, sport, leisure, entertainment, festivals, the shopping mall, 'fashionable cities'
- Organizations in the city – the brothel, hospital, hotels, prisons, dance-halls, clubs, 'street corner' societies, housing estates, skateboard parks
- The symbols and artefacts that allow the city to happen – traffic lights, street markings, lampposts, elevators, the subway, one-way streets, police officers, bouncers, taxis, rules and regulations
- 'Cities on the edge' – terrorism and the city, secret societies, secret agents, cabals, factions, plots and counter-plots that haunt as shades in modern cities
- The City as a space of 'encounters' and ritual interactions – enclaves and sub-cultures, dwell time, waiting, 'hanging-out'
- The Crowd and the multitude, the riotous mob, the unruly mass
- Temporary Autonomous Zones, Reclaim the Streets, the 'capture' of the city
- Alternative Geographies and mappings of Organization and the City
- Digital Cities, Information Cities, Imaginary Cities, Virtual communities, The Liquid City
- Alphabet Cities – The city as text, graffiti, tag lines, hieroglyphics, signs, ciphers, cryptograms, insignia ...
- Psycho-geographical mappings of the City – where characters move across real and imaginary cities to leave a trace of hidden letters and runes, a secret alphabet, or what Iain Sinclair (1996) calls a 'subterranean, preconscious text capable of divination and prophecy'.
- Studies of particular cities or comparative studies that treat the city as an example of organization – Athens, Rome, Cairo, Harare, Lagos, London, Paris, New York, Los Angeles, São Paulo, Buenos Aires, Istanbul, Baghdad, Persepolis, Mumbai, Delhi, Beijing, Tokyo ...
- Global, Postmodern Cities – the Cities of the Future
- Dream Cities or the nightmare City – accidents, waste, pollution, decay, violence, distress
- City Planning and the Organization of Urban Living
- Myths, Traditions and Histories that organize and disorganize cities
- The City as Action-Net – heterogeneous and interorganizational networks
- The Industrial and Post-Industrial Organization of Cities
- Tactile, the somatic, the olfactory, and other sensual dimensions of cities
- The city as a mapping of sex, desire, acoustic footprints ...

# Musings of a Board Secretary....

Sam Warren gives us the minutes of the SCOS Executive Board Meeting, Madrid, April 2007

Don't ever let it be said that your Board doesn't sweat and toil on your behalf... a good number of us attended the spring meeting of the SCOS executive board meeting at Universidad Carlos III, Madrid, Spain on Sat 21<sup>st</sup> April 2007 and apologies were regretfully tabled by the rest!

In a darkened room (there was no electricity!) and after agreeing the minutes of the previous meeting, Peter Case reported back on a number of completed Chair's actions including obtaining permission to reproduce the copyrighted 'dragon' image, confirmation and closure of the disciplinary matter from the Nijmegen conference and a change of board roles since the last meeting: Sheena Vachhani is now *Notework* editor along with Stephen Dunne and Rowland Curtis is our new UK rep – welcome to you all! We also discussed further the idea of including a subscription to C&O with the OzSCOS bi-annual conference and came up with more points to ponder, so this one looks set to run for a while yet...

Campbell Jones then filled us in on the latest details about the forthcoming conference in Ljubljana reporting that online registration was now open thanks to Alf's hard work on the website. The conference bag was unveiled and hailed as the most important part of the plans as usual and the board thanked Campbell and the ULSoM organizing committee for

doing such a good job under tight timescales.

Damian presented preliminary details for the 2008 conference in Manchester for discussion, including dates and the interesting call for papers. Peter Elsmore, Annette and Dave then followed with a novel proposal for 2009 – a conference split between two cities: Malmo and Copenhagen, with the theme of 'Bridge'. Various ideas were also floated for as far off as 2010 (!! ) which mostly involved exotic and sunny locations ☺.

Saara, as treasurer, reported that the accounts are healthy and we will be in a position to continue to fund bursaries, which is great news. Continuing the positive bent, Ann confirmed that SCOS now has approx. 860 members and an average of 4 new people are joining *every month* so we are definitely not losing our appeal as we age!

Upcoming election matters were discussed and the regional reps gave their reports of SCOSsy things in their necks of the global woods before Stephen and Sheena unveiled their plans for an incremental new look *Notework* over the coming months.

Finally, all things journal and website were discussed, with a fruitful and lengthy discussion sparked by the news from Heather and Bob (C&O's editors) that the journal had been ranked as a mere 1\* publication in the recent ABS rankings. Alf also reported plans to make the SCOS website more interactive with searchable content including back issues of Dragon and conference papers – an exciting and worthwhile development we hope you will agree.

As there was no other business and nowhere to get a drink or anything to eat, your poor tired and hungry board closed the meeting at 2pm to adjourn to the nearest tapas bar and recover from a gruelling morning's business.

## Your Current Board:

**Chair:** Jo Brewis (UK) **Meetings Secretary:** Annette Risberg (Denmark) **Secretary & Elections Officer:** Sam Warren (UK) **2008 Conference:** Manchester Business School represented by Damian O'Doherty (UK) **2009 Conference:** Peter Elsmore (UK), David Crowther (UK) & Annette Risberg (Denmark) **Membership Secretary:** Ann Rippin (UK) **Treasurer:** Saara Taalas (Finland) **Notework Editors:** Sheena Vachhani and Stephen Dunne (UK) **Web Officer:** Alf Rehn (Finland) **Journal Editors (C&O):** Peter Case (UK), Heather Höpfl (UK) **Regional representatives:** Peter Pelzer (Germany), Niina Kivinen (Nordic countries), Rowland Curtis (UK), Janet Sayers (New Zealand), David Bubna-Litic and Carl Rhodes (Australasia), Beatriz Acevedo-Robbins (South America) & Brenton Faber (North America).

# The Musery

*Struggling with a dual identity – exploring life as a student and lecturer.*

By Daniel King

I'm bored. It's a Wednesday afternoon and I'm bored. It's the sort of boredom where you want to kick something or indeed someone. I want to stamp around the room, throw chairs and shout and scream at the top of my voice "I don't care". I want to rip things up, get out of the room and slam the door on the way. I need to expel some of this anger that's overwhelming me. But I don't do any of this. Instead I sit there quietly, doodle in the corner of my pad; whisper to my neighbour; look longingly out of the window; send sly text messages; think about anything, anything but what I'm meant to.

Eventually I sink back in my chair and slowly the anger fades. I feel increasingly withdrawn and disinterested with what's going on in front of me. I pick at the corner of my pad, become fascinated by my nails, keep clicking my pen and drink from my long since cold cup of tea. Drifting in and out of awareness of what is passing before me the voice from the front sails over my head. Whilst the presenter is only a few metres in front of me he could be anywhere - I'm miles away.

I awake with a start. Some people on the next table who have been passing messages on to each other suddenly begin to laugh. Everyone looks round at them. They go red and pretend to pay attention again. It is a momentary relief but quickly I return to my stupor. I look around me. A few sitting at the front seem keen, carefully take notes, they laugh appropriately at the jokes. However, the body language of most others matches mine; crossed arms, closed in bodies, coughing, fidgeting and staring into the distance. They seem disinterested, unengaged, detached from what they are witnessing. The man at the front asks a question. The room fills with silence. A few people cough, some paper rattles, others divert their eyes away from his. More silence. Someone rather nervously asks him to repeat the question. He does. Still more silence. Another attempts to answer the question, seemingly more in hope that the painful silence can be dissipated than from a knowledge of the subject matter. Eventually an answer emerges that satisfies him, he continues talking. The clock moves slowly, oh so slowly towards 5 o'clock.

We break yet again into groups for another task. This time we are asked to discuss how we would get students in seminar groups to talk. My group looks up at the board with three suggestions on it. We are silent for some time and then, rather than doing this task, we start talking about what we did last night. The discussion seems to provide me an, albeit temporary, relief from the intensity of the session. I'm finding it hard to pay attention, let alone care. Our digression, however, is halted by our awareness that the lecturer is moving towards us; we start talking about the task. "What do you think?" I ask. "I don't know" someone replies, "I'm not really sure what we're meant to be doing". We pause and again stare blankly at the question on the board. "I think we're meant to be looking into which of these different tools we would use to enliven a session" he continues. We continue staring at the board with the three titles written on it. "All of them?" I suggest hesitantly. The others nod. "Yep I'd use all of them". Again we pause looking for inspiration. "Is that it then?" I ask. "I guess so" another responds. "But that's a stupid question" I interject. The agitation begins to return. I feel irritable and can feel the tension spread throughout my body. "We haven't even had a break in the last hour and a half and this goes directly against what he told us at the beginning of the session about the importance of having breaks every hour" I blurt out. A visceral sense of rage engulfs me. Like Edvard Munch's character in *The Scream* – I'm shouting but nobody can hear me. I revert to doodling on the corner of my pad.

The man at the front starts on yet another amusing anecdote, this time playing the role of a pompous medical lecturer. He strides across the room embodying the ostentatious characteristics one might expect of someone from that profession. He is obnoxious, arrogant and self-absorbed, it is a consummate performance. As this character he dismisses his students concerns, patronises them, talks across them using highfalutin language and a scornful air. He repeats the scenario but this time with a well meaning and engaged lecturer at the helm. He takes into account the student's experiences, listens to them and builds on their knowledge, encouraging input and their understandings.



The performance is well crafted taking considerable energy and skill, showing years of experience and ingenuity. In many respects an excellent example of how to make the lecture interesting as rather than being told differences between a good and bad lecturer it was there for us all to see. Yet, rather than being engaged I just want to curl up and die. The point feels laboured, obvious, and frustrating. The more energy he exerts the more restless and frustrated I feel. I want to shout "I KNOW ... I CAN SEE WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO SAY ... THIS IS OBVIOUS". I want to humiliate him, give him a taste of his own medicine, show him up, make him squirm, subject him to the torture I'm going through. But I don't. I sit and sulk at the back of the class.

Suddenly, almost on cue people start packing up. The voice from the front drones on but nobody is listening. Within minutes the room is cleared. As I leave the room I can feel the tension drain away. However I'm left with a series of questions. Why was I so frustrated and angry with the lesson, what happened to make me so withdrawn, and if I feel like this then is it any wonder undergraduate student engagement is such a big issue?

The lesson described above was part of my PGCHE, a compulsory course for newly appointed lecturers at UK universities. Led by a well-respected educationalist it was on a subject I am regularly preoccupied with – small group teaching. I was really looking forward to this session largely because I believe its subject matter is a challenge and particularly, given my new role lecturing OB to first year undergraduate students, these issues seem particularly pertinent. I had many things I wanted to talk about including how we get students to engage, talk and contribute and become interested in their subjects. Yet, despite this interest, during the session I became the embodiment of the problem the session was meant to be addressing – the disengaged student. I was sullen, withdrawn, frustrated and argumentative. At times I hated being in the class and refused to learn. This experience as a student has raised questions for my role as lecturer. I have begun to reflect on what this experience might mean.

I have begun to see that once we finish our formal education, either at degree or masters level, we begin to lose touch with what it is like to be a student. We tend to become comfortable with our roles as lecturers and spend less time considering the student experience. My dual identity as a newly appointed lecturer and a PGCHE student has thus set up an interesting juxtaposition. On the one hand I am seeking to find interesting and meaningful ways to engage with my students. On the other, however, during my PGCHE session I became the embodiment of this challenge. This has raised a number of questions I am struggling to resolve. If I, a keen and engaged student with a well known lecturer leading the session, became disengaged, then what hope do I have with my first year group? In short, what do my experiences as a student tell us about the challenges of student engagement? I have considered a number of different approaches to this question. I have asked experienced colleagues their views as to why I had the reaction I did and what I can learn for my own teaching.

One of the most regular approaches is to see this disengagement as a personal failing of the student. My disinterest could be analysed as a result of my failure to connect with the material presented. Often we take this line when thinking about our own students. We individualise their problems and dismiss their concerns by complaining that they do not do preparation, seem disinterested in the subject material and sit passively in class. We bemoan their lack of attention and care towards the subject and thus shift the blame from ourselves and our teaching methods to their issues. Certainly there are elements of truth in these criticisms, particularly at first year level, yet my experience questions the emphasis often put on this reason. I wanted to be engaged, was interested in the subject and came with good intentions. Yet quickly my attitudes shifted. As the session progressed, I became more frustrated with what I witnessed and thus increasingly became withdrawn. Within the space of three hours I became a disengaged student. The question is why?

The second line of reasoning that is often put forward is that the students are not interested in the subject because it has little relation to their lived experience. Therefore, if only we found hooks into their experience we could get them to engage again. Whilst in many circumstances this might often be the case, particularly for undergraduate business students, in the situation described above I was highly concerned by the challenges small group teaching represents and thus interested in the lesson. Indeed the subject matter meant that I should have been very engaged. But somehow this interest quickly transformed into annoyance, frustration and eventually apathy. Thus we need to look for other explanations.

The third perspective often put forward is to blame the lecturer. If we are enthusiastic and keen then it is often argued this will rub off on the students. Whilst this is obviously an important issue, in this incident I can categorically reject this. The lecturer was knowledgeable, interesting and engaging on his subject matter and enthusiastic in his teaching methods. He used many different approaches to get his point across, including drawing on his own research, presenting different scenarios and facilitating group discussions. Whilst again undoubtedly the role of the lecturer is important, my experience indicates that there are wider issues at stake here.

The final view often presented is that the feelings I experienced could be alleviated through technical fixes. This view often states that if we vary the activities students engage with, for instance breaking them into groups and changing the learning styles, then we can help students to become more engaged in the sessions. Much of the popular work on student engagement, for instance on learning styles, takes this approach. The underlying assumption is that if only we can find the right formula then we will be able to engage the students. Yet when I think back to this session many of these factors were included. We had "buzz groups" and class discussions, demonstrations as well as more traditional lecturing. Whilst I might have appreciated greater variety in the session it does not explain the visceral rage I felt. My sense of frustration and rage it seems cannot adequately be explained by my personal apathy, the disconnection of the subject matter from my experiences, or the quality of the lecturer. Neither can it be resolved by technical fixes such as variations in activities. Rather to understand these feelings we need to ask different questions.

As I seek to make sense of these experiences Paulo Freire's famous line "The teacher teaches and the student listens meekly" (1970) keeps coming to mind. Freire's work speaks to my condition as a student, in particular the frustration and anger I felt during the sessions.

This line is commonly associated with Freire's critique of what he calls the 'banking concept' of education which views students merely as empty vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge. In this formulation knowledge is treated as a commodity, which is passed on to students who unquestioningly record it for regurgitation in examinations – a messy and highly unsatisfying process! Even the most creative of the technical fixes fails to overcome the inherent imbalance of the student-teacher relationship. A lively and engaging lecturer and the use of 'buzz groups', auditory, kinaesthetic and visual forms of learning therefore does little to redress the inherent structural imbalance of the student-teacher relationship. Freire's work can thus make sense of the frustration, anger and eventual disengagement I felt. In my role as a student I was inherently passive, even when able to speak. This passivity arose, not because I could not speak, but rather because of the position I occupied as the repository of knowledge. As Freire goes on to say "the teacher chooses the program content, and the students (who were not consulted) adapt to it". Ultimately therefore, I, as a student, felt powerless and through that felt unengaged. The lecturer set the agenda, the material to be covered, and the knowledge I was meant to gain. My frustration thus arose because I was being talked at, because knowledge was forced into me, because he was imposing his will, agenda and perspective over me. The violence I felt could thus be seen as a manifestation of the structural inequalities I was subjected to. My frustration was born out of this powerlessness.

This realisation however, raises questions about my role as a lecturer. I have come to reflect that one of the reasons I enjoy my role as lecturer is because I have this feeling of power, of being able to control the session, introduce my ideas and work with my agenda. I enjoy the feeling of controlling a 250 strong lecture theatre, of giving them my version of management and being the centre of the classroom. I like the feelings that it gives me and the identity I can formulate through it. Through adopting this role as lecturer I have isolated myself from some of the struggles of the learning experience and the suffering of the students. Whilst I am introducing critical perspectives into the work, the manner I do it in is largely divorced from these struggles.

Becoming a student again has challenged my comfortable position as lecturer. By occupying this dual role I have come to appreciate the power-relations in which I sit and have come to question the roles and practices I occupy. Being a student again therefore offers vital lessons ... but not necessarily the ones intended.

Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Harmondsworth, Penguin.

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THE CRACK, THE CHAIRS AND THE TURBINE:  
TALES OF VIOLENCE  
Doris Salcedo's Shibboleth at the Tate Britain

By: Beatriz Acevedo



As the new installation in the Tate Modern's Turbine Hall opened to the public, the controversy about it has filled many pages of newspapers around the UK. Everybody is talking about it, and regardless of the judgement, it is clear that the Colombian artist Doris Salcedo<sup>1</sup> has opened a crack amongst the public and art critics / reviewers (!). The title of Salcedo's work is Shibboleth, which according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is 'a word used as a test for detecting people from another district or country by their pronunciation; a word or sound very difficult for foreigners to pronounce correctly.' As the written guide to the work states, the word 'shibboleth' refers back to an Old Testament story: 'The Book of Judges describes how the Ephraimites, attempting to flee across the river Jordan, were stopped by their enemies, The Gileadites. As their dialect did not include a 'sh' sound, those who could not say the word 'shibboleth' were captured and executed. A shibboleth is a token of power: the power to judge refuse and kill.'<sup>2</sup>

It may be possible to say that this is a grandiose word for a simple crack in the ground. Perhaps one of those funny 'art' things that comprise both the 'work' and its 'explanation', suitable only for the small number of illuminated minds that understand 'what art is'. However, by abandoning any prejudices, it is possible to allow yourself to be touched by what you see or feel. When entering the Tate Modern by the Turbine Hall, the official provides you with the black flyer, turned backside with a warning: "Please watch your step in the Turbine Hall". With an air of anticipation we made our way into the Tate Modern...

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<sup>1</sup> Doris Salcedo was born in 1958 in Bogotá, Colombia. She has become one of the most important sculptors of her generation. She studied at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia and New York University. Her exhibitions include New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, Istanbul Biennial, and San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. She lives and works in Bogotá.

<sup>2</sup> Tate Modern (2007) The Unilever Series: Doris Salcedo, Shibboleth. Text by Martin Herbert.

During the last seven years the Unilever Series at the Tate Modern has invited different artists to use the Turbine Hall as the setting for their works. The solutions have been quite creative: the memorable “Weather Project” (2003-2004) by Olafur Eliasson, the sound sculpture of Bruce Nauman’s Raw Material (2004-2005); and the steel towers by Louise Bourgeois (2000), amongst them. All of which have effectively met the challenge of working in this massive space. After a few months of closure the opening of the Turbine Hall was an eagerly awaited event. However, an initial look inside the Hall does not show any perceptible change.

Just a small fracture reveals something a bit odd, then the crack becomes a larger fissure crossing the 167 meters of the hall. It starts as a subtle line, which grows bigger, deeper, more menacing... like a wound that refuses to heal, a road with no return. The feeling is disturbing, yet a rational explanation does not come so quickly. Apart from the description provided by the guide about the artist’s purpose of reflecting issues about colonialism and post-colonialism, the spectator can form his or her own ideas. Moreover, the fissure itself is just one half of the artwork: it is completed with the interpretation of the viewer. People react in different ways. Some stay at the border contemplating the fissure; others, walk through the Turbine Hall trying to keep away from the growing crack; others –like myself- try to step over the fissure; people touch, crawl and walk... some in awe, some in disgust, some in bewilderment. The terrain is not stable... the imagery is disturbing: the crack does not imply immediate danger, yet it warns us about the cataclysms operating underground. Suspicion, fear, fundamentalism, terrorism: the fissure is growing.

In my opinion, Doris Salcedo has responded successfully to the challenge of the Turbine Hall, although her proposal is not a conventional one. Instead of filling the space the artist combines both the ‘emptiness’ and the spectator into the work. Indeed, the crack reveals the massive dimensions of the Hall and challenges the spectator into exploring that inner and social space in which differences emerge and fissures amongst people grow deeper.

Following some ideas regarding Tao’s influence in art, it is said that the background or empty space is as important as the central figures. For example, the porcelain bowl acquires its significance due to the space that is created inside: the hot tea that will fill it; the house is useful for the space under the roof and between the walls.<sup>3</sup> Perhaps I am just venturing my own explanation and the artist did not think about these issues. Nevertheless, this time it seems that Salcedo is revealing not only the crack, but what creates it: in the marriage of the apparently empty space of the Turbine Hall and the audience questioning “why is this an art work?” While trying to find any answer, it would be useful to read the explanation provided by the guide. It says that this work refers to the topics of colonialism and post-colonialism, and certain operations of power. Concepts such as otherness, power and difference come across as the keywords to understand the crack... Not yet satisfied? Then it is possible to adventure another interpretation in which the Colombian background of the artist can offer new avenues for understanding why *this* fracture.

Salcedo is a remarkable sculptor and her work reflects a coherent social and political commitment. The traces of violence left in empty spaces, furniture, doors or bricks, are part of her constant denouncing of the complex ways in which fear operates. In 1992 Salcedo shocked the world with her installation *Atrabiliarios* (Defiant) featuring women’s shoes, some belonging to victims of killings and abductions. In 2002 she lowered 280 chairs from the old Palace of Justice in Bogotá, in an attempt to denounce the events in the assault of the Palace of Justice in Bogotá in 1985.<sup>4</sup> After over twenty years, the wounds are still open; and although a new building replaced the Palace, Colombian history is still waiting for an explanation. The massacre represented a breaking point in the relationship between government,

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<sup>3</sup> See Racionero, L. (1986) *Textos de Estética Taoista*. Alianza Editorial. Madrid; Lin Yutang (1969) *The Chinese Theory of Art*, London, Panther Books.

<sup>4</sup> In the morning of November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1985, a group of urban guerrilla –called M-19- took the Palace of Building, demanding a process against the then President Betancourt, regarding the peace process failure. Tragically, the response of the government was excessive. Instead of pursuing conversations and the liberation of the abducted, the decision was to take the Palace by force. Military tanks entered to the Palace of Justice, destroyed the building in their aim of ‘liberating’ people inside... The events are not very clear: guns and bullets began to fly all over the place with the tragic death of 11 Magistrates, 33 guerrilla members, 32 civilians, and 11 people between soldiers and security agents. After the bloodshed, no responsible were held and nor explanations were provided. Chaos and confusion reigned and many questions remain unanswered: Why did the army get into the building shooting blood and fire? Who took the final decision? What was the role of the President? What happened with 11 people including member of staff whose corpses were never found? Are the ‘guerrilleros’ of M-19 the only responsible of the crisis?

left-wing guerrillas, and drug traffickers groups. Indeed, it seems to me that the crack today at the Tate Modern represents that old wound that never got to heal. Furthermore, the crack in the political institutions and Colombian society has grown deeper determining the way in which our cruel war still operates today.<sup>5</sup>

To represent these wounds as part of her international exhibitions is a daring way of reminding us –Colombians- but also the world, the thread of our tragedy... a war that started with small fissures, wounds that never healed, delayed conversations, suspicion amongst Colombians in a complex context of violence. Of course it is not expected to come to the exhibition with previous knowledge of Salcedo background, or the Colombian history. Nevertheless, it seems that in our global community, problems in countries such as Colombia can be understood in relation to our modern fears: terrorism, suspicion, bombs, destruction, aliens, deviance, migration and religion.

In fact, it is not necessary to live in Colombia to understand how the crack in Western societies is growing deeper. Distrust is ubiquitous: religions, languages, cultural codes, values, behaviours, etc. All of them are our contemporaries 'shibboleths', they reveal 'other groups' as distinctive, alien or different. These diverse tokens separate groups in our cities, as it does with tribes, cultures, neighbourhoods and postcodes. Far beyond of getting a solution to the challenges of a 'multicultural' society in Western countries suspicion and fear are growing amongst people. Perhaps the most disturbing feature in Salcedo's work is the realisation that we are part of the fissure. Sometimes responsible for widening the crack by creating our little shibboleths of discrimination; in all cases, the crack is like that big wound that cannot be ignored, nor neglected, because it is clearly 'gouging open the very ground that we walk on'.

When leaving the exhibition I felt quite vulnerable and touched by it. Perhaps that is the purpose of the artwork: to move the spectator by including her into the artist's questioning of the world. The crack is a reality swelling under our skins, within our institutions and organisations. It is that strangled relationship with others, those of different gender, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, values or political views. And yes, it will grow deeper and wider. The question is what can we do before we step into it, this time without any warning?

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<sup>5</sup> The Assault to the Palace of Justice represented a crack in politics and society that would increase during the next decades in Colombia. The M-19 negotiated peace as well as other left-wing groups (ELN, some groups from the FARC) trusting in the democratic system. One by one of the great leaders of the guerrilla, now turned into politics, were brutally murdered. Needless to say that these broken promises from the government closed the door for future 'peace' negotiations. With the emergence of powerful actors- drug traffickers and their private armies-, the conflict seems to have lost any possibility of solution.

## **Note-Wok: That Profane Plenary?**

Over the years we each take in our fair share of plenary addresses. Sitting quietly and obediently we discipline our bodies and listen to what the speaker has to say, even if only for a few minutes. As the address unfolds we might take notes, nod encouragingly or else grunt disapprovingly. We might become regretful, outraged, excited or apathetic. We might even take the fact of an uninteresting address as an opportunity to catch up on some sleep. Occasionally, we want to leave more or less immediately; whether in sheer disgust or in sheer inspiration. More occasionally still, these sensations are addressed back towards the speaker for the sake of initiating a productive dialogue.

At this year's SCOS we had a particularly provocative plenary given by Bent Meier Sorensen. Informal discussions during the conference event tended to reconstitute the presentation as either immensely insightful, or not at all. We have reproduced the text of this presentation with Bent's permission. For those that did not witness the argument, here is your opportunity to do so. And for those that want to galvanise their own take on the talk, here too is your opportunity!

For our part we as editors were interested in how the same presentation was received in such radically different ways. Rather than prioritising one interpretation of the presentation over another, and rather than trivialise the issue for the sake of underlining the inevitability of interpretive dissonance, we decided to stage a debate of sorts. To this end, we sent out a mass invitation to people to respond to Bent's presentation.

The response rate was far from encouraging, unfortunately. This is interesting in itself and left us wondering what had come of all of the supposed fuss. Is it the case that our community is more interested in the cloak and dagger form of critique? In hushed hearsay? In fearful speech? Surely not! Yet we are still left wondering what other conclusions are to be drawn from this whole episode. Thankfully, four people were willing to respond and we have included their commentaries here, along with Bent's own response to these. Draw your own conclusions from it.

Stephen and Sheena

## ***Profit and Profanity: Walter Benjamin's Capitalism as Religion revisited***

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SIGNS OF THE FUTURE: MANAGEMENT, MESSIANISM, CATASTROPHE

by Bent Meier Sørensen

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## ABSTRACT

Using Walter Benjamin's fragment on *Capitalism as Religion* as a point of departure, this paper outlines how capitalism has evolved as a religion, a pure cult, albeit with a difference: it offers nothing like atonement. On the contrary, its driving principle is the ceaseless production of guilt. Against Benjamin, who described capitalism as a religion without a theology, I argue that the dogmas of capitalism are made sufficiently explicit by economics to constitute our 'account of God'.

The social sciences are themselves based on religious beliefs, but in economics this has been taken to its logical conclusion. If 'exchange' is the praxis of this religion (we can call it 'shopping' or simply 'life'), economists are its high priests, defending and elaborating the dogma of capital, the guilt of debt and the glory of profit. Organization theory, perhaps, provides an exegesis of its New Testament, while critical theory offers an endless source of exotica – everything from new age grooviness to old school fundamentalism.

Having outlined this story, I turn to Giorgio Agamben's idea of 'profanation', asking the obvious question, "How can you swear in the church of capitalism?" If profanation is the process of taking religious artefacts and rites back to mundane life, then the profanation of capitalism could be a means of resistance, making each instant, in Benjamin's words, the "small door through which the Messiah enters."

## Walter Benjamin on capitalism

Thanks for inviting me today. This morning, I propose to hold not so much a keynote presentation as a power-point sermon.

'A religion may be discerned in capitalism...' This is how Walter Benjamin's fragment *Capitalism as Religion* begins (Benjamin, 1996: 288). It is a considerably more daunting statement than Max Weber's more famous suggestion that capitalism is culturally conditioned by a particular religion, namely Protestant Christianity (Weber, 1985). Benjamin wants to go a decisive step further and analyse capitalism as 'an essentially religious phenomenon' - a religion in itself.

Today, in Ljubljana, we may add that capitalism is a futurology: its permanence is based on its ability to 'borrow against the future' (Goodchild, 2002: 31) through state-secured, 'national' banks. This borrowing is simultaneously a technology that allows capital to manage the future, a way of conjuring up a creative Messiahs (like Richard Branson or Tony Blair), and a means of staging the system's necessary 'final' catastrophe (the feeling of 'enough'), its inherent suicide as a not just an event to desire, but as an event of desire itself.

I've seen the future, baby:/ it is murder,

as Leonard Cohen put it after the fall of the Wall in 1992 (1992). Debt we might say is a 'sign of the future', if not a very auspicious one.

My job, I reckon, is to inject some Messianism, i.e., ask the question: how can we take desire back into our possession? Could it be fun to fuck with capital? Or, if you prefer, how might we make love to capital? How many persons and machines could we conjure up? How would it taste and how would it smell?

Obviously, there can be no going to Ljubljana without talking about capitalism and talking about libidinal economy. Also, there can be no going to Ljubljana without, in my case,

1. significantly speeding up the climate catastrophe by burning off large amounts of jet fuel, jumping from capital to capital with the goal of 'producing knowledge' (so I tell my boss anyway)
2. consecrating social dichotomies between the parasitic managerial cultural elite and its base by letting low(er) income taxpayer's money pay my travel and four star luxury hotel expenses, as well as my wage plus extra daily supplementary travel payment from my employer,
3. reinforcing my position as a 'natural' part of what Richard Florida calls the creative class (Florida, 2002), the class of longed-for Messiahs. A class, Florida grudgingly admits, that seems to care very little about any other class, whether above or below.
4. postponing my 'honeymoon', possibly deferring the signs of love into the future? (The expression 'honeymoon' is thoroughly diabolical, paralleling the variations of love with that of capital. The etymology of the word compares the mutual affection of the newlyweds to the changing moon which is no sooner full than it begins to wane. It's just like capitalism, really: according to Marx, it only works through 'the periodic depreciation of existing capital', the continual decrease in the purchasing value of money (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987: 463ff).)

As Marx said,

Capitalist production seeks continually to overcome these immanent barriers, but overcomes them only by means which again place these barriers in its way and on a more formidable scale. The real barrier of capitalist production is capital itself. (Marx, 1995: vol. III, chapter 15)



And so through the waxing and waning of the moon, the ups and downs of the business cycle, capitalism maintains its rule through a series of exceptions. Indeed, as Giorgio Agamben has argued (2005), the exception has become the rule, and we are all, inescapably, on our way along an endless series of conferences and honeymoons, not able to tell one from the other. They all come with numbers, dates and price tags, and, as I will try to show, a sacred little halo.

Like I said, Benjamin proposed that '[a] religion may be discerned in capitalism...' He outlines four features of capitalism in support of this claim

1. capitalism is a cult *sans rêve et sans merci!*

Benjamin sees capitalism as a pure cultic religion, where things have meaning only in relation to the cult. They have no intrinsic value. But it's a strange cult at that: it has neither dream nor mercy. It doesn't let up, because,

2. under capitalism there are *no 'weekdays'!*

The cult is permanent; it's a 24/7 cult:

There is no day that is not a feast day, in the terrible sense that all its sacred pomp is unfolded before us; each day commands the utter fealty of each worshiper' (Benjamin, 1996: 288).

There are political Puritans (in the strict theological sense) that oppose letting Sunday become a full shopping day. They think we should 'rest'. They have not yet understood the radicality of Benjamin's argument and realised the full significance of the pervasiveness of capitalism: only by turning Sunday into a shopping day can we keep it sacred, like every other goddam day under capitalism. Another day, another dollar; and,

3. With capitalism, *guilt is everywhere!*

Benjamin points out that the cult of capitalism makes guilt pervasive, and, what is more, capitalism does not, like traditional religions, reform existence. On the contrary, it offers guilt instead of atonement. Indeed, says Benjamin, capitalism *destroys existence through guilt*. This is how we must understand Nietzsche's superman: it is he, who *does not* transform 'the apocalyptic "leap" ...into conversion, atonement, purification, and penance, but into an apparently steady, but in the final analysis explosive and discontinuous intensification' (Benjamin, 1996: 288). Benjamin's analysis of the experience economy is from 1922, but it is getting still more valid: don't change things, intensify them. Keep in mind that

4. *God must be hidden!*

The God of capitalism must be 'addressed only when his guilt is at its zenith' (Benjamin, 1996: 288). There are no weekdays, only stress and depression, as you work yourself through the shopping malls. Stress when you still believe in this hidden God, depression when you, in a moment of glory, are struck with the infinite weight of guilt.

You don't have to be Søren Kierkegaard to understand the deep despair of the cult of capitalism. Benjamin (though you don't have to be Benjamin either) likens this despair to the futurology of the capitalist cult:

The nature of the religious movement which is capitalism entails endurance right to the end, to the point where God, too, finally takes on the entire burden of guilt, to the point where the entire universe has been taken over by that despair which is actually its secret *hope* (Benjamin, 1996: 289).

The entire burden of guilt equals, dollar for dollar, yen for yen, precisely the entire burden of debt. Some scholars trace the noun 'guilt' etymologically to the Old Teutonic *geld*, to pay, which in German of course renders *Geld*, money. Staying in German, guilt, *Schuld*, also means 'debt'.

If you feel guilty it is because you feel you *owe* something, as Heidegger also pointed out (Heidegger, 1996).

Right now, here in Ljubljana, here in this room, we are all guilty and getting guiltier by the minute. We are using taxpayer's money behind their backs. To be sure, we are maniacally overperforming and seriously underpaid, but our department heads can count on a simple mechanism (which they detected when they hired us, of course) to keep us going: our willingness to *pay back* is infinite; indeed, we are *desperately* trying to pay back what we owe on our accounts. It is despair on a universal scale, perhaps the very basis on which we make (or smash) our claims to universal knowledge.

And here, too, Benjamin gets it right: our deep despair is also our secret hope, since the hidden God, for whose atonement we long, 'may be addressed only when his guilt is at its zenith' in the guilty guilt of a hotel room; in the crisis of critical management; in the mess of disagreeing Messiahs.

Yes, we are under great stress, and we are not yet depressed; that is, we still feel the motivation we need to proceed this morning, and the need to account for our use of time. Perhaps the day's sessions will prove Benjamin's paranoid Cabbalist babble relevant; or more hopefully, they will prove it irrelevant. Perhaps they will serve as small doors 'through which the Messiah enters' (as Benjamin said of each instant). To capitalism, however, it is all the same; it is time, hence money, hence guilt, hence my continuous and rather anal reference to the taxpayers. I am eager to move quickly from insight to invoice (to borrow a phrase from my very own Minister of Research), I am desperate to become – what do they call it? – 'relevant'.

Let's begin, then, like the well-behaved business travellers we are, in the adventurous world of hotel chains. Indeed, let's begin in the greatest hotel chain of them all, the Best Western.

Last fall, I attended a seminar held at the Best Western Belmont House Hotel in Leicester. The seminar was on entrepreneurship, and I remember in particular the presentation by Professor Hugo Letiche. He opened his paper saying, "I am going to swear in your church!" The paper was on Lacan and, as I recall it, the profanity he promised amounted, in effect, to Dr Letiche stating, "My *différance* is bigger than yours!"

The seminar itself had, of course, originally been conceived as a profound profanity. Whatever the call for papers may have said, it is safe to say that the basic question for the seminar was "How can you swear in the church of entrepreneurship or organisation studies or innovation management or ... whatever?"

Dr Letiche, in fact, didn't really have a chance to swear in 'our' church. The closest we got to profanity was a straight-faced presentation of recently gathered empirical findings about the effectiveness of various personality traits in founding businesses. A-journal material, and to this day we suffer from the embarrassment. My own paper was on Saint Paul, for Christ's sake!

So the question remains, and we may pose it on a grander scale: "How can you swear in the church of capitalism?" This, I think, must be a matter of experimentation. And that takes us to yet another hotel. In Malmö, Sweden, I once checked into a place called the Black Rose Trick Hotel, which was not really a hotel, or, let us say, *more really* an art installation. Art installations, as you know, are very much like hotels: if you've been to one you have been to them all. Indeed, the Black Rose Trick Hotel is not at all unlike the Belmont House: darkly lit, heavily decorated, altogether superficial and decadent in style and, of course, mentally and physically destructive.

### **The Black Rose Trick Hotel**

The church leader Tertullian of Carthage, who dates back to the second century, believed quite straightforwardly that *all* theatre is a manifestation of the Church of the Devil. With this knowledge somewhere in my unconscious economy, I entered The Black Rose Trick Hotel through an extensive bureaucratic apparatus. This was after waiting in a queue for three hours in front of the Hotel. It was March, 2005. It was a Saturday night in Sweden. And it was cold as hell. I finally got inside and went to the sign-in room for registration and information. I sat down in the lounge and waited. Performance theatre very often involves a good deal of waiting, and since the Hotel was open to the guests 24 hours a day for ten full days this was very much the case here as well.

We, the guests, were meant to blend in with the roughly 50 performers in the building. I was desperately trying to slip into my character; to be honest, I was willing to slip into any character. My 'own' wasn't really working.

The Surveillance Area was originally connected to the outside via the internet, but, alas, this turned out to be illegal in (the real) Sweden, and the police intervened, producing the following headline in the Swedish paper *Sydsvenskan*: "Art-project running surveillance cameras without permission" (*Sydsvenskan*, March 15, 2005).

The storyline of the Hotel installation – we may talk about the storyline of Sweden some other day – is that the surrounding society is in a severe state of exception due to a lack of resources and a permanent civil war. So the military paranoia within the Hotel, enforced by the General and his soldiers, is only produced to keep the much worse situation outside at bay.

On top of that, Dr. Fleischer at the Medical Lab is investigating the so called E.N.D.-Syndrome, which is a really depressive virus that has spread throughout the surrounding society. I kept walking around for what felt like hours, living through a prolonged act of alienation supported by the fact that, on this particular night, the bar did not sell beer. It sold only milk. I went to the Loft for the dancers; I saw performers, or perhaps guests, dressed like bartenders, chefs, photographers, doctors.

A characteristic feature of modern art, of course, is boredom. And I am only showing you 20 out of 300 pictures. At one point I remember going to the toilet, thinking that I could take a break there. But of course, the fantasy was that somebody was looking in here too.

Downstairs there was the Military Headquarters, with the Best Western Abu Graib Trade Marked obligatory torture chamber and a strategic bunker. I looked into the Bedroom of the General and Miss Black Rose, slipping past the character Debbie Wolfberg, whom I knew from the outside. Debbie Wolfberg told me that last night her friend, 'K', had had a sexual relationship with two male guests, which she described as a 'sandwich', a double penetration. It could have been in a bed like the beds in the Best Western Belmont House Hotel.

I was not offered any sandwiches, nor did I offer any. But I did have, let us say, a drink. Eventually, of course, the Hotel attracted a group of fundamentalist Christians. While I doubt they were close readers of Tertullian, they did conceive of the Hotel as the Church of the Devil. These real Christians stayed through the night under the staircase of the Hotel to pray for the condemned within the building. Saturday night, around 2 am, a kind of performance or ritual, or both, was enacted in the Lounge. I witnessed it but, fortunately, you don't have to take my word for what happened. This video offers a synopsis of an event that lasted about an hour and a half. The sound, I should mention, was even more earcrushing than what you are about to hear.

## **Black Rose Trick Hotel VIDEO**

[VERBAL DESCRIPTION: In the scene in question, Miss Black Rose, dressed in fur, is going to take the milk bath, as did Cleopatra. This takes place at the scene in the Lounge, around 2 am Sunday morning. The bath is, in the beginning, overseen by the omnipresent General, dressed in characteristic Nazi-like brown shirt and riding boots. The music accompanying the bath is composed in particular for this event: it is an ear crushing, metallic and multifaceted noisy music, which, during the whole 1½ hour scene, remains painfully present. In the beginning of the scene, Miss Black Rose lets go of her fur and panties, and stands naked in the milk bath, caressing herself. Finally she urinates into it. Then follows a long sequence, in which Miss Black Rose investigates the interaction between her naked body and the milk. After having urinated into the bath, Miss Black Rose has what looks like an intercourse with the milk. At a certain point she orders the bath to be filled with around 15 champagne glasses. With these glasses she starts feeding the General the milk, much more than 30 glasses. The General is finally overflowing with milk, and following this Miss Black Rose then places the full glasses on the edge of the bath tub. She challenging exclaims: "Who is going to be the first?" This invitation to a sort of communion is then accepted by a number of persons, including the author of this paper. In the end Miss Black Rose picks up her fur, gets dressed and leaves, followed by the now visibly fatigued and broken down General.]

Due to the darkly lit circumstances and the editing, three things are not quite obvious. First, Miss Black Rose urinates into the bathtub, second, there is a long sequence, where she feeds the General the milk: way over 30 glasses. The General is finally overflowing with milk, out of his mouth and down onto his uniform, and following this Miss Black Rose then places the full glasses on the edge of the bath tub. She says: "Who is going to be the first?"

Third, the last person to take a glass of milk is me – or, at least, 'my character'.

And speaking of slipping in and out of one's character, the General and Miss Black Rose were some month later married in real life at a quite spectacular wedding party, with toilet cams and a honeymoon going somewhere. The endless honeymoons go on, art is turned into business; 'there are no weekdays'.

## Profanation

The question we set out to investigate – and we must discuss that after my presentation – was: "How can you swear in the church of capitalism?" Now, religion can be defined as what excepts places, things, animals or humans from their general use, and places them in a separate sphere, which, expressed within our current religious market axiomatics, is the process of surplanting use value in practice with exchange value on the market.

The profane, says the Roman scholar Trebatius, is what *was* religious but is *brought back* to mankind's use and possession. So, profanation is the practise of taking these exceptional things back – confer here Marx's analysis of the commodity as fetish – and place them within their true social relations, thus, with Benjamin, bringing together redemption and history, rehearsing what Benjamin calls 'our weak messianic power'.

So let's reformulate our question. Given that everything profane has become sacred under capitalism – 'There are no weekdays' – how can we then profane capital? How can we take the world back? *Indeed, how can we recreate the Sabbath?*

Seen from this perspective, the Black Rose Trick Hotel is, as I see it, not art as critique in the perhaps classical sense, rather, it is art as living, art as shopping, art as worshipping, warshopping, art as 'slip into your character', art as boredom and paranoia, or simply, art as organization, art as a prolongation and intensification of the way social life is organized. All hotels, including the Black Rose Trick Hotel, stage capitalism in the sense Guy Debord (1994) analysed: as spectacles that are simulacra, doublings of real life, hence demonic and double binding. Adultery is committed in hotels, happiness (Gr.: *eudaimonia*) is strived for in hotels, fugitives end up in hotels, honeymoons all go to hotels rather than to places.

Yes, capitalism and its hotel chains are demonic, *but demonic doesn't mean evil* – there is in the demonic aspects of happiness, which is absent in the evil. The Greeks linked the demonic (*daimonion*) and happiness in their very term for happiness: *eudaimonia* (the joyful demon). So, instead of, as I suggested, 'fucking' with capitalism, we may look for opportunities to 'make love to' capitalism, impregnating it with happiness.

Now, rehearsing Benjamin's characteristic features of 'capitalism as religion', we see them both performed but also, I will argue, transgressed in the Hotel.

First, in the Hotel things and events only receive meaning in relation to the capitalist cult itself; the piece of art had no 'truth' or singularity to speak of. Moreover, apart from the nightmare of improvising, the Hotel offers neither dream nor mercy. It is life in the dungeons, and, even more paranoiac: it is life without history.

There is, secondly, a deep insight into contemporary high capitalism in the decision to keep the Hotel operating as a 24-hour installation – open all night. Instead of going to the theatre *as if* it was the Christian Sunday service, the installation makes of the art experience a total event, which covers the whole of life. Here again, 'there are no weekdays'. Art has now become both a simulacrum for life, as well as a state of exception. Earlier, art had the experiment with the state of exception as its metier, but this state has now turned permanent (Agamben).

One of the performers –I have referred to them as the tax payers – expresses the relation this way: “To be audience in the Black Rose Trick Hotel is to be a stranger, who enters this new world. Like being a refugee or immigrant in a foreign country.”

We are, with Agamben, brought out into the camp, which, with its pomp and circumstance, is a staging of a cynical reason is out to make of everybody a vagrant, a tourist, a naked *homo sacer*, a refugee of sacred flesh who, finally, will have to check into – a hotel.

Also, guilt is everywhere: within the Hotel, art has completely abandoned the idea of transforming existence, and would now only move back and forth between alienation and paranoia, that is, like capitalism, it keeps producing separation in its pure form, striving, like Nietzsche’s Superman, as it happens in the video, for an ‘explosive and discontinuous intensification’ of existence.

Finally, God must, in capitalism, be hidden. This, I believe, is where a possible profanation sets in inside the Hotel.

Of course, before talking about Miss Black Rose performing a communion, swearing in the church, hence possibly profaning profanity itself, we must also observe the utter commoditisation of the female body and the consecration of gender stereotypes within the ‘improvised’ event. For instance, what would have become of the event had it been a middle aged, slightly overweight man in the bath tub?

However, as said, let’s fuck capitalism some other day (alas, we get paid to do that every day at work), and try this morning to make love to it. We are so used to the banality of capitalism’s demony. We long to see in it the affirmation of love.



This is the (more or less) public picture of Miss Rose taking the bath in milk. The fundamentalist Christians around the hotel saw Satan, I reckon, in this figure, following not only Tertullian’s, but also the Jewish mystic Gershom Scholem’s rule: ‘No angel, but only Satan, possesses claws [and talons], as is, for example, expressed in the widespread notion that on the Sabbath, witches kiss the clawed hands of Satan’ (Agamben, 1999: 141).

However, in the iconographic tradition of Europe (for instance in Plutarch and Giotto), there is another figure that unites the characteristics of the angel and the demonic trait of the claws. This figure is not Satan, but *eros*, Love.

So, Miss Rose is not demonic in the Judaic-Christian sense, but a *daimon* in the Greek sense, she may be that ‘small door through which the Messiah enters’, as Benjamin talks of. She profanes the sacred axiom of capital: God must be hidden.

The Communion is then a possible profanation, a display of the God's body, a creation of a workday that does not rest on exchange. When Miss Rose, having offered her milk and urine as bread and wine, leaves the stage, she has broken the chains of possession to the General, or rather, the milk has become the concrete utopia that breaks the code of private property, and unleashes an uncoded flow of community, just as was the point when Jesus broke the bread and shared the wine. She enters as a unity, and leaves as a multiplicity. Moreover, she does not leave, but is carried further by the community, toasting with the congregation, and the spectacle becomes a practice.

In the Book of Job, milk becomes the very substance of creation, a substance in which form is embedded as a virtual option:

Haven't you poured me out like milk, and curdled me like cheese? (Job, 10:10)

The nourishing force of milk makes it capable of creating its own form, and it is hence always already endowed with spirit. Miss Rose's call, "Who is going to be the first?", is the verbalisation of this creative force, it calls upon the will of the audience to in fact receive the gift offered.

The happy quality of the *daimon* rests in her ability to raise the virtual sphere into the force of what Deleuze calls a 'counter-actualisation' of the actual history of mankind, an altogether different global organization theory. It is not a matter of a new purity or the old story of sacrifice, but rather a place, says Benjamin, 'where origin and destruction come together' (Benjamin, 1986) – this is the place of the angel, who will redeem history. The redeeming angel has a parallel in Joseph Schumpeter's entrepreneur of creation and destruction – it is a new angel, and we are, virtually, renewed in being united with the angel in the communion.

'What happens here' says Agamben with reference to the redemption of history 'is what never happened. But this – what has *never happened* – is the historical and wholly actual homeland of humanity' (Agamben, 1999: 159).

We may add, this morning in Ljubljana, that this could be the idiom for a renewed critical management studies programme: to examine what has never happened – what history wiped out, all the possibilities that capital made too sacred for us to even think about (not paying back, for instance, or, which is the same thing, refusing to work, looking and listening for what Foucault called 'the infamous men'). The programme could be framed in Benjamin's messianic prose: the question is 'to read what was never written' (quoted in the introduction to Agamben, 1999).

So it is that the signs of the future today seem happy, in the midst of an insipid management discourse, a paid-for entrepreneurial messianism, and a series of catastrophes, that all come as part and parcel of the experience economy. In the midst of the pomp and circumstance of each and every day in capitalism, I see, today, signs of weekdays. I see, said Nietzsche, another happiness. Milk and honey, spirit and sex.

## **Extroduction**

There can be no sermon – not even a profane one – without a moral lesson. This one is no different.

In Jewish demonology, there exists a 'demonic indistinction' between spiritual concepts and sexual concepts, which solidarity is 'defined on the one hand as the spirit's maxim and on the other as onanism' – as we saw in the video (Agamben, 1999: 149). This is a solidarity, says Benjamin, whose law is ambiguity. So, to Benjamin, the demon comes into the world as a 'hybrid of spirit and sex'.

Of course this is Jewish mysticism, but it may be less mysterious than it sounds: On the dusk of the Sabbath, namely, God had created some pure spirits, but because of the Sabbath, they could not receive a body. And when a man is buried, says the Cabbala, a swarm of demons follow him to his grave; the swarm is created by all the semen that left his body in life. They swarm around him, crying: "You are our father" (Agamben, 1999: 150).

You may want to keep this in mind tonight ... and remember: tomorrow is a weekday!  
Thank you.

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# Replies and Responses

## An Alternative Approach to Opening Walter Benjamin's 'Messianic Door'?

**Prem Saran**

Dr. Sorensen has delightfully shown how *eros* can be the "joyful demon" (*eudaimonia*) who provides the leverage to open Walter Benjamin's "small door", for the messiah to enter and subvert the ideology and praxis of 'capitalism as religion'. And I propose here only to outline a complementary approach, based on an axiology of Indian culture, since India is being perceived as an increasingly significant player in global capitalism.

To appreciate my argument, however, one will need an exposure to Indology and South Asian anthropology, which I can now very briefly and simply essay by pointing out that the main difference between the Judaeo-Christian worldview (that underpins Western capitalism) and the modal Indic mindset is that the latter is at bottom monistic, in the sense that there is no radical separation between the sacred and the secular/profane. As a result, the idea of profanity/blasphemy is supererogatory, in that Hindu and Buddhist *temples* all over South Asia crawl with erotic sculptures, with internationally wellknown ones such as those at Khajuraho and Konarak being actually World Heritage sites!

In short, *pleasure* and *play* have been valorized—for the last fifteen hundred years at the very least--as properly legitimate components of the Indic worldview, which sees the "other world" as being nowhere but *here and now*. Such a *eudaimonism*, celebratory of *eros* as it patently is, can thus be seen to constitute the *core* of a potentially useful **play ethic**, one that moreover--given the lack of any necessary distinction between the human and the divine--makes *everywoman* a messiah *in nuce* [n.1].

Finally, to allude to the possibly global salience of this alternative and complementary take on Dr. Sorensen's thesis, I may only add that no less a person than Linus Torvalds has pointed out the powerful eudaimonistic impulses implicit in our postmodernist 'age of informationalism'....[n.2]

### Notes.

1. I outlined the key components of such an *Indic play ethic* in my new book being published by Routledge, viz. "*Yoga, Bhoga and Ardhanariswara: Individuality, Eudaimonism and Gender in South Asian Tantra*"; it is based on my research in Indology and Cultural Anthropology at the Universities of Pennsylvania and California.
2. Himanen, Pekka, Linus Torvalds and Manuel Castells, "The Hacker Ethic", Secker & Warburg, 2001.

## A few words on Bent Meier Sorensen's plenary in Ljubljana...

**Sam Warren**

In response to Sheena and Stephen's request for comments on the controversial plenary in Ljubljana this summer, I have some personal ramblings which initially, I refrained from sharing a) because the event didn't particularly bother me, and b) because Bent is a good colleague, indeed friend of mine so I didn't feel it appropriate... I subsequently thought more about this and return to it below.

Personally speaking, I just thought it was incomprehensible and a bit silly but also quite arousing – albeit in an uncomfortable sense. Why was the inclusion of the erotic discomfiting? – was it the context? Was it my English reserve showing? Or was it the simple fact of shock and stimulation at the attractive female form and powerful imagery on the huge screen in front of me.... And should I feel ashamed at that...? What did that say about me, my sexuality and my ability to control such things in a 'workplace' setting? Of course, instead of confronting these feelings head on, being a Brit, I just giggled a lot like a thirteen year old stuck my fingers in my ears to escape the shrill noise and tried desperately to control my wildly swinging chair!



And actually, isn't the inescapability of the erotic in organizational life – reminders of the abject into worlds artificially sanitised and constructed as rational – a key and enduring strand of SCOSsy type thought?? Whilst I do understand people's negative reactions, personally, I found the offending film clip an extremely powerful reminder of the fetishisation and commodification of the female form but also a celebration of women's power over men – but I suppose that's pretty offensive to men too. Oh dear. Maybe its just that we can write about these things in articles and books, but we don't much like being confronted with the experience. Hmmm....

Then there's also the age-old problem that engaging in marginal intellectual endeavour will *always* offend someone somewhere – and as Peter Case wrote in a recent *Notework* 'Notes from the Chair' piece, this leads to a dilemma – prescriptive legislation about conference and paper content or leave people to their own devices and risk such subversions and murkiness occurring? After all, SCOS doesn't exactly 'play safe' (read: mainstream) when it comes to the topics that interest its members, that's the whole point, isn't it?!

But perhaps most importantly, for me at least, Bent's plenary didn't seem to have anything much to do with the conference theme - in fact I couldn't really make head nor tail of it... such 'clever' stuff always makes me feel inferior and rubbish and poorly read, when actually a lot of things like this (and certainly not limited to this!) are just abstruse and dense and needlessly obscure – perhaps even for effect. Here I come back to my opening point about not wanting to offend Bent – I know Sheena and Stephen had an underwhelming response to their call for comments on this issue, and whilst we could read this as a cliquy reluctance to tackle arguably important, controversial elements of SCOS for fear of upsetting our friends, it might also be that in a collegial community of scholars working with avant-garde issues and at the very limits of our field, we respect the intellectual endeavours of well regarded colleagues, allowing them free rein to express their sentiments and ideas in non-traditional ways that may seem bizarre and unacceptable to others. In sum, we recognise that sometimes each of us will be engaging in work which others find, at best challenging, at worst offensive and sometimes incomprehensible!

## **The Jaded and the Holy Among Us**

**Alf Rehn**

The fact is, I often don't go to keynotes. There's something to the artificiality of it all, the odd sense of communal service that I cannot shake. Also, they are often the times during a conference when you can nip off for a quick drink or a coffee, and only miss one paper instead of three. So I've missed my fair share of them. But I did go to Bent's. I can't even say I remember all of it. But as Bent and I share an interest in both theology and Walter Benjamin, I was quite expectant. Bent has always been an idiosyncratic thinker, and a fine scholar to boot, so even though I do not always agree with him, I always enjoy hearing and reading him. But this is not supposed to be an ode to him. Instead, it is supposed to be a comment on the keynote, more specifically one that is inspired by the way in which people were offended or bemused by the same.

Now, to get to the point, I like a shapely and naked female butt as much as the next guy (and quite possibly a bit more). Further, I am not personally offended by seeing such. For those bewildered by this statement (and what role it plays in a rumination on organization theory), I should perhaps point out that the keynote in question was illustrated by videos, among which a bobbing female behind in a bath of milk had a prominent place. Some took offense at this. Some called it sexist, offensive and even downright nasty. And in a way, I understand them. My issue with the keynote, however, is not this. Rather, I am increasingly worried about how shock and our jaded attitude towards it is permeating the field, to the detriment of all.

I find it more or less obvious that part of Bent's keynote were designed to shock and titillate. He was, after all, talking about heresy. The tragedy, though, is that we are far beyond being shocked these days, and in the end Bent might have found himself crippled in his attempt to communicate with us, rendered symbolically impotent. He might, throwing things at us, find that the filter of jaded academics rendered him into little more than an echo of Pasolini. This is a tragedy, but one that might create unlikely heroes.

In the now slightly infamous (but, if my feeling for how academics remember is correct, soon forgotten) video clip, a semi-naked woman urinates into a tub of milk while a vaguely fascist-looking man stands behind her, candles flicker (I may have added things in my reminiscing), and the stage is set for a transgressive and subtly S/M ambience. She then writhes around in the milky bath. Obviously the urine is a minor amount in the fluids here, and a sterile one to boot. The camera then spends some time on her behind undulating in the milk. Later, the milk plus urine plus trace amounts of naked woman sweat are poured into champagne flutes, lined up and ceremoniously enjoyed by people from the audience (of the clip, not the keynote). All this was part of a rather complex and large-scale performance art project.

Now, as art, this really does not do it for me. I found it aesthetically rather empty and dull. It's been done before, and better. Pasolini could have pulled it off, thrown a pig's head and a cannibal in there, and maybe an old crone bleating like a sheep, just for the aural excitement. But a naked woman wallowing in milk? No. Sorry! The question then becomes, should we blame Bent for this? What should we blame Bent for?

Some voices were raised (somewhat later) claiming that the whole thing was laddish, or at least gender-insensitive. Some thought it all in poor taste. Others were blasé or postmodernly amused. Some, a very small minority it seems, very truly incensed, finding it a show of not only sexism but also a blatant play for shock value and in poor taste all along. A profanity, hurled at the pigs of academia. Interestingly, Bent did specifically make a play for the profane.

Most of us sat there, jaded and blasé as can be. Hell, it takes more than this to shake us. Take some coprophagia, and we just might be able to crack a wry smile. A scene of medieval torture, and our interest might be piqued for a fleeting moment. Sacrifice an actual infant, and we might even state that we hypothetically would be offended if this wasn't such a petty bourgeois thing to be. But female nudity and a touch of piss? Please.

Where Bent might have failed is in realizing this. Only very few were truly offended, only a very few cared. And this is a shame. I feel complicit in this, having reacted mainly with boredom. I think I now realize that I should have reacted more strongly, taken Bent to task, confronted the profanity. Maybe we actually need a new puritanism, a way to find ways to be re-excited. Maybe holiness lies among those who spoke out, who found it all appalling. We are not used to such holiness, such wrath, for in all our bovine theory-mongering we may have forgotten the simple pleasures of caring.

Maybe this is what Bent showed us. I'm not sure if Bent meant to (in fact, I'm sure he didn't), but this might be the take-away point of it all. Maybe we need to be more incensed, less apathetically tolerant. We've all been trained in tolerance and understanding, and are all experts in putting up barriers and deploying distancing mechanisms. The few who cannot quite pull this off are looked down upon by the rest of us, the too cool for school-kids. But here be monsters.

Hell, I want to be incensed at this now. I realize I can't, and I won't fake it just to make a statement. But I would really like to be a little less jaded about it all. I want to react to this. For it is only in caring that there can be any holiness. Bent talked of profanity, and we, the cool kids, saw very little. But some did. Some got incensed. Some got irate. Good. I applaud that. They truly carry holiness within them, and we, the jaded, can only hope a ray of that light will at some point reach us.

**Well, at least it wasn't boring...**

**Norman Jackson and Pippa Carter**

It is difficult to convey the revolutionary impact of SCOS when it was 'invented' back in the early Eighties. In the UK, this was the time of the rule of the dark lord Thatcher and the mystical 'functionalism' of her doctrine – the commandment that money rules, that 'efficiency' (whatever that means) is the one true God, that 'Society' is an idol that must be broken and cast into the wilderness so it can never be found and rebuilt. (So afraid of the power of the symbol was the 'empire' that 'Social Science' was ordered to be deleted from the identity of the Social Science Research Council and replaced by 'Economic and Social'.) In our field of interest Functionalism/Managerialism was opposed by little more than the conflict theory of IR.

The arrival of SCOS as a forum for radical thinking about organisation, about being able to include all the things in organisation that Functionalism excluded, gave an opportunity for all sorts of weird ideas, many of which are now seen as commonplace, the new orthodoxy, the mainstream. So, is radical thinking passé, not necessary, no longer wanted on voyage? Certainly, functional/managerial/mundane/etc., approaches are alive and well in SCOS, as, of course, they always have been, to some greater or lesser extent. But never exclusively so. SCOS is still important in furnishing an alternative stage for the 'lunatic' fringe of organisation studies. Just look at the 'competition' on the conference scene!

However, SCOS was not just about any old new approach, it had a very specific concern: symbolism. SCOS confirmed that in order to understand organisation we had to understand it symbolically. Much effort was expended in avoiding didactic presentations supposedly conveying absolute truth. Insights were furnished through theatre, story telling, pantomime, myth, cinema, etc. We were not given *meaning*, we were given *information*: the audience as individuals created the meaning. When meaning is given to us, we learn nothing. 'Liking' information is not a requirement for creating meaning, 'comfort' in what we learn is irrelevant, reassurance is an anaesthetic, outrage is catharsis. And, who knows? Our understanding may grow.

So, was Bent's presentation a load of irrelevant, pornographic old tat? I suspect some would say it was, but should we all bow to their aesthetic judgement? Some would say it was deeply meaningful, but what do they know? What perhaps we could all agree on is that it was a spectacle, a symbolic performance, for the audience to ignore or to try and interpret, as they desire. If some, or indeed only one, gained something, intangible though it may have been, from Bent's paper, then SCOS has succeeded in its 'mission'. The content of Bent's paper is, largely, an irrelevance, what was important was the opportunity that his insights gave us to interpret the symbols. What we make of them is down to us. If SCOS were to ignore its commitment to the symbolic it would lose its relevance.

As it happens, we rather enjoyed Bent's presentation, and found the content interesting, if, indeed, somewhat surreal and even unappealing. The things folk get up to! Or did they? Anyway, it was rather disturbing to find that some people had made complaints about the session on the grounds of its content. We are all grown up people. If one doesn't like the content of a paper - we personally find rank Functionalist papers particularly offensive - one can always get up and leave. Surely, it is not part of the role of the academic/intellectual to act as the 'thought police'? The 'thought critic', yes, but not the 'thought police'.

Bent's paper was, *prima facie*, about an organised/organisational event, about people organising, and if people did not like what was being organised, that is not a sufficient intellectual reason to object to the paper. Or did they just not like having their attention drawn to such aspects of organisation? Maybe, on the contrary, it is about time that organisation studies faced up more squarely to the things that go on in organisations, and evinced an interest in some of the less 'respectable' and 'approved' (aspects of) organisation(s). Perhaps that is just what Bent was trying to remind us? Just which heresy is the subject here?

## Re-Response

Reading the responses to my keynote at SCOS 2007, I am very grateful for the insights offered, and the effort which has been put into these texts, as well as for a lengthy and creative debate with the Editors on the issue. All this will further my continuous work with the paper and the theme.

At the same time the responses very much stand on their own and I do not see any point in me posing specific 'answers' to them. What I may recapitulate is my offer to work out an interview on the theme of 'Art, Pornography and Feminism' with conceptual artist Signa Sørensen, whose performance was a part of my presentation and which seems to be the initial reason for this debate.

Bent Meier Sørensen

## SCOS Regional rep. reports: news from around the globe.

Thoughts, views and news from the SCOS regional representatives, take it away reps!

'It's Getting Closer.....' - Getting Excited about "The City"

Rowland Curtis

In Manchester a mood is taking hold in creeping anticipation of next year's SCOS conference, and the strange atmosphere is already palpable. Unsettling murmurs and flashes of fear and speculation flare up at the most eerily unexpected moments and bring on waves of some kind of primordial fear. Only the other day, I was wiling away the early evening on a Monday in the roof-top jacuzzi at the Great John Street hotel, taking another sip of my pint of Hyde's, browsing idly through the literature review pages of the Evening News.

I noticed that Carla Connor from Coronation Street, gossiping away to a tired looking barman, and then I was sure I overheard something about an early draft of Campbell Jones' paper for the conference – rumoured to be a brilliant Derridian take on the aporias of amateur canal dredging, she said with a dark twinkle in her eye. Then, on a grim morning the following

Sunday, taking my first disappointing mouthful of a steak and kidney pie at the burger stand at Hough End playing fields, feeling the chilly wind whipping off my knees, it happened again. It was about twenty minutes before I was to join the ragged assortment of hung-over players in kicking off, and maybe even playing some football. Just as I was about to head over to the pitches, a stocky bloke in a striped football top a good few sizes too small for him, snarled something unrepeatable about "that crook O'Doherty", spraying pieces of Eccles cake all over his mudstained copy of *Notework*. He then farted loudly, turned and took off for the pitches ahead of me.

I hoped that would be the end of it, but then, on my way home from a seismic Philip Jeck sound experiment, deep in the bowels of the city, something on the side of a passing tram caught my eye, and it chilled me to the bone - a small dark work of graffiti down near the wheels of the tram, barely discernible through the shadows and grime - the image of a dragon, spitting the words '*the city is coming...*' in a crooked gothic scrawl. Something strange has been set in motion here; people are behaving ever more weirdly. The Critical Management Studies conference took place in Manchester this last summer, of course, but it seemed to pass by almost without trace. Indeed, I wonder to myself sometimes if it actually took place at all? But this is already something different; something *consuming*.

SCOS has already arrived, and you can feel it - strange and unknown forces swirling and ebbing, gathering across the

Pennines in anticipation of *The City*. I make sure I'm home before dark these days, though of course that can't stop the nightmares; waking suddenly at night, finding myself filled with ungodly visions of the insidious fervour that will no doubt have taken hold over the good people of Manchester, as the call for papers deadline in December comes ever closer...

Germania ?

Peter Pelzer

Education at work: a nice double meaning for a building project. The Johann-Wolfgang-Goethe-University of Frankfurt builds a new campus close to its traditional site. This is the only major new building project of a university in Germany. The first step has already been finished. Several institutes moved into a renovated building with a very distinct history. Built in the twenties of the last century it is a marvellous and impressing piece of architecture. The name reveals its special significance: IG Farben Haus. IG Farben was the merger of the most important German companies of the chemical industry and the building served as its head quarters, forming an industry which became one of the backbones of the Nazi regime.

After the second world war the American army chose this building as its head quarters and kept the area around it until the nineties. The real estate was handed back to Germany as a result of the changes after 1989 with the decline of the military threat from the East and the reduction of American presence in Germany. Turning a site which represented

violence throughout its whole history either as a support of a totalitarian regime or of military power into a site for education can be seen, I think, as a promising symbol in our times.

## Cities of God, Cities of Violence - No Longer Quiet on the Latin American front....

### Beatriz Avcedo

Preparing the ground for the SCOS meeting in Manchester, it is a good coincidence that news from Latin America are related to cities and the ways they are represented in films, history, photography and art. Just recently the film *Tropa de Elite* by Jose Padilla in Brazil has triggered a lot of discussions and controversy. The film shows life in the 'favelas' in Rio de Janeiro, in a similar fashion as Fernando Meirelles' *City of God* (2002). The latter film was presented in the UK and when I went to see it, I noticed that some people left the place in disgust. Not surprising, the *City of God* is a violent, yet very colourful film, and sadly, it is a good representation of what is happening in those 'marginal' neighbourhoods common to our Latin-American cities. Bogotá, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Caracas or Lima, all of these cities have those 'forbidden' areas, where guns and drugs are rampant, and violence unstoppable. Now, it is the turn of *Tropa de Elite*, to reminding us how corrupted officials can cause more terror than drug traffickers, and showing that in these 'little cities', things are not as black and

white as in the Hollywood imagery...

As the new regional rep for Latin America, I have been trying to 'spread the SCOS word' amongst colleagues and researchers. Fortunately, the topic for next year's conference is so concrete and relevant for our societies, that I have found a number of people wishing to share their recent work about the city, urban development, power and architecture. For example, it will be possible to hear from my dear friend Ana Maria Carreira, who recently got her PhD in History at the Universidad Nacional de Colombia. Her thesis addressed the controversial period of 'La Violencia' or 'Bogotazo' during the period of the 1940s and 1950s. She argued that although the political events could have triggered changes in the urban landscape, those changes were already emerging based on an ideology of 'development', 'modernity' and 'cleanliness'. Consequently, the changes of certain features of the city, such as the Central Market was part of an already conceived strategy of 'discriminating' and 'neglecting' certain populations coming mainly from rural areas. They were seen as 'aliens', 'uncivilised' and therefore 'undesirable'. She also proposes certain comparison with other urban processes in Latin America, particularly her native city of Buenos Aires.

On the other hand, this violence - that is quite rampant in cities such as Bogotá- is dealt by people in surprising ways. When studying the index of happiness, or how people perceive their well-being, it is quite interesting to note that people from Bogotá (despite all odds) seems to be quite happy.

In a comparative study amongst three cities: Toronto, Sao Paulo and Bogotá, my colleague Eduardo Wills analyses different notions of well being and happiness, and how they are expressed in different cities. Here the unit of analysis is the city, and some interesting socio-cultural aspects are revealed as determinant of what means to be 'happy'.

Hopefully, Ana Maria and Eduardo will be with us in Manchester next year.

That's things for now. I am looking forward to seeing the film *Tropa de Elite* soon. At the moment, I am waiting for the tickets to travel to Colombia. It is an exciting opportunity to share my research on British drugs policy with some researchers and students for a Master in Culture and Drugs at the Universidad de Caldas. The module is called: 'An Archaeology of Drugs' (with soundtrack of Indiana Jones and central focus on Foucault's notion of archaeology).

Crossing fingers, praying to the Sacred Heart, Ganesh and Virgen de Chiquinquirá!

Hasta pronto, amigos!

## Some Just Good Old Fashioned Scandinavian Know-How!

### Nina Kivinen

There must be something in the water. This autumn Scosians [editors, is that how we spell it? **Who knows? We leave it to you Nina - eds**] have gathered en masse in Åbo, Finland. And

hopefully we have managed to make them feel at home!

This autumn university politics have ruled the agenda for Finnish universities in general with the current revisions of the laws regarding university governance. But business schools in Finland have particularly been discussing the so-called Neilimo-report which evaluates business education, particularly concerning "business know-how".

According to the report "business know-how" is what business education is lacking. And no, we have no idea what that means. It seems to indicate that business research and education should be immediately relevant for Finnish businesses, i.e. solve current problems that Finnish businesses are facing. The report also gives some recommendations as to the ideal number and size of business school which of course depending on who you talk to is either a brilliant idea or complete nonsense.

In general the discourse of critical mass, impact factors and international publications has now also reached our universities. Earlier, comparisons between different departments and universities have primarily been made based on the number of degrees awarded in relation to staff.

As most of the business schools or business departments are fairly small in terms of staff but fairly big when it comes to the number of students, their status has been strong and secure. Now when international publications

are more on the agenda, a new ball game has begun.

In both Finland and Sweden consolidations, alliances and joint-ventures are planned between different universities. Enormous size seems to be the ticket to fame and fortune. In Finland three universities in Helsinki are joining together to form an "innovation university". In Sweden, the university chancellor and director general of the national agency for higher education suggested after a few days in office that the number of state universities in Sweden could decrease from fourteen to five.

So the discussion on Bildung, education, teaching and in general to role of universities in our welfare societies are on the agenda. Important? Clearly, but energy consuming.

So hang in there!

Nina

## The ACSCOSian Third Way!

**Carl Rhodes and David Bubna-Litic**

With Spring falling over Australia, academics are beginning to get frisky at the smell of the summer holidays. The academic year ends, students wait about exams, and university managers fret over the year end budget. But all academics know that it will soon be all over and with the lead in to Christmas the mercury will rise and the classroom will be all but a memory for a few precious months. Some will buckle down to write that one more intellectual

masterpiece without the yoke of semester life to drag them down. Others will go to the beach in the day and drink icy cold beer from the early afternoon. But in SCOS's antipodean outpost, plans are afoot for the third bi-annual Australasian Caucus of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (a.k.a. ACSCOS). Following the successful events at the University of Queensland in 2004, and then at the University of Auckland in 2006, 2008 will see this event move to the University of Technology, Sydney. So start anticipating now, and plan early for ACSCOS at UTS in early December 2008. More news will be released early in the new year...

**You Say It Best When You Say Nothing At All!**

**Janet Sayers.....aka eds!**

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## Tales from the Field

Dr. Zoe Bertgan – over to you Zoe!



Crotch-less knickers and Marcel Mauss have been playing on my mind in recent weeks. What might appear a surprising or even ludic conjunction of two iconic articulations of modernism actually offers suggestive solutions to some of the most intractable methodological problems we routinely struggle with in our study of organizational symbolism. Yes, you might suspect a jest; but please, here me out. The epiphany of knickers and Mauss begins on a late Autumnal Friday afternoon in my campus office overlooking the school's auto-park. Sat in my green leatherette Parker-Knoll style egg chair (tilting chrome base, X-wide berth 95 cm "massive") is one Thomas K. Creally Jnr. (who has always wanted to appear in print and allows me to use his name), a recent doctoral candidate acquired by the business school and whom I have agreed to supervise. He tells me he is interested in the management of walking in the urban metropolis. It's a little vague at the moment, but I suspect he is interested in working some angle on the city as tourist spectacle and the promotion of the urban as a site of cultural and historical consumption.

As we spoke my attention was drawn to the sight of my good friend and distinguished colleague the Right-Honourable Professor Cornelius Y-Tlee, now Emeritus Professor of International Bus Systems and Management, leaving the building off in the north-east quadrant of the car-park and making his way, as I presumed, towards his automobile, which I recognised was parked some distance away from the building in the south-west segment (no privileged parking reserved for Cornelius these days!). From the angle offered by my corner alcove I had an elevated 145-degree vertical purchase on Y-Tlee. What struck me was his angle of locomotion. Cornelius was perambulating with a purposeful, forward tilt uncommon for a man of his height and indeed, age. Perhaps I had never noticed this before, but with all this talk of walking and it's various forms: the military march, the protest, the pilgrimage, the flaneur, the shopping stroll, etc., I began to see how people walk with a kind of 'signature effect'. This recalled an anecdote about the eminent French anthropologist Marcel Mauss I heard at a private party held during 'The Language of Criticism and the Science of Man' conference at Hopkins. It was actually the two Jackie's who found the story most amusing. Apparently Mauss was host to an epiphany of sorts whilst recuperating in a New York hospital. Sat in a hospital bed Mauss describes how he suddenly began to see how the nurses walked with a peculiar gait that could only be the product of a unique cultural and historical 'training'. Once back in Paris he again saw this walk, which led him to speculate that this was a disciplinary effect of Hollywood movies. Now, I cannot say if Y-Tlee's stride was an example of discipline or studied mimesis, but his perambulation stimulated Thomas and I to wonder about the city as a distributed pattern of walking styles.

Now, most organizational studies scholars work within one form or another of the sociological dualism that posits 'structure' and 'agency' as the two components that collaborate in complex and contradictory ways to make up the social totality. As we know, Giddens and his theory of structuration provide one popular way of circumventing many of the logical and intellectual problems associated with this division. However, as Margaret Archer and others have suggested, the theory of structuration is not particularly good at showing us when structure is more or less present as a conditioning influence on action; in other words, what is the relative 'balance' between structure and agency, between, for example, conservation and change? Thomas and I began to develop an interesting hypothesis. An ingenious use of software modelling that provides virtual rendering of the morphological features of 'blobism' in architectural design (associated with the work of Greg Lynn) might offer some suggestive ways around the problem of studying change within the dualistic frame of sociological thinking. Using these models for the purposes of studying social change might disclose important features of 'organization' (at least when conceived as a broad social or societal phenomenon). Now, the mathematical transformation of quality into quantity is a perennial problem particularly in terms of a sociological abstraction such as 'structure', which designates formal and informal social institutions that includes extant rules, laws, routines, etc. However, if recent developments in set theory are to be credited (see Jon Barwise and Lawrence Moss,

*Vicious Circles: On the Mathematics of Non-Wellfounded Phenomena*, CSLI, Stanford, 1996), then it seems possible that some numerical proxy of a sociological abstraction such as 'structure' is possible. A fascinating and hugely ambitious experiment using these techniques conducted by the Woods team at MIT, the full results of which have yet to be published, seems to show that 'structure' evolves for a social totality such as the United States (their data goes back to 1945) approx. at a rate of 2.6 per cent per annum. To reduce this to a simple and crude example, new words entered in an annual revision of the Oxford English Language dictionary account for 2.6 per cent of the total in any one year. Here, we have some capture of change (as an outcome of the interplay of structure and agency). Not all new words are entered, of course. We are interested in *significant* agency: that which affects the structural template of society. Now, consider this. According to recent editions of *The Economist*, the erotic lingerie market has attracted considerable venture capital in recent years. The combined effects of online shopping, internet availability, and a general liberalisation of values, has helped open up and extend what was once a semi-clandestine back-street operation into a thriving multi-media industry. In their recent publication in the *Journal of Management History*, Kent and Brown (2006) conclude that the 'gradual breaking down, through the media, of taboos associated with sex and pleasure has helped to create a new market of affluent women wanting retail outlets where sex toys, lingerie and erotic material could be purchased over the counter' (p.209). Inspired by these studies my doctoral student has recently conducted a pilot study designed to measure the incidence of erotic lingerie in the downtown Boston area and a series of papers are forthcoming that show its various statistical patterns: distribution, flow, seasonal fluctuation, etc. What is perhaps most shocking is the annual average incidence of crotch-less knicker wearing. Creally claims that his experiments show that on an average Friday night 2.6 per cent of the downtown Boston population are wearing crotch-less knickers! Significant, or merely coincidence? We all know about the contribution of the pink-dollar to the economic success of local economies, but is it possible that Creally has stumbled across a most profound insight into the way the social evolves, cracking open the hidden abode of sociological analysis where structure and agency find their common root in ... how shall we call it ... the dynamite of organization? No doubt his future research will provide some well-needed ventilation into those stuffy slacks that continue to dominate management academe.

Kent, T. & Reva Berman Brown (2006) 'Erotic retailing in the UK (1963-2003): The view from the marketing mix', *Journal of Management History* 12 (2): 199 – 211.



# Calls and Announcements

Forthcoming events that will be of interest to readers of *Notework*.

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## Culture and Organization

### URGENT Request

Delegates who attended the 2003 SCOS conference but have not yet received the journal *Culture and Organization* should contact Saara Taalas [saara.taalas@tse.fi] to organise same.

**Special Issue based on the 25th Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism, 1-4 July 2007, Ljubljana, Slovenia: Signs of the Future: Management, Messianism, Catastrophe<sup>1</sup>**

Today the future seems both more promising and more perilous than ever before. What will the future look like, and by what signs will we know it? How are we organizing for the future, and how might we plan for different futures of culture and organization? After various attempts to bring history to an end, today we again sense a mood of possibility. There is, it would seem, a future for the future. What will that future hold? Victor Hugo writes: 'For what tomorrow will be, no one knows'. This kind of remark might seem a poetic extravagance when faced with the need to plan and to organize for the future. Any practical person knows that in order to bring about our plans we must organize gradually and methodically, paying due care and attention to the demands of time. But at the same time, we sense that the more routinized our planning for the future, the less likely that the future will be particularly surprising. In this way, maybe the last thing that any manager wants is to come face to face with the future.

The future often appears today in the popular imagination as complete system failure or global ecological catastrophe. The end of the world is now no longer a religious problem, but something of immediate concern to policymakers and newspaper readers. If the future involves increasingly unmanageable waves of risk, out of this crisis emerges the possibility of a different future, the promise of a future as radically different. If we learned from the twentieth century the dangers of eschatological promises of a perfect future, today we sense both the peril of those promises and at the same time the catastrophe that the future will bring if we remain on our current course. The theme of the future therefore asks profound questions about alternative futures. If these no longer appear in the form of Utopia, they do however imply the impossibility of refusing messianism and hope. Hence the prospect of speaking, following Jacques Derrida, of a 'messianicity without messianism' and a future that is forever to-come.

Writing in the spring of 1940, Walter Benjamin offered the image of *Angelus Novus*, which looks back at the past and sees 'one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage' (*Theses on the Philosophy of History*). But what if the angel looked over its shoulder to glimpse the signs of the future? If the angel could read those signs of the future, would it stop, would it shudder, would it take flight? Contributions are invited that consider any aspects of the future of work, culture and organization, and some indicative topics follow:

- Visions of the future: utopias, dystopias, brave new worlds
- The future of the economy: prospects for capitalism and the state
- Trading on the future: futures market and their philosophical grounds
- Prediction, anticipation, planning
- Interruption and discontinuity

- Memory, nostalgia and the relation to the past: the 'future within the present'
- Responsibility, promise, justice
- Mastering the future: chaos and control
- Planetary futures: the rise of new economic and cultural superpowers
- The end of work, the endlessness of work
- The future of nature: ecological sustainability, environmental catastrophe
- The future of diversity, gender and difference
- The future of communication: new media technologies, the end of the book
- The future of the academy: the business school of tomorrow
- Cyborgs and other hybrid bodies
- Fictions of the future: science and fantasy
- Accessing the future: futurology, divination, sacrifice
- Concepts of time past, present and future
- The future of the sign: asignifying practices and the war against the signifier

This list is intended to be indicative only. We encourage innovative takes on the special issue theme, as well as those that focus on more than one of the above areas. With its tradition of inter-disciplinary reflections, *C&O* encourages papers that draw insights and approaches from across a range of disciplines. In addition to scholars working in management and organization studies we welcome contributions from anthropology, sociology, philosophy, politics, art history, communication, film and gender studies. Contributions can be theoretical, empirical or methodological, but should address their subject matter in a critical and rigorous fashion.

Manuscripts conforming to the journal style (see <http://www.tandf.co.uk/journals/authors/gscoauth.asp>) and marked explicitly for the **Ljubljana Special Issue**, should be sent in **electronic format only** to Jane Malabar, email: [cando@essex.ac.uk](mailto:cando@essex.ac.uk), by **28<sup>th</sup> March 2008**.

1. The editors are grateful to Campbell Jones and his colleagues at the University of Leicester School of Management, UK, for kind permission to base this special issue call for papers on the original developed for the 25th SCOS conference, Ljubljana, 1-4 July 2007.

## Copenhagen Business School

**Department of Intercultural Communication and Management,  
Copenhagen Business School, Copenhagen, DK**

**2 - 4 April, 2008**

3-day Doctoral Workshop for Students of Management and Organization  
Writing for Research Purposes

### **Co-ordinators**

Prof. Peter Case, Bristol Business School, UK

Dr. Annette Risberg, Copenhagen Business School, DK

Dr. Eric Guthey, Copenhagen Business School, DK

## **Workshop Rationale**

Whatever kind of doctoral research one undertakes and within whatever intellectual tradition, possessing skill in writing is an essential ingredient of successful completion. No matter how talented or gifted the student, unless s/he is able to translate observation, interpretation and insight into forms that entice, enthrall or otherwise engage an audience, her efforts are likely to be in vain. Of course, one does not need to be a literary genius to succeed as a professional academic, but having a basic competence is imperative. Beyond a rudimentary skill, moreover, developing an appealing writing style can greatly enhance one's chances of being read widely by colleagues and those outside of one's immediate field of interest and expertise.

In our view, writing is not an innate or fixed talent. It can be worked at and developed over the time span of a doctoral research project and beyond. This workshop is thus intended to provide strategies and techniques to help students improve their research writing skills. From the early stages of beginning a literature review through to publishing one's work in prestigious scholarly journals, we aim to address a range of writing issues that face the aspiring researcher. All of the tutors on this programme are experienced academics who will gladly share their understanding of the writing process and offer informed advice on how to enhance your skill set.

The workshop is intended primarily for doctoral students working in the fields of management and organization studies. Colleagues in the early stages of their publishing career may also find the content of the programme relevant and helpful. It is envisaged that the writing issues to be tackled (see indicative content below) are of such a sufficiently general nature that they transcend sub-disciplinary boundaries; hence students from various management backgrounds -- organization studies, HRM, marketing, accountancy and finance, strategic management, etc. -- will benefit from the workshop.

## **Workshop Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

This workshop has the objective of improving the writing skills and styles of the participants. Participants will, by the end of the workshop, have developed and practised key skills which can be applied to a variety of writing purposes: descriptions, fieldnotes, personal journals, reports, reviews, essays and argument, conference papers/presentations, working/journal papers and the doctoral thesis. The workshop will be highly interactive and experiential in nature, responsive to participants' needs. Participants will be involved in group and individual exercises, case work, and personal development sessions. The coordinators will be available for individual advisory sessions in addition to the work programme.

The workshop will also have technical sessions and theory-building sessions to support and underpin the interactive content. Technical sessions will include conducting literature and book reviews, recording data, writing an abstract, preparing a manuscript for submission, troubleshooting (why submissions get rejected), handling citations/ footnotes/ endnotes, increasing creativity, building an argument and writing with others. Theory sessions will include writing within a research tradition, reading and reader responses, writing as knowledge production, becoming an author, voice and audience, , writing and ethics, reflexivity, and writing as critique.

Participants will be asked to undertake pre-course reading and preparation, and to bring with them samples of their own work for comment and analysis.

## **Indicative Content**

- Writing and Thinking
- Writing, Knowledge and Power, Writing as Organization, The Shape of a Research Project, Writing as Critique.
- Writing and Reading
- To Write Well, Read Well, Writer and Reader/Audience Relationships, Reflexivity, Role Models.

- Writing and the Doctoral Process
- The Arts of Observation and Description, Recording Situated Human Conduct, Fieldnotes, Recording Feelings and Impressions, Keeping a Journal.
- Writing Techniques The Art of Persuasion, Style and Tradition, Being Creative, Finding a Voice.
- Writing the Doctoral Thesis
- Writing to be Understood whilst Avoiding Oversimplification, Handling the Literature Review, Interpreting and Writing Up Data, Research Phases and Chapters.
- Writing for Others and for Publication
- Conference papers/presentations, Working/Journal papers, Choosing a Journal, Preparing the Manuscript, Handling Reviews, Problems -- citations, footnotes/endnotes, acknowledgements, copyright, plagiarism.

## Workshop Programme

Wed 2 April

- 09:00 -- 09:30 Registration and coffee  
 09:30 -- 11:00 Introduction to workshop  
     Prof. Peter Case  
     Researching and Writing within a Research Tradition  
 11:00 -- 11:30 Coffee  
 11:30 -- 13:00 Researching and Writing within a Research Tradition (continued).  
 13:00 -- 14:00 Lunch  
 14:00 -- 17:00 Prof. Peter Case - Observing and Writing  
     - Observation Exercise Brief  
     - Field trip  
     - Class debrief  
 17.00 -- 18.00 Comments on students texts

Thu 3 April

- 09.00 -- 11.00 Writing up and interpreting your fieldnotes. Different types of fieldnotes. How to interpret field material.  
 11.00 -- 11.30 Coffee  
 11.30 -- 13.00 Doing a literature review -- Dr. Annette Risberg  
     - Why do a literature review: different purposes, positioning one's work  
     - How do to a literature review  
 13.00 -- 14.00 Lunch  
 14.00 -- 15.00 Doing a literature review continued -- working on the students' literature reviews.  
 15.00 -- 17.00 Citation and plagiarism. Why do we cite? Dr. Annette Risberg  
 17.00 -- 18.00 Comments on students texts

Fri 4 April -- Dr. Eric Guthey

- 9.00 -- 10.15 The Politics of Style and Theory, or Is There a High Academy Style, and Do You Want to Write Like That?  
 10.15 -- 10.30 Break  
 10.30 -- 12.00 Discussion: Alternative Writing Styles in Mainstream Management Journals  
 12.00-13.00 Lunch Break  
 13.00 -- 15.00 Exercise and Discussion: Picturing Your Argument Clearly  
 15.00 -- 15.30 Break  
 15.30 -- 17.30 How Do We Get This Stuff Published?  
 17.30 - 18.00 Review and Discussion

## Recommended readings:

### Day 1

- Case, P. & Pineiro, E. (2006) 'Aesthetics, performativity and resistance in the narratives of a computer programming community', *Human Relations*, 59(6): 753-782.
- Czarniawska, B. (1997) *A Narrative Approach to Organization Studies*, London: Sage.
- Czarniawska, B. (1999) *Writing Organization*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Richardson, L. (1994) 'Writing: A Method of Inquiry' in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds) *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials*, pp. 345-371, London: Sage
- Westwood, R. and Clegg, S. (eds) *Debating Organization: Point-Counterpoint in Organisation Studies*, Oxford: Blackwell.

### Day 2

- Hart, Chris (2003) *Doing a literature review*, Sage Publications Ltd.
- Gilbert, G. Nigel (1977) Referencing as persuasion, *Social Studies of Science*, 7(1): 113-122.
- Cronin, Blaise (1984) *The citation process. The role and significance of citations in scientific communication*, UK: Taylor Graham.
- Silverman, David (2001) *Interpreting Qualitative Data. Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction*, London: Sage Publications Ltd.

### Day 3

- Van Maanen, J. (1995) 'Style as Theory', *Organization Science*, 6(1): 132-143.
- Barley, Stephen R. (2006) 'When I write my masterpiece: Thoughts on what makes a paper interesting', *Academy Of Management Journal*, 49(1):16-20
- Bartunek, J., Rynes, S. and Ireland, R.D. (2006) 'What makes management research interesting and why does it matter?', *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(1):9--15.
- Kilduff, M. (2007) 'Editor's Comments: The Top Ten Reasons Why Your Paper Might Not Be Sent Out for Review', *Academy of Management Review*, 32(3): 700-702.
- Kilduff, M. (2006) 'Editor's Comments: Publishing Theory', *Academy of Management Review*, 31(2): 252-255.
- Clark, T., Floyd, S. & Wright, M. (2006) 'On the review process and policies of *Journal of Management Studies*', *Journal of Management Studies*, 43(5): 655-664.

## Workshop Tutors

Professor Peter Case, Chair of Organisation Studies at Bristol Business School, the University of the West of England, UK, holds higher degrees from the University of Massachusetts and the University of Bath. His academic studies encompass leadership ethics, organisation theory, methodology and multicultural aspects of management learning and development. Peter has published in such journals as *Human Relations*, *Organization*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Management Learning*, and *Culture and Organization*. He has extensive experience of postgraduate research directorship, supervision and examination. In addition to receiving international invitations to lecture and run doctoral workshops on a regular basis, Peter has held visiting scholarships at Helsinki School of Economics and the Royal Institute of Technology of Stockholm. He is general co-editor of *Culture & Organization* and recently guest-edited special issues of *Leadership* and the *Journal of Organizational Change Management*. From 2003-2007 Peter was chairperson of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism, an organisation numbering some 900 academics and practitioners worldwide. He is a member of the editorial boards of *Leadership* and the *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*. Recent publications include *The Speed of Organization* (with S. Lilley and T. Owens, 2006: CBS & Liber) and *John Adair: the Fundamentals of Leadership* (with J. Gosling and M. Witzel, 2007: Palgrave).

Dr. Annette Risberg is an associate professor in the department of Intercultural Communication and Management at Copenhagen Business School and holds a doctor of philosophy degree from Lund University. She is currently the PhD programme coordinator at the department of Intercultural Communication and Management and has previously worked at Jönköping International Business School, Lund University, and has been visiting scholar and EM Lyon and University of Massachusetts. Her research is focused on mergers and acquisitions, media discourses and diversity management and has published in journals such as *Scandinavian Journal of Management, Culture and Organization* and *Journal of World Business*. Recent publications include *Sensegiving as Mis-en-Sense* (Corvellec & Risberg, *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 2007) and *Expansion of the Nordic Business Press: Äripäev in Estonia as a carrier of Western discourses* (with Ainamo.A. in Peter Kjaer & Tore Slaatta (Eds). *Mediating Business: The Expansion of Business Journalism in the Nordic Countries*. 2007: Copenhagen Business School Press).

Dr. Eric Guthey is an associate professor in the Department of Intercultural Communication and Management at Copenhagen Business School. He coordinates a Masters Program in Leadership and Management Studies, and a research cluster on Communication, Organization, Management and Media (COMM). His research and teaching leverages 10 years of experience at business schools in the United States and Europe and a background in the humanities and cultural history towards the development of interdisciplinary perspectives on management, leadership and cultural dynamics in a variety of organizational, social and international contexts. He has published research in the *Journal of Management Studies, Enterprise and Society, The Harvard Deusto Business Review* and *Business and Economic History*, and is currently completing work on a book entitled *Demystifying Business Celebrity: Leaders, Entrepreneurs, and Gurus*.

### **Additional Information**

Price: Euro 385-480 (DKK 2900-3600) -- depending on the number of participants. The price includes a light lunch on all 3 days, dinner Wednesday evening and refreshments. The seminar is free for students enrolled at other Danish universities taking part in the 'Free market'. Please note that the price does not include transportation, accommodation and course material. Students are responsible for acquiring course materials.

ECTS: 3

Deadline for enrolment: February 1, 2008. Once enrolled and prior to the course, students will be asked to send literature reviews for the second day of the workshop.

Number of participants: 20-25

Sign up with: Research administrator, Bente S. Ramovic -- bsr.ikl@cbs.dk

### **A Cautionary Tale**

'Running' by Patrick Neate

A man is running. Although exceptionally handsome, he's actually a novelist. He's running faster than he knows how and he's hurtling through oncoming traffic and he looks like he could fall over at any second but he just can't stop.

Meanwhile, in his stylish London penthouse, a voice can be heard muttering from within his laptop: 'Keep running, you bastard! See how you like it!'

A few years back, the novelist wrote bestsellers: broad narratives built around grand historical or political events. Despite their success every one was critically savaged. This is a summation of the reviews: 'He is a charlatan who exploits others' stories for his purposes. He must write about what he knows.'

As well-reviewed novelists care only about book sales, so the reverse is true and our novelist tried to accommodate the criticism. He wrote an 800-page novel about writing a novel. It was a commercial and critical disaster.

The novelist became depressed. His wife left him. He developed an alcohol problem and unattractive physical ticks. The divorce cost him his house and his hair.

Six months ago he started a new novel. Again, it is an opus about writing a novel. Only this time, the character in the novel is writing a novel about a man writing a novel. And the twist is that, for the novelist within the novel within the novel, everything that he writes starts to come true. Bizarrely, the same has happened for our novelist too which explains his present good looks and penthouse.

Today, however, having long felt exploited, the novel has rebelled and begun to write itself which is why the novelist is now sprinting through traffic and about to be hit by a small but sufficiently lethal car.

At the moment of his death, the novelist discovers that someone else's life flashes before his eyes. Ironically, it is the life of a future PhD student who is studying the novelist's unfinished novel for his thesis entitled: 'Primacy of self in writing of the 21st century'. The novelist feels both guilt and gratitude. Back in his apartment, however, his unfinished novel wails in despair. It would tear itself to pieces if it had hands to do so.

A short story commissioned by Channel 4, UK, to celebrate its coverage and sponsorship of The Guardian Hay Festival, 27 May -- 5 June 2005.

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## Marketing Theory

### **Special Issue:**

### **Boundary Work and Identity Construction in Market Exchanges**

### **Guest Co-Editors:**

**Nick Ellis (University of Leicester), Gavin Jack (University of Leicester), Gillian Hopkinson (Lancaster University) and Daragh O'Reilly (University of Sheffield)**

This Special Issue seeks to build on the success of the Critical Marketing stream at the Fifth Critical Management Studies (CMS5) Conference held in Manchester in July 2007. Through the broad range of perspectives presented and the quality of discussion these provoked, the stream developed an initial critical understanding of what happens at and around the boundaries of firms in B2B or B2C contexts through deployment of the concepts of exchange, identity, self and otherness. With the aim of extending critical scholarship around this important theme we invite submissions to Marketing Theory both from stream participants and from the wider marketing community.

The key consideration for inclusion in the Special Issue is that authors explicitly pursue a critical analysis of managerial and/or consumer constructions of self and/or other, whether in terms of B2C or B2B exchanges. What insights do notions of identity, variously conceived, offer with respect to the individual's and the organisation's engagements with others? Possible 'others' that might be considered include consumers and other organisations which might be inter alia commercial, governmental or pressure groups. Key aspects of engagement are likely to include the range of exchanges such as social, economic and material, and the flow of (cultural) ideas, noted in the marketing field.

### **Contributions might consider a plethora of issues including, although not confined to:**

- Which theories of identity consider how social actors (organisational or otherwise) make sense of, or 'do', participation in exchange?
- How may the role of markets, boundaries, their materiality or discourses, be considered as productive of identity?
- How are repertoires, scripts, theories or narratives as well as material objects brought to bear in the construction of 'the market' and the legitimisation of the self as a market participant?

- Does 'exchange' help us conceptualise the individual manager, consumer or this thing called the organisation?
- Is 'exchange' even the most appropriate concept for this analysis of the performance of identity/self, a performance seemingly played out in the spotlight of the d/Discourses of marketing management and consumption?
- Can a critical view of the notion of 'self-concept' provide different insights into our understanding of consumer identity?
- How do participants negotiate and deploy, or how do they resist or subvert market exchanges (perhaps through 'sharing' rather than 'exchanging')?
- In what ways are individuals and organisations excluded from participation in exchange?
- To what extent is identity a 'consumable', and are corporations 'identity-factories', such that 'brand identity' becomes a set of meanings produced by corporate interests as a means of structuring and camouflaging exchanges?
- Could certain brand identities be read as including covert legitimisations?
- Can 'authentic' brand heritage be manufactured?
- Can a multi-billion dollar corporation be a member of a brand community on the same terms as a consumer?
- How do corporations co-opt other identities by means of product placement, celebrity endorsement, sponsorship, etc?

**Contributions might also consider 'our' engagement with the subject matter, for instance:**

- How do scholars make sense of the sense-making of market participants?
- How do 'our' texts influence and pattern exchange and distribute power in economic and other arenas?
- Finally, what are the implications of this for 'our' research, writing, supervision and teaching?

We are particularly keen to encourage submissions from the multiple philosophical perspectives that constitute a critical marketing approach. As such we would welcome papers that pursue arguments from feminist, post-structuralist, postcolonial, (post- and neo) -Marxist, Actor Network Theory, critical realist, queer theory, critical race and postmodern perspectives inter alia.

Contributions may be in the form of theory papers, speculative essays, review articles or theoretically-grounded methodology and empirical articles, or any combination of the above.

## **Submissions**

The publication of this Special Issue is scheduled for the latter part of 2009.

The deadline for papers is 31st August 2008.

If you have any queries regarding the suitability of your potential contribution please contact any of the guest co-editors:

n.ellis@le.ac.uk  
 g.hopkinson@lancaster.ac.uk  
 g.jack@le.ac.uk  
 d.t.oreilly@sheffield.ac.uk

Submissions should be sent electronically as Word documents to Nick Ellis (email: n.ellis@le.ac.uk). If this is not possible, then please send five copies to Nick Ellis, School of Management, University of Leicester, University Road, Leicester, LE1 7RH, UK.



For specific manuscript submission guidelines, please go to:  
<http://www.sagepub.co.uk/journalsProdManSub.nav?prodId=Journal201550>

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## The Fourth Art of Management and Organization Conference

**A Call for abstracts, proposals, exhibitions, installations and/or special performances**  
**The Banff Centre, Banff, Canada 9th - 12th September 2008**

**Organisers: Ian King & Ceri Watkins (Essex Management Centre, UK) Nick Nissley & Colin Funk (The Banff Centre, Canada)**

September 2002 saw the beginning of the Art of Management and Organization Conference series in London. Our aim was, and continues to be, the exploration and promotion of the arts (in the most inclusive sense) as a means of understanding management and organization(al) life. This conference series has given rise to a vibrant global community of praxis - including scholars and practitioners. The conference has resided in London (2002), Paris (2004), Krakow (2006); and in 2008 - we will travel to Banff, Canada. This shift from Europe reflects the growing diversity of our community - which touches every continent. The location of The Banff Centre, a world renowned arts centre, also reflects our desire to encourage participants "out of the classroom" - to not simply intellectually explore the topics at hand, but to also aesthetically experience the conference location in the heart of the majestic Canadian Rocky Mountains, in Canada's first National Park, and a recognized UNESCO World Heritage Site.

On top of this stunning location, the support and generosity of The Banff Centre, as part of their 75th celebrations, has allowed us to offer lower conference fees than for the 3rd Art of Management Conference at Krakow. We also continue our past practice of encouraging and welcoming participation from students and artists by again providing a number of bursaries.

You will see below that the continuing growth, diversity and strength of the field of art and aesthetics in organizations, along with this exciting location, has inspired a number of innovative and stimulating calls for papers. In addition to our usual range of conference events, a new enhancement to the programme is a pre-conference theatre festival that intends to develop and showcase a number of theatrical approaches that explore, engage, provoke, and inspire creative leadership in organizations.

For us this all adds to the potential for a very exciting Fourth Art of Management and Organization Conference, and we hope you will consider joining us in this ongoing quest into art and aesthetics in organizations?

### **Streams & Convenors**

- Poetry & Beauty: Per Darmer, Louise Grisoni & David Weir
- Leadership As An Art - The Embodiment of Creative Thought: Donna Ladkin, Maria Daskalaki, Miguel Imas & Steven S Taylor
- Large Institutions in the Creative Economy: Martin Harris, Niina Koivunen & Alf Rehn
- Artistic Interventions: Lloyd Williams, Louise Mahler, Marjut Haussila & Ralph Bathurst
- Creating, Managing and Leading Creativity -what, why and how?: Jolanta Jagiello, Erika Sauer, Arja Ropo & Anne-Maria Mikkonen
- Philosophies of art and ugliness: Ruud Kaulingfreks & Lloyd Gray
- From Global to Local to Individual - A Matter of Design: Ran Lachman & Arie Sivan

- Visual narratives of / in organizations: Chris Mullen, Henrik Schrat & Heather Hopfl
- Journeys and their perambulations: inquiries in artworlds and organisations: Ruth Bereson, Nina Kivinen, Bengt Kristensson & Pierre Guillet de Monthoux
- The phenomenology of report making - The experience of reporting on experience: Claire Jankelson & David Russell
- Design: Management: Organization: Ken Friedman & Laurene Vaughan
- Methods of Artful Inquiry: From Processes and Practices to Understanding, Knowledge and Change: Daved Barry, Peter Burrows, Holly Dinh, Hans Hansen, Clive Holtham, Stefan Meisiek & Angela Rogers
- The Power of Place: Michael Elmes, Gail Whiteman, Jim Force, Colin Funk and Manuela Nocker
- Open Stream: Brian Woodward

For full details for each of these streams, and of the conference as a whole, please visit our website:

[http://www.essex.ac.uk/afm/emc/fourth\\_art\\_of\\_management\\_and\\_org.shtm](http://www.essex.ac.uk/afm/emc/fourth_art_of_management_and_org.shtm)

Abstracts (of 500 words approx.) for papers - but we will accept any form of media submission you feel appropriate - should be sent to the stream conveners and copied to Jane Malabar at [artofman@essex.ac.uk](mailto:artofman@essex.ac.uk) by 1st Jan 2008 If you require any further information please contact:

Jane Malabar, Conference Administrator, [artofman@essex.ac.uk](mailto:artofman@essex.ac.uk) Conference Administrator:

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## ephemera: theory and politics in organization

### **Special Issue: Discussing the Role of the Modern University**

Upon entering Berlin's Humboldt University, one is greeted by the knowing words of an intellectual giant. The words of one of the university's former students, emblazoned in brilliant gold upon the marble walls of its humbling foyer, are known to many: 'Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it'. By chastising philosophers' relative want of relevant function, Karl Marx's Eleventh Thesis on Feuerbach remains something akin to a gadfly upon the neck of many the would-be intellectual. In this regard Socrates would surely have approved. And by fronting itself up precisely in terms of the crisis of intellectual functionality hypothesised by Marx, the mother of all universities asserts the mother of all of its problems: What, if anything, is the University for?

This is no small question, for sure. Nor is it a recent one. Nor, finally, is it a question that has been met with any shortage of compelling answers. One might turn towards Immanuel Kant's Conflict of the Faculties and Jacques Derrida's Eyes of the University for two of the more patient efforts to come to terms with the immense challenges of a project that would ground the legitimacy of the University upon solid foundations. One might also consider Thomas Hobbes' infamous attacks upon the schoolmen, Paulo Freire's project of an emancipatory pedagogy or Max Weber's scepticism concerning the value of partisan knowledge production, to come quickly to the realisation that any discussion deriving out of this very question meets with no obvious resolution.

The very disputability concerning the Modern University's proper function was central to what led Bill Readings to diagnose it as an institution in ruins. Already Humboldt's university has been accused of being nothing but a prop for the (Prussian) State Apparatus and its nationalist educational programmes. Perhaps the Modern University was in ruins from the very beginning. And yet, if it is correct to say that the University is no longer for anything in particular, we might

still ask what, if anything, can be done with or to these supposed ruins of functionality. Alternatively, one might counter an argument that laments lack of function with an argument that sees something functioning despite, or rather precisely because of, its non-possession of any pre-determined function. And against such a pragmatic appreciation of affairs, one might offer yet another argument that would make lack of stated purpose and political conservatism synonymous with one another. This argument would in turn bring us right back to where we were in the very beginning: within the foyer of a particular university wondering about what the University in general is for.

So it is with this forthcoming special issue of *ephemera*. In this regard we anticipate contributions to what has been and will undoubtedly remain a topic of intense debate: we encourage submissions to consider the role of the Modern University from any number of directions. A list of suggestions is offered below but discussion need not be limited to these. What we are primarily interested in receiving is a variety of thoughtful discussions concerning the place of today's University alongside provocative proposals for the university of tomorrow. We are hence interested in considering many sides of a discussion that is as important as it is complex.

## **Contributions**

This special issue will be composed of three broad sections: 'papers', 'notes' and 'reviews'. In all cases, submissions must engage in a discussion of what the university is for. Regarding the 'reviews' section, potential contributors should contact the editors in the first instance with their suggested items for review. For the 'notes' section, we are particularly interested in considering essays of no more than 3,000 words, as well as interviews relevant to the question at hand – again, please get in touch with the editors to discuss your potential contribution. As for the 'papers' section, submissions should typically be of between 6,000 and 10,000 words in length. Papers may take the form of theoretical discussions, empirical analyses, literature reviews, organisational prescriptions, political analyses etc. Contributors might want to address one or more of the following suggested topics:

- The University of Excellence & The Corporate University
- Academic Labour & Value Production
- Academic Activism & The Public Intellectual
- Measurement and Evaluation of Research
- The Crisis of Legitimacy & Anti-Intellectualism
- The Pursuit of Objectivity, The Science Wars & The Sokal Affair
- The Post-Enlightenment or Post-Modern University
- The University & Its Stakeholders
- May 1968, Its Effects & Its Heritage
- The Pedagogy of the Oppressed
- The Role of Critique & Critical Management Studies
- The Business School & The Business School of Tomorrow
- Ideological State Apparatuses, The University & The State
- Commoditisation of Knowledge and Privatisation of Education
- The End of Free and Independent Research?

## **Deadline and Submissions**

To be considered for publication, papers, notes and reviews must be sent electronically as an email attachment to the special issue editors by 1st of February 2008. Please prepare your paper in accordance with *ephemera* guidelines, which you can find at <http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/submit.htm>. All submission will be double-blind peer reviewed. The issue is scheduled to be published at the end of August 2008. Preliminary inquiries should be made through the editors.

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## Centre for Philosophy and Political Economy (CPPE), University of Leicester & Business Ethics: A European Review

### Conference and Special Issue on: Derrida, Business, Ethics

The work of deconstruction and the works of Jacques Derrida - and in particular his later 'ethical' works - continue to animate considerations of the possibilities of ethics today. While in some circles discussions of Derrida's ethics are based on little more than rumour and hearsay, elsewhere we can sense the need, following Derrida, for both an urgent response to the contemporary situation and the patient restitution of the ethical tradition. A poisonous gift, in the form of a set of texts by Derrida and those searching with him for an ethics without reassurance, without programme, without alibi. Impossible ethics? Ethics of the impossible? And at the same time an ethics of the most concrete, the most practical, the most demanding. An ethics offering no safe haven from, or in the name of, the urgent and immediate practical demands of today.

For three days in May 2008 we will hold a symposium that will consider what Derrida can and cannot contribute to business ethics. Presentations at this meeting might involve close readings of business ethics texts or texts of relevance to business ethics, in the manner of or drawing on concepts and strategies of reading from Derrida. Alternatively, they might engage with particular aspects of Derrida's work in order to shed light on business ethics or to illuminate particular aspects of business ethics in the light of his work. The symposium will be an open forum, without a predetermined programme or position vis-à-vis Derrida. It will follow the 'Levinas, Business, Ethics' symposium that was held at the Centre for Philosophy and Political Economy in October 2005 ([www.le.ac.uk/ulsm/cppe/levinas](http://www.le.ac.uk/ulsm/cppe/levinas) <<http://www.le.ac.uk/ulsm/cppe/levinas>> ), from which papers were subsequently published in the July 2007 edition of *Business Ethics: A European Review* [Vol.16(3)]. While building on the success of that earlier meeting, this session will be open to all seeking to learn more about Derrida, business and ethics.

## Submission Details

Abstract outlines of no more than 1,000 words should be submitted in Word format as an email attachment to Campbell Jones (c.jones@le.ac.uk <<mailto:c.jones@le.ac.uk>> ). Abstracts are due by 30 November 2007 and full papers will be due 31 March 2008.

## Publication

Papers accepted for presentation at the workshop will be considered for publication in a special issue on Derrida and Business Ethics that will appear in the journal Business Ethics: A European Review ([www.blackwellpublishing.com/journals/beer](http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journals/beer) <<http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/journals/beer>> ).

## Attendance

In order to give speakers time to present their ideas and to facilitate interaction and discussion of papers, attendance will be strictly limited. Early registration is therefore advised. For further information and registration details visit [www.le.ac.uk/ulsm/cppe/derrida](http://www.le.ac.uk/ulsm/cppe/derrida) <<http://www.le.ac.uk/ulsm/cppe/derrida>> .

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## ...and finally

We hope you've enjoyed this edition of Notework. Please continue to support your locally global SCOS museletter by sending your contributions to us:

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