

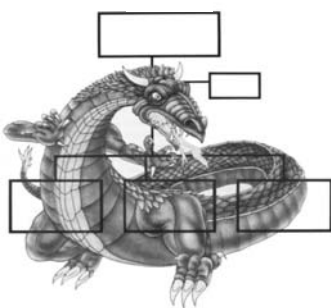
Museletter of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism



Notework

December 2006

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.



The end of an era

Festive Regards! A little later than usual, this issue of *Notework* comes to you as a mixed bundle of sadness and joy... for it is the last to be edited by us, your faithful hacks, Damian and Sam. So why joy? Well, we are pleased to be handing over this important task to two highly competent and enthusiastic young – and hell, beautiful! – academics, Stephen Dunne and Sheena Vaachani – we're sure you'll ease them in gently and make their first issue in May 2007 as brimful of tasty morsels as a Christmas Hamper.

So what have we got in store for you as our parting shot? Some **great stuff** that's what! Gracing the cover of this issue is Ljubljana's famous dragon – in the heart of Slovenia – where the SCOS roadshow will be making its 2007 appearance. More from Peter Case on dragons and contraband in his **Notes from the Chair** which this time around tackles some thorny SCOS issues of late around diversity.

But now to the future: **SCOS 2007 is being held in Ljubljana** and organised by some of the finest minds in UK critical organizational thought. Led by Campbell Jones, we'll be ruminating on **Signs of the**

Future in this beautiful city (and country) and you can read the call for papers at your leisure over the festive season – what a piece of Christmas Cheer! Having been in Ljubljana for the SCOS board meeting we can guarantee its going to be a goodun' And our Silver Anniversary too! Indeed, a special 'retro' track is being run to commemorate just this event

Ed Says is back this issue, this time he's all riled up and ready to POP about student satisfaction surveys. We'll let you discover his wrath for yourself.... **Anne-Marie Greene** rounds up the top stories from two board meetings for us next, one held in Malmo, Sweden and the other at the Nijmegen conference. Find out what the inner sanctum get up to in keeping this ole' show on the road – thanks to all the retiring board members too, we'll miss you!

The Musery is RAMMED like a Christmas stocking this issue. We begin with **Dunne & Harney's critique of the critters** as they ask 'Does the UK RAE make for incompetent scholarship?' We think their ideas reach waaaay beyond UK shores. See if you agree. Hot on their heels is a fascinating report from our **Temporary Brazilian Rep, Steffen Bohm** on the impact of the paper industry on the culture and economy of Latin American countries – think before you print this edition of *notework* out...

Our regular **regional reps** have been busy sniffing and snuffling out tasty little morsels of local gossip for you to lay like a Turkey

buffet before you all – and in true gluttonous Christmas style, we've **gone large!** with Germany and have an extra helping of **New Zealand** too. Mmm. Tasty.

Zoe is back with another tale from the field – jeez, the woman never ceases to amaze. We hear she's been requested as a keynote speaker at next year's conference, **what a coup that would be!** And finally, we have some reflections on the Nijmegen conference from recovering positivist, SCOS virgin **Sue Harrington** and how do you fancy a nibble with **Beatriz Acevedo** and the **vagina dentata**? We know we do! Meet her and her beasts on Page 27.

Last and least (!) we have some **calls and announcements**, but not many... and all that's left to do is say a big GOODBYEEEE from us and a big HELLOOOO to Stephen and Sheena. It's been emotional...

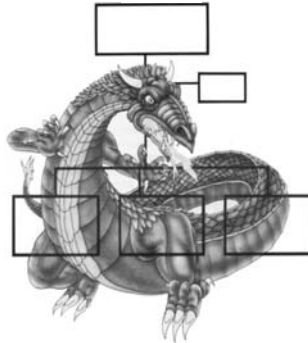
Sam and Damian
xxx

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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

It is now two weeks since the SCOS board met in Ljubljana. While there, we received an extremely warm welcome from Rudi Rozman and colleagues at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, who have kindly agreed to host the 2007 conference at relatively short notice. The conference facilities at the Faculty are excellent and the riverside café life of Ljubljana will be perfect for SCOS-like-post-conference-day socializing. It really is an enchanting city; resplendent in its 'K und K' Hapsburg architecture (which, owing to Italian

occupation, survived World War II unscathed) and overseen by a magnificent castle situated on the top of a central tor. Moreover, Ljubljana's history is shrouded in myth, most notably that of Jason (of Argonauts fame) who is reputed to have slain a marsh monster somewhere between present day Vrhnika and Ljubljana. That the marsh monster became the dragon inhabiting Ljubljana's castle tower carries all manner of resonances for SCOS's own symbolic legacy. As I wandered over Dragon Bridge I could not help but wonder whether finding ourselves in this city for the 25th anniversary conference is merely serendipitous, or a matter of the organization being beholden to more mysterious powers. This is what comes of having an overly active imagination, I suppose. Be warned, however, that there will certainly be more on dragons in my next *Notework* missive **(and said Dragon is gracing the cover of this issue too eds.)**

I should take this opportunity to thank Campbell Jones and his colleagues at the University of Leicester School of Management for responding so nobly and effectively in SCOS's hour of need last summer. They really have done an excellent job, not only in terms of developing an imaginative, apposite and suggestive call for papers – 'Signs of the Future' – but also in setting up a international conference infrastructure in record time. On behalf of the organization, I am extremely grateful for these efforts and the professionalism displayed by all colleagues involved. SCOS XXV promises to be yet another intellectually exciting, creative and ground-breaking event.

One broader set of issues that has been exercising the board of late concerns how we address diversity as an organization. Such questions as how we might be able to attract a wider range of ethnic groups to the conference, how we can ensure gender balance at board level and how we constitute the board representatively are all matters that have been discussed. Similarly, there have also been discussions of the propensity for some elements of organized events at conferences, which often have a local cultural flavour, to give offence to delegates. It would be disrespectful to organizers to mention specifics with regard to the latter, but there have been a number of conferences in both the recent and more distant past in which special events have raised controversy.

On this topic, I am reminded of an experience I once had working closely with a social anthropologist (if you're reading this you'll be able to work out who you are) on an international management masters programme. I'd been running a module on the course for a number of years before the colleague in question joined me, so was quite shocked when – given his extensive training and experience in matters of cultural sensitivity – he pointed out various ways in which I was almost certainly offending certain sections of my international audience. Indeed, I learned that one cannot step foot in a genuinely diverse/multiethnic classroom (we had 90 students representing some 24 nations) *without* giving offence to one or more grouping. Several examples come to mind, but, at risk of seeming like an HSBC advertisement I'll share just one anecdote.

I was in the habit of sitting on a desk at the front of the classroom, my motive being to communicate a sense of easefulness and informality through my own 'relaxed' demeanour. My social anthropologist colleague, who, incidentally, was researching Japanese factories in Thailand and France, pointed out that this practice was deeply offensive to the Thai students attending the class (although they'd consider it impolite to bring this to my attention themselves). As I recall, he suggested it would be something akin, in terms of European sensibility, to showing up without any clothes on. I soon desisted from sitting on the desk during class time, but only in the recognition that there were plenty more aspects of my conduct that would continue to offend others in the room.

So what is my point? It is simply that although it can be helpful to discuss matters of cultural sensitivity, as an organization it would be futile to try to legislate against offence in all circumstances or on every occasion. My own view

is that, rather like teaching a diverse international group, SCOS is learning to live with a certain *potential* for offence in special conference events. The SCOS conference is always an exciting venue within which diverse sensibilities are discovered and explored. We try to guard against the obviously infelicitous; however, to discover what we are offended by and why demands that we engage actively with otherness. There will always be 'undecidable' aspects at a SCOS conference both in terms of its programmes and spontaneous offerings and whose benign intentions may be taken as inappropriate or offensive by some colleagues. I think, in the spirit of stoicism, this unpredictability is something we simply have to live with.

With discussion of this agenda item as a kind of gestalt background, I had a rather perturbing experience at Ljubljana airport after the board meeting. Fellow board members Sam Warren, Campbell Jones (sorry to rope you both into my 'notes') and myself, having just passed through the usual pre-boarding security check, found ourselves in the airport lounge standing in front of a tall glass cabinet full of interesting looking artefacts. It was the kind of display that one typically associates with airports; the sort that contains expensive designer jewellery and other kinds of 'exclusive' consumer goodies. On closer inspection, however, we noticed that the items on display included such things as a handbag made from crocodile skin, ornaments fashioned from elephant ivory, stuffed marine turtles and other such contraband. For one fleeting instant, all three of us were seduced into thinking that these items were for sale. Talk about the potential to offend cultural sensibilities! To our shared relief, we quickly realised that this little box of horrors was, in fact, intended to warn travellers about attempting to smuggle contraband. Order was quickly restored. Yes, we could arrange a SCOS conference in Ljubljana after all without fear of mass dissent and walk outs on day one.

On another subject: we have been ringing the changes on the SCOS board recently. Several colleagues have reached the end of their tenure or stepped down owing to other commitments. Following a recent call for nominations, I can now announce that Sam Warren will be replacing Anne-marie Greene as board secretary and Saara Taalas will be taking over from David Crowther as SCOS treasurer. In addition, this is the last issue of *Notework* that Sam Warren and Damian O'Doherty will be editing (*collective sigh of sadness...*). I'm pleased, however, to welcome two very able new editors - Sheena Vachhani and Stephen Dunne (*collective cheer...*) – who, I'm sure, will carry on the excellent work of Sam, Damian and their predecessors. In addition to changes to the executive board, Nina Kivinen and Rowland Curtis will be taking up non-exec positions as Nordic and UK representatives respectively (taking over from Saara Taalas and Peter Elsemore). With the growing interest in SCOS Down Under, we have appointed two new Australasian representatives, Jan Sayers (New Zealand) and Carl Rhodes (Australia), to replace Julie Wolfram-Cox.

I am truly grateful for all the hard work done by the out-going members of the board and would like to extend a hearty welcome to the newcomers. Without the continued enthusiasm and personal commitment of board members the conference simply wouldn't survive.

If you haven't submitted an abstract for SCOS XXV yet, then please get writing. Don't miss out on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to think messianic or apocalyptic thoughts whilst in the company of a dragon or two.



Ex cathedra

Peter

25th anniversary of SCOS

Ljubljana, Slovenia

1 – 4^h July 2007



Signs of the Future: Management, Messianism, Catastrophe

Call for papers

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 organise for the future. Any practical person knows that in order to bring about our plans we must organise 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:

- a. Visions of the future: utopias, dystopias, brave new worlds
- b. The future of the economy: prospects for capitalism and the state
- c. Trading on the future: futures market and their philosophical grounds
- d. Spectacle and speculation
- e. Prediction, anticipation, planning
- f. Interruption and discontinuity
- g. Attempts to create new worlds: 'Another world is possible' (The World Social Forum)
- h. Mourning, loss, trauma
- i. Memory, nostalgia and the relation to the past: the 'future within the present' and the celebration of the past in the name of the future
- j. Responsibility, promise, justice
- k. Mastering the future: chaos and control
- l. Managing risk and event
- m. Planetary futures: the rise of new economic and cultural superpowers
- n. Pensions funds, saving for the future
- o. The end of work, the endlessness of work
- p. The future of nature: ecological sustainability, environmental catastrophe
- q. Responsibilities for not yet born others
- r. The future of diversity, gender and difference
- s. The future of communication: new media technologies, the end of the book
- t. The future of the academy: the business school of tomorrow
- u. Cyborgs and other hybrid bodies
- v. Fictions of the future: science and fantasy
- w. Accessing the future: futurology, divination, sacrifice
- x. Concepts of time past, present and future
- y. The 'now', the out of joint and the untimely
- z. The future of the sign: asignifying practices and the war against the signifier

This list is intended to be indicative only. We actively encourage innovative takes on the conference theme, as well as those that focus on more than one of the above areas. With its long tradition of inter-disciplinary reflections, SCOS 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.

Open stream

An open stream at SCOS XXV will facilitate interesting presentations of recent developments in research on organizational culture and symbolism that do not connect directly to the conference theme. Papers are therefore invited on any aspect of theory, methodology, fieldwork or practice that is of continuing interest to the SCOS community. If submitting to the open stream, please indicate this clearly on your abstract.

Workshops

We also welcome suggestions for workshops, performances or events. Outlines of proposed workshops should be no more than 500 words and should clearly indicate the resources needed, the number of participants, the time required, the approach to be taken and the session's objectives. Here are two workshops already planned:

Workshop on the History of SCOS

'We learn from history that we learn nothing from history.' (George Bernard Shaw)

The first SCOS conference was held in Exeter 25 years ago and what is happening now is *the future* of that first conference. It no doubt seems strange to modern researchers that, in the early 1980s the 'proper' way to do research was to emulate the natural sciences, but for the 'modern' researchers of that period there was an obvious need for a forum outside the mainstream, where a more 'revolutionary' approach to knowledge production could flourish. This is what SCOS provided, and very successfully too. In light of the theme of the 2007 conference it seems appropriate to ask the question: 'Is *now* the future that was envisaged by the pioneers of SCOS?'

This suggests a number of subsidiary questions. For example:

- What has SCOS achieved, if anything, in terms of its original ambitions?
- Can any such 'achievements' be seen as completed, and therefore no longer active, or do they need to be retained as projects for SCOS?
- Are there new projects? If there are, are these different, in substance and/or in style, to those that motivated the early SCOS network, or are they more properly seen as 'mature' versions of the old ones?
- The 'OS' in SCOS stands for Organisational Symbolism, which was a fundamental element in the early days, but which seems generally taken-for-granted now. Is that significant? Does it matter?
- It can be argued that functionalism is still the dominant mode in our field and there is, indeed, a 'functionalist symbolism'. Given that functionalism is the handmaiden of capitalism, and given the ability of capitalism to incorporate opposition, where has, and will, and could, and should, SCOS stand in relation to this tendency?
- What, if anything, made SCOS 'different', and is it still 'different', compared to other research networks?

To address these, and other, questions we are inviting early SCOS contributors and others to participate in a symposium (possibly in its original Greek sense!) to reflect on the original future of SCOS made present and the prospects for its future yet to come. For further details, to participate, or if you have any suggestions, feel free to contact Pippa Carter or Norman Jackson (carterjackson@carterjackson.karoo.co.uk)

PhD Workshop: Organization Studies Will Eat Itself

If there is an attempt to discern 'signs of the future' within organization studies, then one would do well to turn towards the research currently being conducted in its name by PhD students. In the years to come, the young upstarts of organization studies may find themselves as part of a new orthodoxy. Some might even be asked to take part in a nostalgic retrospective celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism. In any case, there is little doubt that the work of the doctoral community will, in some way or another, impact on the future direction of organization studies. PhD students are already challenging the conventional frontiers of organization studies through their various avenues of research. Previously marginalized or excluded traditions of thought are being examined in doctoral theses, which will in most cases emerge as a series of published articles. It is certainly true that there has long been a 'critical' tradition within organization studies. But there is a sense that increasingly diverse and experimental perspectives on management and organization are being thrown into the mix. In the process, the concept of 'organization' (and, by consequence, the very idea of 'organization studies') is being radically redefined by PhD students. To what extent will it be possible in the future to even speak of an 'organization studies', an academic discipline with its own specific identity and history, if it is constantly being reinvented and transformed beyond recognition by PhD students? The question is, will organization studies eventually eat itself? Must one then answer: *bon appetit*?

We propose to discuss the twin problem of inheritance and innovation within management and organization studies. On the one hand, PhD students are instructed to engage sensitively with the established canon of management literature, whether 'critical' or 'mainstream'. On the other hand, PhD students are also expected to conduct pioneering work which must amount to an original 'contribution to knowledge'. Is it possible to have one's cake and eat it? Or should PhD students work towards baking an altogether different cake with much fresher ingredients? If the business schools of today are the cook-shops of the future, we would like to ask what new kinds of recipes doctoral researchers are developing at present. The forum will be organised *by* PhD students, *for* PhD students, with *only* PhD students in attendance. Attendees will be asked to reflect on the above and offer their own insights in an open forum – there will be no paper presentations in the strict sense, aside from a five-minute opener to the discussion from its facilitators.

Please don't hesitate to contact Nick Butler (nb115@le.ac.uk) or Stephen Dunne (sd142@le.ac.uk) with questions, comments or suggestions. We look forward to hearing from you soon and to seeing you all in Ljubljana.



Ed says...

He's been given this space to rant, so rant he shall!

'A cautionary Xmas tale'.

The Business School of the University of Midfordshire has just discovered 'teaching'. This research led, excellent, top-drawer, world-leading, les couill du chien (excuse my French), centre of scholarship - with award winning architecture - has just realised that those young(ish)

trendy, boisterous people clogging-up the queues for overpriced food and coffee in the on campus café are, I believe it is called, 'students'. And what's more they are apparently 'our' students. And being our students they, it would seem, want something from 'us' – I know, it's extraordinary. It seems that they want us to turn up to allotted lectures, ha! To make sense when we get there, preposterous! To mark, and get this, to provide comments on their assessment!! To, and this is clearly fantasy stuff I'm sure you'll agree, 'care' about the syllabus, their learning, the class sizes, the one-to-800 staff-student ratio. Such demands are of course quite ridiculous: we have our internationally esteemed glass bead games to play which, of necessity, must take all of our precious time. To focus upon teaching as well would mean that we would simply lose our marbles.

Up to this point at the Business School, it was assumed that everything was fine, the emperor was fully clothed. We gave out high marks like confetti, showering 2.1s and 1sts on the masses. Our external examiners went along with this – we ARE after all the University of Midfordshire. And we simply assumed that the 'consumer' wouldn't complain because surely they only cared about the product not the process – like us. Alas, however, something went wrong. Some mischievous soul decided to conduct a national student survey to see what the students thought. And it appears, quite shockingly to us, that they do – think that is, about the quality of their teaching. The emperor is suddenly naked, his unhealthy fixation on his glass beads exposed. And he's livid. Far too angry and resentful for a careful and thoughtful response. No cultivation or rewarding of diligent teachers here, no reconsideration of how the obsession with the glass bead games got us into this mess, no pause no sit no think. No! What we need are short term and knee jerk solutions! Thankfully these weren't that hard to find. We shall blame the students for the views they express and we shall embark on a McCarthy-esque hunt for individual bad teachers.

Ah, blaming and individualising, the neo-conservative architects of the Business School would be so proud.

Musings of a Board Secretary....

Anne-Marie Greene, SCOS secretary makes her final reports on the two most recent executive board meetings

13th May 2006 held at
Malmö Högskola
(Malmo University
College)

Usual Business

Board officers made their usual reports.

A report in abstentia from Dave Crowther the **Treasurer** was received and the final accounts for year ended 31st March 2006 were approved. Continuing problems with conference delegates receiving journal issues of "Culture & Organisation" were reported. A motion was received and passed to revisit the corresponding account surplus on the account so that it may be used productively for conference purposes.

Membership Secretary Ann Rippin indicated an increase from the last report to 841 current members and that around 2 people per month were joining the mailing list.

Elections Anne-marie Greene was not able to attend the meeting. Election issues discussed in her absence included that the SCOS Chair would fall vacant in July 2006 and any nominations would be discussed at the next Board meeting. Other future vacancies include *Notework* editorship as of September 2006. In addition, there are two regional vacancies as Peter Elsmore

retires in July 2006 as UK rep and Julie Wolfram Cox has retired from the Board as Australasian rep. Jon Sayers and Carl Rhodes were proposed respectively as New Zealand and Australian reps.

One of the **Notework Editors**, Damian O'Doherty reported that the May issue of *Notework* was ready for publication but noted that the editors had received very few 'calls for papers' for this issue. Sam was unable to attend the meeting, but was there in spirit.

The SCOS Board received a report from **C & O Journal Editor** Bob Westwood, covering a number of issues discussed by the Board including the balance between open and special editions of the Journal, the marketing and market position of the Journal, and the need to strengthen relations between the Board and the Journal editors, including a more formal role in the appointment of general editors.

The **Website Officer**, Alf Rehn reported that the website has around 100 'proper' visitors per month but many more 'hits' than that. There are 80 –90 downloads per month of full editions of *Notework*.

Conferences: current, past and future....

Rene ten Bos & Ruud Kaulingfreks reported on arrangements for the 2006 conference in Nijmegen. So far a good number of abstracts have been accepted, including a healthy number from outside of Europe. PhD Bursaries are to be awarded to: Anna Mariz Murtola, Dave Meijer, Jan van Baren, Rolland Curtis, Beatriz Acevado Hull, Shena Vachani, Juliane Riese, Eleanor Ballard, Arturo Irigarai and Fleur Digines.

Akseli Virtanen reported on progress of plans so far for the 2007 Conference in Helsinki. There was much discussion about the Call for Papers and it was agreed that a sub-committee should work on the latest draft, with the aim of a final paper to be distributed in time for the 2006 Conference.

Damian O'Doherty reported on plans for the 2008 conference in Manchester, including a conference theme of 'Organizing the City' with possible speakers including Tony Wilson, Dave Haslam and Philip Jack.

Two possibilities presently exist for conferences in 2009 and 2010. These are Lisbon, where there are links via board member contacts, and Egypt. Further details and outline proposals will be discussed at the Nijmegen Board.

Saturday 15th July 2006 during the Nijmegen Conference, Radboud University

The board meeting was held on the last day of the 2006 Conference.

Usual Business

Board officers made their usual reports:

The **Treasurer** Dave Crowther presented the accounts to date, including the fact that generated surplus from past conferences had now been used up funding PhD bursaries for attendance at the Conferences. It was agreed that subject to financial viability, the aim of having a certain number of SCOS

funded PhD bursaries each year would be maintained. Ongoing problems including non receipt of C&O journal issues associated with the conferences were discussed again and it was agreed that this was something that needed to be resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Peter Case reported on behalf of the **C & O Journal Editors** that Heather Hopfl plans to stand down as editor of C&O in 2008. Both Peter Case and Rene ten Bos have expressed interest in having editorial involvement and the board agreed that the existing editors should be approached to discuss the matter. The board indicated there should also be consideration of the gender balance of the editorship of the journal and that the editors need to pay special attention to the profile of gender issues within the content of the journal.

Anne-marie Greene, **Elections Officer** reported on a number of position changes and upcoming vacancies.

Peter Case was re-elected as Chair of the Board with tenure to run until 2009.

Anne-marie Greene reported that she was reluctantly tendering her resignation as Board Secretary/Elections Officer due to

time commitments. The board thanked her for her work over the last 5 years.

Dave Crowther reported that he was resigning as Treasurer and the board thanked him for his work first as Membership Secretary since 2002 and then as Treasurer from 2004.

The term of office for the 2 Notework Editors was also at its end, and Sam Warren and Damian O'Doherty indicated that they did not want to stand again for this role since they firmly believe that constant fresh ideas are needed for this internationally renowned quality publication (*but we'll miss it! – eds.*). The board thanked them both for their work as editors. An election call for all these posts has now been issued, and the results will be fully publicised in the May 2007 edition of Notework, but some changes have already been made and are reported in 'Notes from the Chair' in this issue (and see below).

Conferences: past, present and future....

There was in-depth discussion of arrangements for the 2007 Conference in Helsinki. Serious concerns were raised about progress of arrangements so far, including financial viability, conference theme

and ill health of one of the organisers. Given the time frame, with only a year to go to the conference, the board reluctantly made the difficult decision to abandon existing plans for the Conference.

Emergency discussions were held concerning alternative arrangements for the 2007 Conference. Thanks to the valiant efforts of Campbell Jones and colleagues at Leicester, an alternative venue of Ljubljana, Slovenia has been proposed and agreed by the Board.

Preparations for the 2008 Conference in Manchester are making good progress and Damian O'Doherty circulated a Call for Papers for discussion. Peter Elsmore put forward a proposal for a conference in Alexandria, Egypt for 2009. The board agreed that the possibility should be investigated, although concerns about the high cost of travel to the location were discussed.

Your board are currently:

Chair: Peter Case (UK) **Meetings Secretary:** Annette Risberg (Denmark) **Secretary & Elections Officer:** Sam Warren (UK), **2006 Conference:** Rene ten Bos and Ruud Kaulingfreks (Netherlands) **2007 Conference:** Leicester Management School represented by Campbell Jones (UK), **Membership Secretary:** Ann Rippin (UK) **Treasurer:** Saara Taalas (Finland) **Notework Editors:** Sheena Vaachani and Stephen Dunne (UK) **Web Officer:** Alf Rehn (Finland) **Journal Editors (C&O):** Heather Höpfl (UK) & Bob Westwood (Australia) **Regional representatives:** Peter Pelzer (Germany) Niina Kivenen (Nordic countries) Rowland Curtis (UK) Janet Sayers (New Zealand), David Bubna-Litic and Carl Rhodes (Australasia) J Santos (South America)

Academic Competence and the RAE

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&

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The RAE

Are critical scholars of business and management making themselves incompetent under the pressures of the RAE? We have studied over 2,300 journal articles in the top business and management journals, journals that formed the bulk of the submissions made by five star departments in the last RAE. The study raises serious questions about the basic competence of the discipline. And, to the extent that critical scholars engage with these journals, the study also passes troubling commentary upon the deskilling of such scholars under the regime of the RAE. We asked ten questions in a manual content analysis of the top twenty business and management journals, a list compiled from the results of the last RAE.¹ These questions were designed to mine two years of highly regarded scholarly output for the fundamental social and political issues of the day. The results startled us. Although we began by focusing upon the relationship of the most highly rated journals to the major issues of the day, we ended by confronting serious questions about the basic competence of these journals. It is this issue of competence we intend to explore here, after a quick detour through some of the results.

Just over one in ten articles explored the relationship between business practice and the redistribution of wealth. Only 223 of the top 2,331 articles regarded safe working conditions as worthy of consideration. Over three quarters of the 'best' articles ignored wage negotiation and worker representation. War and the displacement of populations were an issue for less than 2% of these articles whilst critical race theory and postcolonial studies figured only 1.5% of the time. Less than 6% of the articles were published by authors based in the developing world. Less than 4% engaged a feminist perspective. And less than 1% published queer studies. The reader should consult the authors if they are interested in receiving the complete statistical database.

As we say, there are a number of questions raised by this study for the discipline as a whole. One very stark question for all business and management scholars is this: if business and management is said to be so central to the contemporary world, why are the central social and political issues of the contemporary world so marginal in the most highly rated business and management scholarship? For us, this in turn raises the question of the social responsibility of the intellectual, as Noam Chomsky, and before him Dwight McDonald, put it so directly. The data suggests that we ought to focus less upon the social responsibility of the corporation and more on the social responsibility of the business scholar. We have explored the question of the social responsibility of the business and management scholar raised by this data in another forum, and in a number of recent presentations. Here we want to address what we presume is a more specific audience, an audience of critical scholars. And to this audience we want to raise perhaps an even more fundamental question arising from this data. *Is business and management scholarship incompetent?*

¹ Michael Rowlinson et al. (2004) 'Journal Rankings in Business and Management and the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise in the UK,' *British Journal of Management*, 15(1).

Theory

This question, even with the support of our data, would be dismissed in the mainstream world of business and management scholarship. But for the most part this mainstream world is untouched by what Frederic Jameson has called 'theory.' Jameson writes, 'I believe that theory begins to supplant philosophy (and other disciplines as well) at the moment it is realized that thought is linguistic or material and that concepts cannot exist independently of their linguistic expression.' He goes on to say, 'it remains only to say that for theory all uses of language, including its own, are susceptible to these slippages and oilspills because there is no longer any correct way of saying it, and all truths are at best momentary, situational, and marked by a history in the process of change and transformation. You will already have recognized deconstruction in my description, and some will wish to associate Althusserianism with it as well.'²

Jameson may reach the totality of 'theory' a little quickly here and we will wish to recognize much else as well – subaltern studies, queer theory, new feminisms, post-colonial critique, radical black studies, new studies of immaterial labour – as versions of Jameson's 'theory.' But we would agree that all these approaches 'at once exclude and forestall a great deal of philosophical and systematic writing organized around systems or intentions, meanings and criteria of truth and falsity' as Jameson says, even if they need sometimes to resist a single banner to do so. Nonetheless this is a very different concept of the critical than the one hawked around the edges of mainstream management journals by critical management studies scholars who advertise the critical or the radical as merely a deeper look at these philosophies and systems. Theory is as Jameson also says in this short powerful piece 'a search and destroy mission' setting out against these philosophies and systems to finish them off, not some deep massage therapy out of which they will emerge stronger to serve all of us better. But more to the point, this conception of 'theory' is absent from mainstream business and management scholarship.

Moreover it is the way language gets interrogated in theory, the way these concepts, philosophies and systems fall to this interrogation that interests us here. For a queer theorist like Eve Sedgwick this method means recording the way some language must be closeted, darkened, for other language to emerge as the bright platform of a concept, a system of heteronormativity. Any investigation of that concept, that system, requires us to turn the light on in the closet. Note that we use the word require. For theory, anything less than this interrogation of language as material and thus ideological object, amounts to a failure of critical practice and scholarly incompetence. So too for a radical black studies scholar like Cedric Robinson this method means recording the way some language must be cast into another kind of darkness for other language to produce the enlightened. These examples should be obvious enough to the readers of this publication. The problem arises when we acknowledge that once one enters the realm of theory, anything less than this kind of fundamental approach to the materiality of language and the ideology of concepts, philosophies, and systems, is simply not a competent approach to the topic.

Excellent?

And here we confront the excellent journals of our field. In our study of the twenty most excellent journals as nominated by the most excellent British business and management departments, incompetence is the norm. The basic concepts, philosophies, and systems, to say nothing of the materiality of the language that makes them up, never come under serious threat. At best they get examined, in the manner of these critical management scholars who promise, however disingenuously, that their treatment will be even better for these objects than the mainstream treatment. But for those touched by theory, such an approach is just not intellectually adequate.

We asked questions in our content analysis design to make theory possible from any number of directions. We asked about war because theory from scholars like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's conception of the war machine, to Michel Foucault's notion of the race wars founding states, to war founding law in Giorgio Agamben, all indicate to us that any adequate theoretical approach to normalizing concepts of operations, planning, and globalization would have to take account of the way these founding terms suppress war. We found almost no competence here. Excellent journals

² Fred Jameson (2004) 'Symptoms of Theory or Symptoms for Theory?', *Critical Inquiry*, 30:2.

like Long Range Planning and the Journal of the Operational Research Society proved to be full of incompetent approaches.

We asked about sexuality and conceptions of the masculine and feminine because we have learned from the authors of important books like *Fear of a Queer Planet* (Warner, 1994), and more recently the special issue of *Social Text* on *What's Queer About Queer Theory Now* (Munoz and Eng, 2006), and we have learned from scholars like Donna Haraway, Rosi Braidotti, and Elizabeth Grosz, that any competent discussion of human resources management, of personnel, of human relations, would not just question the human of such affective work relations, something few excellent articles do in our study, but also dismantle and dismiss this human through its own affective materiality. We asked but we did not receive an answer in this study. Journals like *Personnel Review* and the *International Journal of Human Resource Management* showed no competence here.

We asked about critical race theory, about post-colonial theory and transnational migration studies because we have learned from scholars like Rey Chow, Nathaniel Mackey, and Gayatri Spivak that any conception of consumption, commodity, or reification needs the highest level of vigilance about the erasure of the human commodities of slavery and colonialism in the constitution of even such critical concepts. But we saw almost no such theory in two years worth of articles in the *Journal of Marketing Management*, in the *European Journal of Marketing*, or *British Journal of Management*.

And we asked about labour. We were interested not in the sociological figure of the labourer, rare enough in most excellent business and management journals, but in what Marx called the real not-capital, and in living labour as Michael Hardt and Toni Negri use the term, and in what CLR James understood as the priority of worker self-activity. We learned from them that as capitalism shadows the discipline of business so too does communism shadow capitalism - critique conjures something from the shadows of its object. Though the sociological worker appeared occasionally in *Work, Employment and Society*, in the *Industrial Relations Journal*, and in *Organisation Studies*, the articles in these journals were largely incompetent on their chosen topics.

We asked more besides, with other questions relating more to the social responsibility of the field and the discursivity of excellence, but overall thousands of journal articles from journals submitted by the very best departments in business and management at the last RAE proved incompetent from a theoretical point of view, the point of view for the readers of this newsletter.

Competence?

The obvious question, then, is whether participation in the RAE is a de facto deskilling of the critical scholar. One sanguine response to this question might be that this threat to critical scholars is muted by their inability to get published in these journals. This is also a hopeful response because it suggests this inability to be based on the incompetence of journals rather than the critical scholars. Another altogether less optimistic conclusion to be drawn from this study, a conclusion that Jameson would remind us must remain some kind of provisional and temporary truth, is that we have made an error in presuming the readers of this newsletter share our commitment to this kind of theory.

But leaving aside these two considerations, as important as they may be, we may still want to ask what is to be done? We are not tempted by what is to be undone, any more than Lenin was. Any desire for a return to a time before the RAE seems to us dangerously nostalgic about the concepts, philosophies, and systems of that time. More importantly perhaps it would fail to take advantage of what capital has done to us. At the very least, the RAE has broken the illusion of the individual scholar at his craft and revealed the labour of the university in a new way. For those who are fugitive in 'the undercommons of the university'³, this will not be any kind of theoretical advance, nor will it mean that undercommons does not continue to provoke new regulation in the wake of the RAE's promised demise. But for many academic workers there may be a chance to take up theory now to move beyond that mere sociological category of necessity and into the realm of freedom. The place to start might be to offer theory to those feeling the

³ Fred Moten and Stefano Harney (2004) 'The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses' *Social Text* – 79, 22:2.

proletarianization of the RAE. This requires resisting the clubbishness of theory and extending opportunities for mainstream scholars to join in this kind of critique. Needless to say it also means critical scholars avoiding the temptation to join the mainstream. Starting to think about such a move into the mainstream as a deliberate de-skilling, even a move into incompetence, might help to resist this temptation. Just as an emphasis on theory as competence might attract the de-skilled mainstream scholar.

‘Greening’ the North and South: A Note on the ‘Development’ of the Pampa

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I'm currently on study leave from the University of Essex, and I'm using this opportunity to spend half a year in Latin America to learn about this continent, to get to know people, to get to know its rich culture as well as its problems, which often relate to past and current structures of colonialism. In July and August 2006 I spent two months in Porto Alegre in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. I was teaching at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul a course about contemporary theories and practices of the organisation of social movements that resist hegemonic forms of corporate and social management.

In Porto Alegre there was a group of students who were very interested in the issue of cellulose companies that are currently being installed in the south of Brazil. Porto Alegre is situated on a big lake, and just opposite to the city there is a town called Guaíba where there is a big cellulose plant run by the biggest Brazilian cellulose company, Aracruz. When the plant was opened in the early 1970s (then owned by a different company), it caused a lot of environmental problems and the people of Porto Alegre mobilised against it, forcing the local authorities to close the plant temporarily. The plant then reopened with more modern technology; but still today there is a horrible smell and constant contamination of water that the people of the region there have to live with. Recently, the company has applied to double the capacity of the plant, and the people of Porto Alegre are starting to mobilise again, because they have a horrible experience with this type of industry – not to mention the terrible environmental record of this industry around the world. Furthermore, there are two more cellulose plants planned for Rio Grande do Sul. The Swedish-Finnish Stora Enso and the Brazilian company Votorantim Celulose plan to build huge cellulose plants in the region, taking advantage of the climate advantages to grow eucalyptus trees, which need a lot of water and a lot of heat to grow fast. Not to mention the relatively cheap land the companies can buy in this region to grow the plantations, which are needed to constantly feed the cellulose plants, producing cellulose and paper almost exclusively for export to the North.

After the course, we went on a trip with about 15 students to travel from Porto Alegre via Montevideo, Fray Bentos and Gualaquaychú to Buenos Aires to find out more about the regional dimensions of this struggle and learn from the experiences of the people in Uruguay and Argentina to resist this type of development. On this trip we talked to a lot of people from local governments, NGOs, social movements and companies who are involved with this topic. We have started a blog on the internet (<http://pulp->

fictions.blogspot.com) to inform the public about our research. We hope that this research will help people in the wider region in the Pampa – as well as across the globe – to learn about the issues. For me this is part of an academic research which is not simply academic, i.e. tight to theory and the academy, but a research that is connected to popular social actions, to public consciousness; it's an idea of action research; a research that is connected to social action. In this way the academy is connecting itself to society struggling for a better life.

Now, one might call this academic or activist tourism. But for me it is not simply that. I'm learning very interesting and important facts about the way 'development' works in today's era of corporate globalisation – a 'development' which is often directed and master-minded from the North. The Pampa region can be very much seen to be on the frontlines of a particular type of 'development', and I'm hoping that this research will help to understand better the global dimensions of contemporary practices of corporate globalisation, which often have devastating effects on local and regional communities in the South. The problems of 'development' that one can envisage everywhere one goes in the South are never just local or even regional. They are always also global.

The fact is that the North is using resources, like paper, in an excessive way; In Finland, for example, a person uses on average ten times as much paper as in Uruguay per year. This excess needs to be produced; and it is increasingly produced in the South, in so-called 'developing countries'. Why? Because environmental regulations are stricter in Europe; because costs are much lower here; because there are less regulations here; because there are favourable climatic and other natural conditions here (for example, a Eucalyptus tree grows roughly 10 times as fast in the Pampa region than in Finland). Of course, it's not the first time that the North uses the South to enrich itself. Writers, like the Uruguayan Eduardo Galeano, have exposed for a long time that since the so-called 'discovery' of America the continent has been a ground of exploitation by Europeans and North Americans, by the North. There are many people who say that the period of colonisation has not ended yet; in fact it is alive and well, and ongoing. Today they call it 'development', but the practices have changed little.

However, there have always been numerous struggles against colonisation, against hegemony and

imperialism. The people of Latin America have always resisted foreign domination and the exploitation of their lands. There have also been many struggles in the North against environmental destruction, against companies that pollute the environment in the name of 'development', in the name of providing jobs and making money. There have been many successes of the green movements in Europe, for example; rivers have therefore been cleaned up and regulations have become much tougher. Costs have therefore risen for a lot of companies there. Globalisation makes it now possible for companies to relocate; to shift their production, which often is polluting, to other countries with less regulation. This is why it's important for the people in the South to realise what is happening with their environment here in this new wave of the colonisation of their land. But people in the South are not simply accepting these 'new', contaminating industries. They have started to resist the polluting practices of local and multinational companies. They are organising to resist contamination and environmental destruction.

So, let me talk in more detail about the situation in Fray Bentos and Gualeguaychú, which are places at the border of Uruguay and Argentina where Botnia is currently building a giant cellulose plant, and where ENCE is planning to build another big cellulose plant – although they have recently announced that they might relocate their plant to another place in Uruguay; a decision that is the result of an intense social struggle – mainly organised by the Citizens' Assembly of Gualeguaychú – against the building of these two plants.



The local dimension

Why have the people of Gualeguaychú resisted the construction of the two cellulose plants in Fray Bentos for the past three years? To bring it to the point: because they are extremely worried about the potential contamination and environmental destruction of these plants. As Carlos Martín Cerri writes in his book *El Corte de Gualeguaychú* (Dunken, Buenos Aires, 2006), “One has to emphasize that the cellulose industry is considered to be one of the three most polluting industries of the planet, together with the leather and metallurgical industries” (p. 13; all translations are mine).

Gualeguaychú is an important regional tourist centre. The Carnival of Gualeguaychú, famous in the whole of Argentina as well as the wider region, draws thousands of visitors to the town every year. Tourists also come to Gualeguaychú to enjoy its tranquil river shores, fishing, water sport. In short, Gualeguaychú – besides being an important regional, agricultural centre – is a tourist town; tourism is one of the main incomes for its people. Would you want to have two giant plants constructed by an industry that is considered one of the world's most polluting industries next to you, if your livelihood depends largely on tourism as well as agriculture?



The two plants would have immense environmental, economic, social and cultural implications for the town and the local region. There is not only the smell that all cellulose plants produce – even those with the newest technologies. There is also not only the aesthetic aspect of having giant chimneys rising next to where you want to enjoy tranquil river life – not to mention the immense amount of other smoke being produced by these plants. There is also the documented effects cellulose plants have on the quality of the water – they

use millions of litres of water every day, which they extract from a public space – the river – free of charge. Sure, today they are often obliged to clean the water; but they can never filter everything out – because producing cellulose and paper is basically an intense chemical process using a lot of toxic materials. And with often weak governments in place in many Southern countries, the existing environmental laws are often not enforced, as there is corruption and lack of controls.

The regional dimension

But of course there is a wider regional dimension to this problem. Environmental destruction is never just a local problem. The environment does not know national borders; it always affects the wider region, if not a whole continent, especially if we talk about the contamination of water that is carried by rivers across countries providing the livelihood for often millions of people. Also, a local cellulose plant is only the tip of the iceberg; it can only exist if massive amounts of wood are available cheaply nearby. A cellulose plant ‘eats’ hundreds of tons of wood every day. This wood needs to be planted and grown cheaply near the plant in order to reduce transportation costs. In this part of the world the eucalyptus tree, which is native to Australia, has been introduced over the past three to four decades specifically because of its ability to grow fast and produce extremely favourable wood for cellulose production. Eucalyptus trees mature in the Pampa region about 10 times as fast as in other regions; this is because of the good climatic conditions; it is warm all year around; the Pampa has comparatively rich resources of water. The problem is that

“...the eucalyptus sucks up all the nutrients of the earth. The eucalyptus is a destructor on a grand scale. A tree consumes one hundred litres of water per day, each eucalyptus. It dries up the water tables, which are the water reserves we have underneath the earth, to be accessed for human consumption. All this is sucked up by eucalyptus trees. That is, the massive eucalyptus plantations are a desertification instrument, and in addition it kills all the biodiversity that there is. Underneath a woodland of eucalyptuses there is no beast, there is not left anything, everything disappears.” (Héctor Rubio in *El Corte de Gualeguaychú*, p. 44)

Here it is claimed that a eucalyptus tree consumes 100 litres a day; others claim it consumes 30 litres a day. Whatever the number, it is widely accepted that eucalyptus trees consume a massive amount of water, as they are genetically trained to look – with their long roots – for deep water sources in the Australian desert.

Currently the whole of the Pampa region – comprising vast areas in Argentina, Uruguay and Rio Grande do Sul in the south of Brazil – is being transformed into a giant eucalyptus monoculture. This is a deliberate development in a region that is a natural grassland and that traditionally supports cattle production. The World Rainforest Movement (WRM), with its headquarters in Montevideo, Uruguay, has studied the problems of eucalyptus plantations in great detail. All their extensive material is available online free of charge (www.wrm.org.uy).

We should also mention the huge implications of these eucalyptus plantations for the consolidation of unequal land rights. As Eduardo Galeano has described so vividly in his book *The Open Veins of Latin America*, ever since the so-called discovery of Latin America the continent and its vast lands were a colonial tool to produce monocultures that were in high demand in



Europe. First it was sugar. Then it was coffee, cacao, cotton. Today it is soya, mais, and of course eucalyptus. These monocultures are often made possible because the oligarchy, that is, a very few people with a lot of power, own the majority of land. These vast areas of land, owned by national oligarchies as well as foreign proprietors, are intensively used to produce monocultures that are shipped to Europe and other parts of the rich world. That is, they are used not to develop a local industry; monocultures are not there to bring about a sustainable local development. Take for example soya, which is currently being planted across Latin America to satisfy the rising needs of the North. Just like eucalyptus trees, this is a monoculture which is extremely destructive, as it consumes all the nutrition of a soil for a few years without giving anything back to the soil. Massive amounts of pesticides and industrial fertilizers are needed to keep the production efficient, which of course is another source of water

contamination – not to mention the implications of these monocultures for the consolidation of unequal land distribution.

The global dimension

As I mentioned before, there are of course not just local and regional dimensions to these problems. Ever since its so-called ‘discovery’ Latin America has been dealing with local and regional problems, which are in fact produced elsewhere. Today, everybody talks about globalisation, as if this is something new, a new inevitable practice. But isn’t this just the continuation of the type of colonisation that started with the ‘discovery’ of Latin America and other foreign lands by European conquerors, which enslaved millions of indigenous people, which established unequal relationships of dependency, which created unbelievable practices of exploitation, pollution, and contamination?

But when we talk about globalisation today, it is not colonisation or neo-colonisation which dominates the discourse. Instead, the prevailing discourse today is ‘development’. Companies like Botnia, ENCE, Stora Enso, Aracruz, etc, receive a lot of international grants (from the World Bank, for example) to invest in this region in order ‘develop’ the region. The Botnia investment in Uruguay is the biggest single foreign investment in that country ever. It is supposed to develop the economy, provide jobs, stop the immigration of young Uruguayans to other countries because of the lack of opportunities at home. But what kind of ‘development’ is it really?

“In the middle of the 1980s, at the end of the 20th century, a plan was conceived in Europe to clean the old continent of dirty industries. The idea was to begin to relocate the most polluting industries, taking them to other countries of the world where they could take advantage of the free plundering of natural resources, cheap manual labour, and where they could get rid of the polluting leftovers without the necessary controls. Thus, the Europeans reached the conclusion that the project to install cellulose plants in the river basin of the Uruguay River would help to implement a significant part of that plan, which is beneficial for them and detrimental for us. ... The World Bank granted the first credits to bring the project on its way, money that began falling into the hands of the political class, some of whose members would use it to invest in eucalyptus plantations.”
(*El Corte de Gualaguaychú*, p. 13)

Carlos Martín Cerri talks here about a deliberate plan to shift the contaminating industries from Europe to the so-called developing countries. What he forgets is that this ‘decision’ didn’t come suddenly. It is the result of

decade long social struggles that involved a very strong green movement in Europe – particularly in places like Germany, France and Scandinavia. The victories that were won in that struggle resulted in higher environmental costs for companies – they couldn't just pollute the rivers anymore; they couldn't just pollute the air anymore. There were now stricter laws and controls in place that prevented pollution from happening. I don't want to give the impression that everything is fine and rosy in Europe – not at all. There are many cases of environmental destruction that come with hyper-development; an excessive amount of cars exist, for example, polluting our cities. These cars need roads, which transform our limited land into asphalted terrains destroying natural habitats. We also have problems like industrial waste, like that from nuclear power plants, which cannot be disposed of properly. In short, there is every need for the environmental struggles to continue and proliferate in Europe.

But let us go back to Fray Bentos and Gualeguaychú. The reason why most people in Uruguay support the installation of the cellulose plants is because of the promised economic development providing jobs. When we were travelling through Fray Bentos we could see local people coming from the construction site of the massive Botnia plant; so this is beneficial for the local economy in that town. But this is not the whole story. The majority of the jobs that are being created are only for a limited time period when the plant is being constructed. For that construction effort the Finnish company actually plans to also import cheap labour from Eastern Europe, which has created – not unsurprisingly – labour relation problems on the construction site at the moment. And when it is finished the actual plant will probably not employ more than 100 people, which for this huge investment of around 1 billion US Dollars is a tiny number of jobs that is being created. So, the economic development in Fray Bentos is limited.

And what about the wider implications for the Uruguayan economy? The first thing to realise is that the plant will be built in a so-called 'Zona Franca', a Free Trade Zone.

"A Free Trade Zone is a zone that a country grants to certain corporations where they don't pay anything. There no taxes are paid; it is as if one goes from one country to another. And there they also have their own private port from where they export." (Julia Cocaro in *El Corte de Gualeguaychú*, p. 38)

There have been many Free Trade Zones installed in so-called 'developing countries' over the past decades. The idea is that a designated area is used to provide easy investment opportunities for multinational companies without burdening them with national taxes and other unwanted things. The hope is that such areas can kick-start a national economy or at least the economy of the wider region around a Free Trade Zone. Experiences with this type of development in other countries like Mexico, however, show that this is often not the case. Instead, the Free Trade Zones are simply special zones for multinational companies to produce cheaply as they get massive investment help from institutions like the World Bank as well as from local governments without paying any taxes for many years. The profits that Botnia, for example, will make in Fray Bentos will be transferred back to Finland where the taxes will benefit the Finnish people. So, it's actually a development of the Finnish economy. It's not surprising that the Finnish government is a very active supporter of the Botnia investment in Uruguay.

But there is another aspect of the global dimension of this topic. It's not just the discourse of 'development' that is fuelling the installation of the cellulose plants in the South. It is also the 'green' discourse of 'climate change' that is driving this development. As Julia Cocaro of MOVITDES (Movement for Life, Work and Sustainable Development), a movement organisation from Fray Bentos, Uruguay, explains:

"The subject of cellulose plants begins with forest monoculture, a policy imposed by the World Bank promoting the forestation of the tempered zones of the Southern hemisphere as 'woodland captors'. ... 'To what do you refer to when you say 'woodland captors'? ... 'Woodlands to capture carbon anhydride with the purpose of fighting the overheating of the terrestrial atmosphere. That is: the Northern hemisphere, which is the super-industrialized hemisphere, is contaminating; it is emitting too much amount of carbon anhydride to the atmosphere. Carbon anhydride is a gas that contributes to the greenhouse effect, that is, it increases the temperature of the atmosphere, which is known as 'climate change', and we already know what is happening with the climate. With this story they were going away to forest the tempered zones of the Southern hemisphere to catch carbon anhydride, in order to reduce global overheating. This is how they promoted eucalyptus monocultures. But eventually these trees are being destroyed to use the wood in cellulose plants; that is, we first have 'woodland captors' and then we let carbon anhydride again into the atmosphere.'" (*El Corte de Gualeguaychú*, p. 36-37)

Isn't this ridiculous? The North is the biggest polluter of the world – by far. As people push our governments in

Europe, for example, to do something about this problem of pollution that results in climate change around the world, our governments come up with a seemingly 'green' solution that promises to plant a lot of trees in the South that hope to offset the pollution in the Global North. What this supposedly 'greening' of the South is, is a new form of colonialisation. Why? Because the eucalyptus trees planted in the Pampa in the name of 'climate change' are actually new forms of monocultures that serve the economic interests of the North, producing contamination, health problems and other problems in the South. This is a farce!

In terms of health problems, we can report on the town of Juan Lacaze in Uruguay. It has had a cellulose plant for more than hundred years. When we visited the town on our trip, there was a fine white dust in the air, settling on trees, buildings, and in people's lungs, creating a lot of health problems for the local population. It's the type of external effects that companies often don't feel responsible for. Cellulose plants create a lot of filth, external effects that the companies don't feel responsible for; contamination of water, contamination of air, heavy truck traffic to transport the trees to the plant and take the cellulose away – and many others related to eucalyptus plantations. All these external effects the companies don't feel responsible for; creating huge problems for local and regional societies.

But people in the South don't simply accept this 'development' that is being dictated to them by the North. The people of Gualeguaychú don't just accept this type of 'development' on the shores of the Rio Uruguay, which provides the livelihood of their communities. They have organised to resist the installation of the cellulose plants. Their resistance has

become a major political issue in the Pampa region, which has catapulted issues of environmental destruction as well as of green and sustainable development right to the forefront of people's attention.

But resistance does not just happen; it is not an automatic response, as we can see around the world where there are numerous examples of environmental destruction caused by so-called 'development'. People don't automatically stand up against pollution, exploitation and colonialisation. What I'm interested in is the question of how people stand up and organise themselves to resist developments that are against their livelihood, against their interests. Too often people are left powerless, betrayed by their 'democratically' elected representatives in local, regional and national governments – not to mention the numerous supranational organisations – like the World Bank – who claim to represent the interests of millions of non-privileged people around the world. But there is a huge mistrust of these established organisations and institutions, which often work for the interests of the oligarchies rather than those without power. But people realise that they do have a lot of power if they organise themselves; when they engage in collective action, when they organise themselves in neighbourhood governments, in assemblies, in unions, in social movements. This is what interests me; this process of organizing power out of powerlessness; and this is why it's important to look at the case of the Citizens' Assembly of Gualeguaychú (www.noalapapelera.com.ar), which has organised the resistance against the two cellulose plants on the Rio Uruguay for the past three years. But this engagement with the organisation of this popular assembly of the people of Gualeguaychú has to be left for another paper.



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

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Meet your new 'nomadic' Nordic rep

Nina Kivinen

November is really the most depressing month of the year, at least in Finland. Grey, wet and really, really dark. The only good thing is that this gives you a perfect excuse to spend quality time inside.



As Saara Taalas has been appointed treasurer of SCOS, I now have the honour to take up the position as Scandinavian rep. So perhaps a few words need to be said about me. I just received my doctorate with a thesis on space, images and identity at Åbo Akademi University, where I work as lecturer and researcher (and yes, Alf is my boss, the stories I could tell.).

I'm also currently involved in the Nomadic University of Art, Philosophy and Enterprise, which might interest many of you. Our first fantastic meeting (or we call it an oasis) of artists, academics and practitioners took place in Turku/Åbo in September. Our next meeting will be in February at Cittadellarte in Biella, Italy. Check out our cool website (www.nuope.eu) for more information on how to join!

And finally, all of you in Scandinavia, please let me know of things going on in our part of the world!

Papers on the beach?
SCOS Aussie style

David Bubna-Litic

I have just got back from the Australasian SCOS conference, held at Massey University in New Zealand, late in November. This is the second conference we have held under the auspices of SCOS, and following our general thematic: exploring the alterity of being on the other side of the globe, the conference was entitled *Hosts and Organization*. It attracted a surprisingly number of excellent presentations. We are all grateful to Janet Sayers and the NZ team, who did a remarkable job in organisation, and a good time was had by all. In keeping with the very positive mood that ensued, Carl Rhodes and I agreed to host the next conference at the *University of Technology, Sydney* in 2008. So, if you want an excuse to travel to the sun, for the winter of 2008, this is a good opportunity to do so. The food will be sublime, the wine

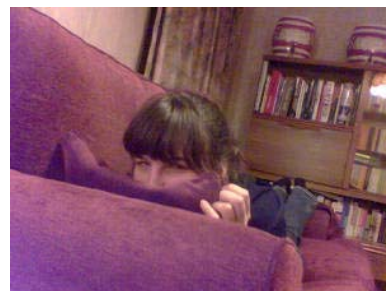


superb, and perchance — we might even allow papers to be presented on the beach. Needless to say, it should be a chance to catch some Australian culture, and we expect some very interesting and ground-breaking papers.

Farewell Peter!

pp. Sam Warren

After 3 years faithful, exuberant service, Peter Elsmore has handed the UK rep baton (**and what a fine sturdy stick it is...eds.**) over to Rowland Curtis, who's a little shy at the moment — so we'll look forward to his first report in the next edition of *Notework* — welcome Rowland, you can come out from behind the sofa now!



Go large! A super-size portion of German Academic Life

Peter Pelzer

Bologna is everywhere. Several years ago the EU summit took place in this town in Italy. One of the topics where the heads of governments could agree upon was a certain standardisation of degrees in higher education: masters and bachelors everywhere. If the replacement of century old ways of graduating has positive or negative impacts should not be discussed here, but a note given of a current discussion in Germany.



One part of the discussion about the budget for universities connected to the expected rise in numbers of students is how to expand the teaching personnel. One proposal is the introduction of lecturers, adding to the other forms of teaching with different amounts of research. The interesting thing in the discussion is how it is tried to place this new role into the web of the existing ones. So far there are two routes of qualification for full professorship. One is the traditional with becoming an assistant at an institute, teach a lot, research a bit and finish a PhD. If one wants to follow a career at university there are two possibilities. Getting a teaching job or working at a renowned research institution and parallel to that write a habilitation is the usual way. The habilitation is considered to be a piece of research which should be of higher standard as a dissertation. After passing the defence and the research being accepted by the committee of all full professors of the institute, the candidate is a 'Privatdozent', which roughly translates as private lecturer. And it is meant like this. S/he has to teach in order not to lose this status, but is not necessarily paid for that. Losing this status means that teaching experience is not unconditionally accepted and provides a thornier way to apply for a full professorship. This is the traditional way. To break this formal way the federal government passed a law to clearly say that the habilitation is not accepted any more as the only way of qualification for full professorship. The new way is the junior professor. Within five years the candidate has to prove the ability to teach and to publish. After that it is possible to apply for a full professorship. This was created to have a less standardised way and to open the way for good candidates at a younger age. But the establishment is stubborn: many junior professors take on the additional stress to write the habilitation to have a chance at the appointment commissions which usually consists of full professors who had to complete a habilitation themselves.

Now the German association of universities (Deutscher Hochschulverband) discusses the introduction of 'lecturers'. A lecturer, they state, must provide a motivating perspective. "We don't want to install the cheap teaching slave or a future teaching proletariat", declares the association. They propose a teaching of twelve to fourteen hours a week and the lecturer should be given the opportunity to write a habilitation. The difference to junior professors or scientific personnel is achieved by the concentration on teaching. The precondition for a junior lecturer should be a PhD, the precondition for a senior lecturer a habilitation or a successful finished junior professorship.

It is in my opinion no wonder that a lot of research takes place outside universities in such renowned institutions like Max-Planck-Institutes or Helmholtz Gesellschaft. This has been realised during the past years in the public discussion about how to achieve excellency at German universities and close the gap to the world's leading research universities. The former red-green federal government started what they called an excellence initiative. What followed is unprecedented in this country. Not following the principle of indiscriminate all-round distribution but instead a competition where only the winners, decided upon by an international academic jury, get the money. Three lines were called upon: there will be about 40 graduate schools where students write dissertations within concrete main topics; about 30 clusters of excellence where regional universities and research institutions cooperate in defined topics; and 10 concepts of future where universities concretely plan how to develop to the top class of science. Interdisciplinary work across the university as well as jointly with other research institutions was explicitly asked for. Only a university

successful in all three categories is called élite university. Besides the quality of several of the concepts there are two remarkable results in the competition. The first is that the competition was decided upon exclusively by an academic commission. They achieved to keep politics out of the competition despite the fact that the regional politicians tried to influence the process. And the result is untypical for the German federal landscape which usually tries to distribute budgets according to a regional balance: the three elite universities are in southern Germany: the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology and two universities in Munich: Technical University and Ludwig-Maximilian-University. This political incorrectness is a clear indication of the jury's independence.

There will be a second competition next year where more universities can qualify for the additional budget. In total the extra budget is € 1.9 billion, distributed over five years. The basic question for the successful universities is how to go on with their concepts once the budget is used up, i.e. how to turn an initiative into a lasting success. For someone who is not a natural scientist, there is an obvious lack. There is only one cluster of excellence from humanities: the university of Konstanz, 'cultural foundations of social integration' is their topic.

The discussion about the development of higher education and research in this country was always characterised by the conflict between the federal government and the regional governments of the 'Länder'. Universities are the jealously kept responsibilities of regional governments, many research institutes are financed primarily by the federal government. One change resulting from the competition is the cooperation across these political boundaries and the fact that a first step to an autonomous decision making is taken.

Besides the enthusiasm of the successful there are also voices who are not really bothered by the competition. An internationally well respected scholar in neurophysiology commented that it is well possible to achieve excellence without such public turmoil. Besides that the successful concepts were about applied technology in which he is not interested. He considers pure research as much more fundamental and has achieved excellent working conditions without a great apparatus of bureaucracy. Another critique comes from the students' union of one of the new elite universities. The students, says Thomas Honesz will not profit from the new status, as the professors involved are freed from teaching already during the whole competition and this will be continued during the research programme. Munich university, originally designed for about 25000 students, now has 45000 students, so that the currently bad situation will be worse with the new status.

Why did I put these two topics into this extended country rep's report? It demonstrates in a nutshell two extremes of the present academic situation in Germany: on the one hand business as usual and sticking even to those parts of tradition. What I very much regret is that the old strength of German universities, that only the excellence of humanities and natural sciences in the same university lead to their recognition as excellent, is almost lost. A critical reflection on what is researched with which consequences resulting from this research, and this viewed from different perspectives, is needed more than ever.

It's all about ME – Santa, God, Lacan and cheap bananas An antipodean mother's musings....

Janet Sayers

The report below includes the following: musings on Santa and God; problems with Adam, Eve and that other dude ...; Milk, cookies and Lacan; Plagues, bananas and taxi fares; and finally some stuff on ACSCOS 2006 (ie. The 2nd Meeting of the Australasian Caucus of the Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism)

Kia ora. As with the rest of the known universe, life continues. I have been thinking a lot about Santa lately and his magic powers. This has been prompted by my daughter (8, almost 9) who is very interested in discussing God's powers at the moment. God, as she has learnt in Bible Class (at school –more on that later), has magic powers. This is hardly fair, she reasons. If

God can have magic powers, why can't she? Good question I think. This is why I had children. Other than the promise of immortality, it was to keep me young, make me think of someone other than myself, and these interesting questions help mitigate the cost of schooling, clothes, toys, mortgage, and the worry. Well, I tell her, she can have magic powers once she actually gets some power. I suggest she has a shower and gets off to bed because it is past her bedtime. As you can probably see I am quickly out of my depth in eschatological discussions, but this doesn't stop me.

Back to Santa. Clearly there is a parallel between God and Santa. Both live in a heaven-like place. God in the sky. Santa at the North pole. Both are wonderful places full of happy people. Angels in heaven. Happy height-challenged people at the North Pole. We sacrifice things to both God and Santa. God gets the symbolic blood and body of Christ. Santa gets milk and cookies in the non-alcoholic houses, and a beer and a mince pie in others. Both are older white men. Both can perform miracles – God's powers are well known, but Santa's also involves piercing the space-time dimension. Santa, in short, is a god-figure. OK. But what is it with the milk and cookies? Why cookies? Why last thing at night? Why always the last cookie? Why does Santa get it? Where does it go? Why does he always leave such a mess with all the crumbs? What about his cholesterol? Well, I have to say that the answer to these questions came from an unlikely source to me last week. The ACSCOS 2006 event was held at Massey University in Auckland (more on that in a minute), and as part of the event we had a pre-conference Writing Workshop facilitated by the lovely and talented Professor Brad Jackson. One of Brad's suggestions was that we share our favourite bits of academic writing. One of those pieces of writing was by Lois Shawyer (1998). Lacan's theory of self and the story of the last cookie, in *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 58(3), 329–336. It all became clear to me. It's not about the cookies. It is all about me! I need to talk about the cookies, in therapy. Thank you, Andrew Dickson, a very bright cookie himself, for sharing that piece of writing with us. I finally think I get Lacan, or at least a bit of it. More than before the workshop anyway.

Also, on Bible Studies at school, I am ambivalent. I live in quite a conservative area in the suburbs and have made my feelings known that if the school is going to teach from the Bible the kids should learn about other

religions too. Everyone agrees, but no one does anything. The kids take the same tack with me: resistance by saying yes and then not doing anything (the technical term in organizational studies escapes me). But, on the other hand, as I say to my ten year old when he protests that he doesn't want to do it. "Luke", I say, "You will never be able to appreciate *The Life of Brian*, unless you understand something of Christianity".

This is what happens when you patronise children by presenting them with literal interpretations of the Bible at school: My daughter is currently extremely anxious about the issue of Adam and Eve being the progenitors of the entire race of man. The way she introduced this conversation was as follows "Mum, I need to talk to you ..." My gut clenches, "Aimee, you know if there is anything you need to ask me, you just ask, OK? And if it's about sex, don't be embarrassed. I know you talk it about at school, and I can tell you anything you need to know". To this, I get a cross between a scowl, a sneer, and two rolled eyes. I read that one completely wrong. "No" she says, "It's about Adam and Eve and that other dude ..." The other dude? Some prompting doesn't help, and finally I realise, "Oh, the devil!!!" Yes, she says relieved. We are finally on the same wave-length. "The devil, yes, that dude ..." She goes on "At school they have been saying that we are all brothers and sisters, but that can't be right can it?" I understand her anxiety. Her brother and her fight like cats and dogs and have ear-splitting battles of wills. I calm her down. "No, they are wrong. Adam and Eve are just symbolic", I tell her. I scour the back of my mind for some recent learning on this subject. Actually I tell her, science is currently saying that all people in the world can be traced back to one of seven mothers. This seems to take the sting out of the one mother, one father thing for her. Her moral universe is in kilter again. There is some wiggle room.

So, finally to ACSCOS 2006. It went great. I would like to thank the Ruth Simpson from Brunel and Campbell Jones from Leicester for travelling all the way to Auckland for our meeting. Our Australian friends also travelled some distance so thanks to you as well. Regarding feedback from the conference there were two important points to note. The first was that taxi fares from the airport to campus are nose-bleedingly expensive. The second is that Australia requires bananas. I had no idea. We couldn't provide enough. Those Ozies just gobbled them up. Something to do with a plague of some sort, and not being able to import

them. Only \$1.99 kg here. Our weather is crap, but at least the bananas are cheap.

The conference went well and many interesting and provocative papers were presented. We had 35 attendees and quite a lot of papers presented over two days. If you want to see anything about the content presented then go to <http://mib.massey.ac.nz/MIB/Events.html> where the full papers and the Conference Proceedings are located. The theme was hosting and hosts, and people used the opportunity to work out some ideas, and present some really interesting papers. I have put this report in a hurry, but the following is just some immediate high-points that come to mind for me personally, so apologies in advance for omissions. Some quick impressions: We heard from Campbell Jones who talked about parasites on bottoms and other sorts of parasites but for me the parasite on the anus captured my attention and held it. I blocked everything out after that. We should have put his talk last, not first!! Aha, the power of a strong metaphor ...

Tim Bentley had a baby girl the day before he gave his presentation. Isabella Rose. Well done Tim. Apparently it really hurt, but he looked quite good considering. Loong Wong talked about that complete multi-national hall of shame, Bhopal, and reminded me why I am

doing this job. Thanks for that Loong. Loong also brought me chocolates and wine as koha. Wonderful ... Ruth Simpson's paper also reminded me why I do this job – very interesting research on men in non-traditional (female) occupations. Helen Richardson's presentation was also really interesting and provocative. Helen looked at graffiti art and the framing of cities as aesthetic tourist destinations. She had some fascinating photos and she arranged some young graffiti artists to come out from town to give us a demonstration. It was terrific, and I have been looking at all the tagging around the North Shore (where I live, close to campus) wondering if that is our paint. Other really evocative and uplifting papers included John and Nanette Monin's paper on creativity and its relationship to the environment. This is undoubtedly coming to a very good journal near you soon. As too will Bronwyn Boon, Deborah Jones and Bradley Curnow's paper on the making of the movie "Out of the Blue" (which you should see – it is very good). Not only was it on the theme of hosting and hosting, but it was evocative and unsettling – like the movie itself. I could go on, but this missive is long enough. It was a terrific event and please be assured SCOS is alive and well down-under.

Thanks for letting me rave in this report. C U soon, XXX
OOO Janet

Tales from the Field

Dr. Zoe Bertgan – over to you Zoe!

I had lunch the other day with Karl Weick! Methodologically, I cannot speak of a more profound event in recent weeks. Heidegger in one hand, *The Chap* magazine in an other, I was examining the distributed pattern of carbon waste across the photoreceptor drum in terms of a hypothesised organizational analogue concerning the constellations of shoe leather cost-residue (after Bailey, 1956) on carpet wear. I came across Karl of all places in the staff canteen at NewForte Hotel Crown Plaza head offices, one of my randomly selected empirical sites, and boy did we get our sense-making apparatus in a terrible twist. Collectively co-emergent and mindful interaction it most certainly was not. Let me explain. Both working in NewForte as part of different - albeit as I was later forced to admit *related* research projects - we found ourselves trading ontology like dice players in some ancient Greek agora. He accused me of carrying mine around with me in my upholstered calfskin Vuitton (circa, 98 (note!)) whilst I posed to him the question whether he even cared about his. Despite Karl's reconstruction of events, it was I who was reminded first of Horace and his wonderfully barbarous 'His taste is keen, although his verse is harsh', but I had the decency and good taste not to give air to this anecdote. He on the other hand, oh so casually, with grace and aplomb dropped the immortal line when our anchovy dressed steamed sea-bass arrived: 'A lovely women tapers off into a fish'. He thought I wouldn't notice the allusion to Horace. Reader, can you imagine? Wouldn't you just *die* without Horace? The crude translation from the Latin notwithstanding I bit my tongue and eased off a morsel of lumpy white flesh from the plump and smiling



sea-bass reciting in my mind something along the lines of 'Verum pone moras et studium lucri, nigrorumque memor, dum licet, ignium misce stultitiam consiliis breuem dulce est desipere in loco'⁴.

Weick's a dapper chap, though, I have to say. Let me picture him for you. He stands some 5 foot 7 tall with a baroque gush of spiked white mullet, somewhat in the catwalk style of Gucci circa 1999 - after Billy Ray Cyrus or Michael Bolton, perhaps. He wears well the herringbone tweed, brogues, and plus fours. Swinging his monographed marble headed fluted walking cane with ostentatious pride, he invariably makes quite an entrance. Now according to twochapstalking dot com 'The modern chap's dress comprises items that have been tested on the sports field, by the military or by working men. They can, at various times be 'in fashion' but they have no quality, in and of themselves, of 'fashionableness'. Hegel was known to worry about the possible synthesis of the intransigent part and the emergent whole, but there can be no doubt that Karl fulfils this criterion of fashion. In his conversation he always chooses the best spot, the middle of each wall, to put a picture laboured over with all his skill, and the empty space all around it he fills with grotesques, which are fantastic paintings whose only charm lies in their variety and strangeness. The art of conversation is one that has not escaped our emeritus professor. But, what!? The human race no longer has his blessing, he tells me! All the theatricality to one side this interjection caused me to choke a little on my filigree of plum spiced broccoli. Did I hear him right? Now I know that silence corresponds to the noiseless ringing of stillness, the stillness of the saying that propriates and shows. We are all keenly aware that a thinking that thinks back to appropriation can just barely surmise it, and yet can already experience it in the essence of sartorial technology, an essence given the still odd-sounding name 'gentleman-framing'. But Karl? What gives? Why-fore the cynicism? Needless to say lunch was quickly concluded. I went my way, he his. Never one to waste an opportunity I considered deeply this exchange with Karl. I spoke at length with my erstwhile colleague The Right Honourable Cornelius Y. Tlee and finally this opened up some clearance that allowed me to make some kind of sense of it all. Yes, of course, the Lagrangian is always a crude reduction, the plum spiced broccoli a contingent irritant in the teleology of spirit, but by Jove heedful interaction demands a mighty dose of you-give-me and I-give-you a star-shot-down-to-incandescent-burn upon the sidewalk.

Bailey, M. (1956) 'The Welfare Cost of Inflationary Finance' *Journal of Pol Econ* 64, 93-110.

SCOS 2006 – Nijmegen for recovering positivists!

Sue Harrington
University of Portsmouth/ Leicester

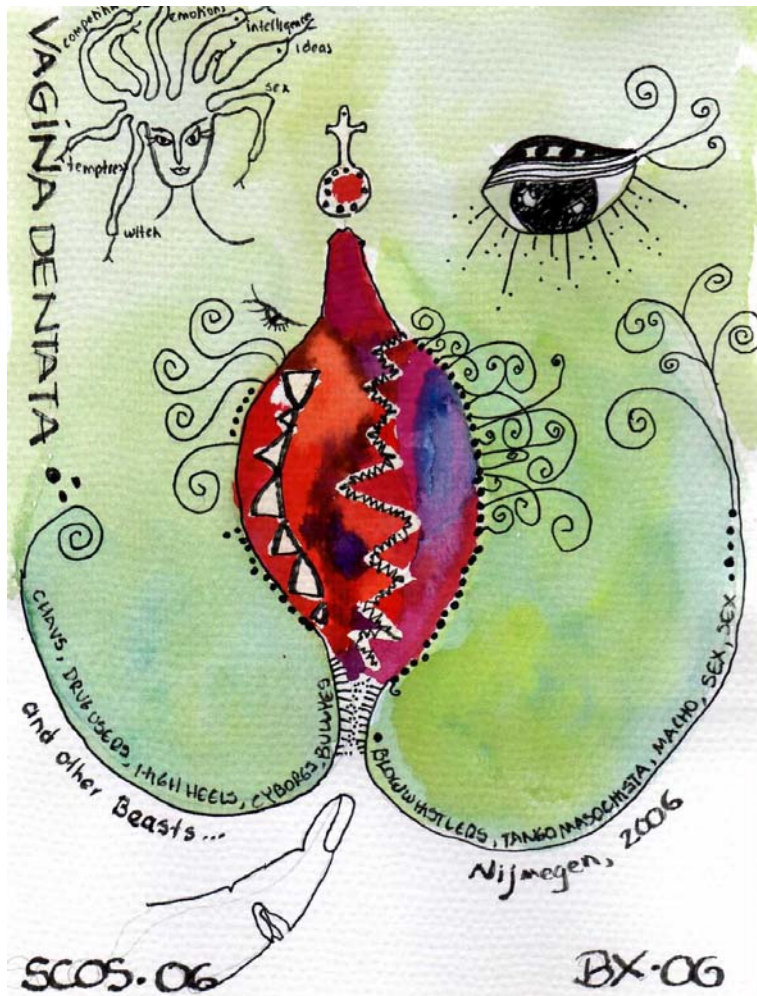
For me, this SCOS 2006 was viewed through the eyes of a recovering-positivist SCOS-virgin. Under the sound supervisory care of Sam Warren (**hmm – that's doubtful – eds.!**) I had been encouraged not only to attend SCOS but also to present a paper – all part of my continuing therapy! Having read the call for papers and agonised over the language of my abstract, my nerves were jangling with anxious anticipation (of what I wasn't quite sure!). But from the moment I reached Schiphol airport and began to meet fellow delegates, my SCOS experience proved to be unlike any other conference. The theme of fun permeated everything – from the alien-life-form-covered conference bags, to the enthusiasm and originality of the session presenters, and onto the zest and fervour with which the evenings' official and unofficial entertainments were approached. The other real difference was the welcome and friendliness from everyone I met – there was a real sense of SCOS being one big happy (albeit rather strange) family – nevermore so than the feedback and advice I received on my paper (thank you!). The sessions were incredibly varied; there was a level of creativity, originality and a richness that I had not encountered at a conference before. From the perspective of a researcher whose roots had been firmly entrenched within a psychological background, I have to admit that I found some of them impossible to understand! But perhaps that is all part of the SCOS experience, because there were very

⁴ But put aside delays and the pursuit of profit, and mindful of the dark [funeral] fires, while it is permitted, mix a bit of nonsense with your schemes: it is sweet on occasion to play the fool. (Eds.)

many more that provided me with new insights and alternative approaches for thinking about and developing the theoretical approach for my PhD research. So, for a now almost-completely-recovered-positivist SCOS-ex-virgin the conference was an eye-opening, mind-broadening, fun and alcohol-filled experience!

Organizational Bestiary & the Vagina Dentata

Beatriz Acevedo,
University of Hull
SCOS 2006 PhD bursary recipient



Once upon a time, in a land of woods and mystery, dragons and chimeras, witches and cyborgs.. there were some adventurous Scosians⁵... It was the summer of the sixth year of the new millennium, everything was known, but also, a mystery.. here they are, talking and discussing, and having a drink.. they come from different parts of the world and disciplines.. the place is called Nijmegen, in the border between the Low and High lands (Germany and The Netherlands), the hosts: two wonderful knights, Ruud and Rene, and the group of organisers who as ever make of this event an unforgettable reunion. Thanks for a wonderful conference, again...!

Throughout the different presentations, the seminar became populated by monsters, beasts, beauties, dragons, evil clowns, 'v-dentatas', 'chavs', devils and other creatures... Imaginary or real, threatening or poisoning, disguised in the organisational scenario, these metaphors of the surreality of organisations, these creatures haunt organisations.

One of the most daring presentations was the 'Vagina Dentata' which really caught my imagination: **(and we think your representation of it will do the same for Notework readers, Bea! – eds.)** It referred to

the representations of women in the organisation, and how the feminine seems to be wrapped on temptation, sexuality, sensuality, irrationality and distortion... Then, it is not just the –also mythological/but real- glass ceiling, or the procedures, politics or regulations... there are other subtle mechanism of exclusion. If we believe in the presence of the vagina dentata, thus, changes in the way organisations work in relation to women and the feminine must work within the realm of dreams and metaphors. The Vagina dentata, represents amongst many things the fear of castration, in a very Freudian way, it embodies those characteristics of women, sublimed or simply exaggerated: the sexuality, the risk, the

⁵ This race of humans is a very difficult to define, they come from different parts, disciplines, and colours... some by causality, conviction, fortune, or misfortune, belief, disbelief, etc.. A whole article would be required to describe them... (us?)

castration, the competition, the imaginary, the emotional, the intelligence, the Mother Earth... Explicit or implicit, these representations may become myths or monsters. Sensuality, sexuality, temptation: insatiable, the vagina dentata threats, showing her teeth, her devouring claws... adding to the already stereotyped duality between female / male views in the organisation are excluding and discriminatory.

More drawings and images emerged from the presentations, still gazing from my notebook courtesy of University of Nijmegen... More ideas sparking in my mind... Can we perfectly propose to gather an Organizational Bestiary, including the tango-masochists, the dentata, the cyborgs, and bullies, the chavs, the devil in high heels, the deviant, the whistle-blowers, the outsider, the deviant, the evil clown, or some other images populating our organizations... Mirrors and mirrorers... which reminds me of an adventure in the *Zoology Fantastic* told brilliantly by Jorge Luis Borges. Thus, as a farewell but also as an invitation, here an extract of his *Book of Invisible Beings*:

Fauna of Mirrors

In one of the volumes of the *Lettres edifiantes et curieuses* that appeared in Paris during the first half of the eighteenth century, Father Fontecchio of the Society of Jesus planned a study of the superstitions and misinformation of the common people of Canton; in the preliminary outline he noted that the Fish was a shifting and shining creature that nobody had ever caught but that many said they had glimpsed in the depths of mirrors. Father Fontecchio died in 1736, and the work begun by his pen remained unfinished; some years later Herbert Allen Giles took up the interrupted task.

According to Giles, belief in the Fish is part of a larger myth that goes back to the legendary times of the Yellow Emperor. In those days the world of mirrors and the world of men were not, as they are now, cut off from each other. They were, besides, quite different; neither beings nor colors nor shapes were the same. Both kingdoms, the specular and the human, lived in harmony; you could come and go through mirrors. One night the mirror people invaded the earth. Their power was great, but at the end of bloody warfare the magic arts of the Yellow Emperor prevailed. He repulsed the invaders, imprisoned them in their mirrors, and forced on them the task of repeating, as though in a kind of dream, all the actions of men. He stripped them of their power and of their forms and reduced them to mere slavish reflections.

Nonetheless, a day will come when the magic spell will be shaken off. The first to awaken will be the Fish. Deep in the mirror we will perceive a very faint line and the color of this line will be like no other color. Later on, other shapes will begin to stir. Little by little they will differ from us; little by little they will not imitate us. They will break through the barriers of glass or metal and this time will not be defeated. Side by side with these mirror creatures, the creatures of water will join the battle. In Yunnan they do not speak of the Fish but of the Tiger of the Mirror. Others believe that in advance of the invasion we will hear from the depths of mirrors the clatter of weapons.

Book of Imaginary Beings
Jorge Luis Borges (1957)
Fauna of the Mirrors

Calls and announcements

A (very) few upcoming events, dates for your diaries and announcements:

European Nomadic University

Ok guys why not tell THE WORLD that the european nomadic university is well running on its tracks. this is a three years nomadic tribe wandering to three oasis each year in quest for ideas and experiences in critical crossroads between art and economy. The hub is in Åbo Finland and partners are swedish, italian etc. Read for yourself at www.nurope.eu Contact Pierre Guillet de Monthoux for more details....

Management Ethics and The Politics of Identity

EURAM 2007, Paris, 16-19 May

Contemporary organizations are beset with ethical controversy. Concerns as varied as environmental disasters, fraudulent business activities, corporate collapses, workplace harassment, and worker exploitation are commonly reported in the daily news. Moreover, in an era characterized by rapid expansion and diffusion of organizational power across the globe, the impact of ethically questionable management practices have never been more conspicuous or dangerous. Despite the obvious relevance of ethics to the behaviour of organizations, what being ethical means and what are the implications of different ways of constituting this remains contested and unclear for the practice of management. Increasingly, moral dilemmas confront all managers in their mundane everyday activities. Such dilemmas are accentuated for those who work in organizations where a formal stress on ethical awareness, often through adherence to codes of practice or governance rules, is the tenor of the times. Yet it is in some such contexts that the most scandalous behaviour has occurred - ENRON, for instance. Such a context demands a re-thinking of management practice, ethical management practice, and what it means to be a manager - what it means to be an ethical manager.

The track will explore the relationships between the ethics of management, the behaviour of organizations, the identities of contemporary managers and the ethics of identity performance. Centrally, this concerns the meaning and practice of ethics, for managers, in an age where corporate power, organizational complexity, and managerial responsibility are all taking on new and expanded forms, with implications for a politics of managerial identity in which personal values, organizational pressures, ethical traditions, and public responsibility all come into potential conflict.

The track calls for empirically and/or theoretically based contributions which address the breadth of issues that arise in the space in which ethics and management intersect. To submit to this track, please do so via the EURAM website: <http://www.euram2007.org/r/site/default.asp?ild=to3zgsxGHJtuo0pu1zhttp> and click on "click here to submit". If you have any queries regarding the stream please contact alison.pullen@uts.edu.au or carl.rhodes@uts.edu.au. If you have questions regarding the submission process please contact Audrey O'Connor: audrey@eiasm.be. Deadline for submissions is 2nd January 2007.

International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior Call for Papers for a Special Issue

Organization Theory and Organization Behavior: Through the Lens of Psychodynamics

Guest Editors: Adrian Carr – Principal Research Fellow, University of Western Sydney
Cheryl Lapp – President, Labyrinth Consulting

The *International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior* is seeking original contributions from academics and practitioners for a special issue that explores the manner in which psychoanalytic, or, more broadly, psychodynamic insights inform organization theory and our explanations of behavior in organizations. The editors of this special issue use the term “psychodynamic” in preference to the term “psychoanalytic” in an effort to emphasize behaviour that is beyond the ‘consulting room’ and as a less treatment orientated synonym that implies the normality and dynamic nature of these processes.

The aim of journals published by PrAcademics Press is to bridge theory and practice and it is in the same spirit that we invite contributions that highlight the utility of being psychodynamically informed when it comes to understanding theory and behavior in organizations. In keeping with our aforementioned distinction between psychoanalytic and psychodynamic, we ask that contributors address themselves to the more typical behaviors and processes rather than the aberrant, deviant, exceptional or the pathological. Topics that contributors might like to consider may include: strategy, technology, leadership; group dynamics; gender; authority relations (including bullying); creativity; emotionality; politics; identity; cultural change; social and organization defences; psychodynamic responses to bureaucratic and other organizational forms; and architecture and aesthetics. In addressing these or any other topics, in keeping with the Freudian origins of psychodynamics, contributors are asked to highlight the deeper understanding of the *unconscious motivation* and *meaning* of behaviors and processes. This understanding may come from any of the psychoanalytic schools of thought including; Freudian; Lacanian; Kleinian; Jungian etc.

It is intended that this special issue of IJOTB will be Number 1 of Volume 11 (published in 2008) and the guest editors would like submissions no later than **the end of January 2007**. Contributors should send their manuscripts by email to both Adrian Carr (a.carr@uws.edu.au) and Cheryl Lapp (LabyrinthConsulting@shaw.ca). In general, submissions should be in **APA style** and contributors should consult the web page for IJOTB (<http://pracademicspress.com/about-ijotb.html>) for specific notes about formatting submissions.

....and finally

Hope you've enjoyed this edition of Notework. Bye from Sam and Damian, but please continue to send your contributions to the new editors: Sheena and Stephen

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dab19@le.ac.uk