

3-2006

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**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443330610657160>

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## Citation

HARNEY, Stefano and OSWICK, Cliff. Regulation and freedom in global business education. (2006). *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*. 26, (3-4), 97-109. Research Collection Lee Kong Chian School Of Business.

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# Regulation and freedom in global business education

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – This paper seeks to confront the orthodoxy of global business education with some insights from postcolonial theory in order to develop a new critical pedagogy adequate for a global sociology of management and accounting.

**Design/methodology/approach** – Reviewing the state of play in postcolonial theory and noting the new politicisation in that field, the paper asks what relevance this politicisation might have for an alternative to orthodox global business education.

**Findings** – The paper finds that the texts available to postcolonial theory present a wealth beyond the regulation of colonial and neo-colonial regimes and in contrast critical management studies do not have texts that express such wealth or reveal global business as the regulator of such a wealth. Instead critique and indeed the anti-globalization movements risk, appearing as regulators of wealth and business, threaten to emerge as the true carnival of wealth and path to freedom.

**Research limitations/implications** – To dissociate critique from regulation and business from wealth, business and management education must seek out these texts in the fantasies among students and in the differences that obtain, as Dipesh Chakrabarty has argued, at the heart of capital.

**Originality/value** – This article embraces the fantasies of the fetish of the commodity as part of an immanent politics, claiming both an excess of wealth and an access to wealth, based on a new fetish adequate for the globalized limits that students and teachers encounter.

**Keywords** Business studies, Sociology of work, International economics, Globalization, Political economy, Regulation

**Paper type** Conceptual paper

Globalization is a complex of effects that shift the imaginary through which we think consolidation and dispersion, mutuality without sameness; namely, it is a condition of limitation (Martin, 1999).

A sociology of management and accounting has developed in the Britain over the last twenty years. This sociology owes its existence chiefly to the rapid expansion of the business schools. Universities in Britain turned to sociologists studying work and workplaces to staff these schools and these scholars brought with them contemporary concerns about Marxist labour process theory and latterly Foucauldian theories of worker resistance. Today this sociology of management and accounting goes under the name of critical management studies (Alvesson and Willmott, 1992). At a recent conference at Cambridge University in 2005, 800 scholars gathered under this name. Not surprisingly the question of how to maintain a critical stance inside business schools – largely dedicated to producing income for the university and to finding new ways to extract surplus labour for business – has been a constant one in the life of this particular sociology. The place where this contradiction flares up is in the lecture

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theatre, and critical management studies has responded by producing its own version of a critical pedagogy (French and Grey, 1996).

At the same time, this sociology of management and accounting remains a minoritarian discourse, establishing a few spaces in a few universities in Australia, Denmark, Finland, and The Netherlands, and even the USA and Canada. But for the most part it remains at the edge of orthodox Anglo-American business and management scholarship where the broader sociological questions of the relationship between business and society are sidelined in favour of the promotion of business over society, or perhaps the promotion of business as society. Thus it is often the case that the immediate priority for any critical pedagogy in the business school has been to confront this orthodoxy and the curriculum that embodies it. This task is made more complex by the rise of the business schools themselves. Because their expansion in Britain today is largely funded by an expansion of its orthodox business curriculum into new markets in the developing world, made accessible by two decades of structural adjustment and ideological assault on alternative development models. As the official knowledge of a global neoliberal regime, orthodox management and business education now invade an underdeveloped tertiary education in low- and middle-income nations through distance learning programmes, through satellite campuses, and through the massive trade in overseas students. Critical management teachers have been drawn into this invasion and it has multiplied the contradictions they face and provoked the need for this sociology of management and accounting to confront globalization. In this paper, we will try to address these contradictions with some observations from postcolonial theory, itself rooted in the critical moment of anti-colonial thought and struggle, but coming to full fruit in the face of today's global neoliberal regime. We hope confronting these contradictions through postcolonial theory might lead us toward a new pedagogical praxis adequate to a global sociology of management and accounting.

Thus far postcolonial scholarship has been introduced in business and management studies mostly for the purpose of critiquing the inadequacy of the orthodox and canonical texts in the field. Efforts by Bill Cooke on developing states and colonialism stand out (Cooke, 2003, 2004), but there have also been contributions in the collection edited by Anshuman Prasad (2003)[1]. Within the emerging sub-discipline of critical management education, Peter Case and David Selvester (2000) have critiqued international management teaching to suggest a practice in the classroom where knowledge becomes both more self-conscious and more mutual. Their work is a considerable improvement on the efforts of Andrew Sturdy and Yannis Gabriel (Sturdy and Gabriel, 1999) whose focus on distance learning teaching in Malaysia borrowed a discredited diffusionist models from anthropology[2]. Moreover, Case and Sylvester seem to suggest that postcolonial theory can do more than just show the limits of the business and management canon, and the contradictions of teaching it globally.

This question of moving beyond the critique of the canon and its dissemination is one that postcolonial scholars themselves have lately made central to their own discussions. One could say there has been a re-politicisation of postcolonial studies in the past few years, culminating in a conference and the pieces gathered from it in the important collection *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond* (Loomba *et al.*, 2005), a book in a series known for its influence on the intellectual zeitgeist, especially in the USA. A

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previous book in the series, *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Nelson and Grossberg, 1988) was pivotal in announcing the coming of cultural studies to American academic departments, and a second, *Cultural Studies* (Grossberg *et al.*, 1992), consolidated this movement.

In some sense re-politicisation is the wrong term. Postcolonial studies has been a political intervention, even a materialist intervention, from the beginning. It participated with feminism, cultural studies, and critical race and queer theory and their movements in a materialist critique of the disciplines that called for them to account for themselves systems of the production of meaning and representation. This materialist critique of disciplinary knowledge is what Frederic Jameson simply calls theory. Theory “gradually annexes large areas of the traditional disciplines, that is to say, traditions in which outmoded practices of representation – belief in the separation of words and concepts – still holds sway” writes Frederic Jameson (2003, p. 1). By “theory” Jameson means this:

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 . . . Now critique becomes a critique of language and its formulations, that is to say, an exploration of the ideological connotations of various formulations, the long shadow cast by certain words and terms, the questionable worldviews generated by the most impeccable definitions, the ideologies seeping out of seemingly airtight propositions, the moist footprints of error left by the most cautious movements of righteous arguments.

This is the first way in which postcolonial studies launched a materialist assault on the canon of a number of disciplines, and together with these other interdisciplinary tendencies transformed the curriculum, especially in North America, in English literature, comparative literature, communications and film, in fact all of the humanities. But postcolonial studies has always been materialist in another sense too, and Neil Lazarus in this new collection means something different from this post-structural Marxism when he calls for postcolonial studies to stay true to its “materialist critique.” Lazarus reminds the reader that postcolonial studies is born out of a certain radical anti-colonialist tradition of scholarship mixed with revolutionary politics and such writers have not been content to see institutions of education even in “translation” as sufficient arenas for their ambitions. Lazarus does not want to lose sight of a history of radical anti-colonial scholarship, literature, and activism extending in a global history from W.E.B. DuBois to C.L.R. James to Frantz Fanon to Jose Rizal. There has been a steady insistence on this radical foundation in postcolonial studies. Some of it has been strident and even personal, as in the work of E. San Juan (2000) and Aijaz Ahmad (1994), born of a passion for the liberatory politics at stake, and highly critical of academicism and what they regard as disengaged cosmopolitanism. Other works, most notably Robert Young’s magisterial work, simply make the case that postcolonial theory owed its existence to this anti-colonial theoretical tradition, and could not be conceived without this foundation (Young, 2001).

But as new journals like *Interventions*, as the rebirth of an American Studies as “postcolonial American Studies,” and as this new collection from Duke University Press all make clear, the re-politicisation now under way is more widespread and comes as Jameson might say after theory has done its initial work. In the USA, still the material base for the vast majority of post-colonial scholarship, the question of what is to be done

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with this scholarship has come to the fore. And interestingly at this point these scholar activists find themselves confronted with many of the questions that any imagined scholar activist cohort in working toward a global sociology of management and accounting also confronts. And yet, we will suggest shortly, they are in certain respects better placed to face this confrontation because they have more resources at hand.

Indeed the urgency of this confrontation runs throughout the contributions to this new collection on postcolonialism. Robert Stam and Ella Shohat seek a robust, internationalist anti-racism against the superficial multiculturalism of global capital. Rob Nixon wants a similar environmentalism that does not reproduce the power relations of centre and periphery. And Timothy Brennan wants to expose and fight the continuing primitive accumulation that occurs under the protection of centre and periphery images. To realize this re-politicisation other authors in this collection caution the field against an obsessive attention to rivals methods (the piece by James Scott) or emphasis on paradigms (the piece by James Ferguson), cautions that should resonate for readers from critical management studies. In place of such academic refinements Neil Lazarus echoes many of the authors when he calls for using the anti-colonial foundations of postcolonial studies to renew attention to the economic and to alternative marginal traditions. But no matter the trajectory of the politics, these prominent postcolonial theorists all seem to recognize that they face a process of capitalist globalization that promises wealth as the solution to racism, sexism, war and fanaticism, environmental crisis, and poverty. And this capitalist globalization sells back much of what postcolonial theory throws up against it. This is to say these scholars recognize the formidable character of the opposition, and in the face of such an enemy post-colonial scholars appear to recognize in this collection the need to mobilize with some urgency.

The formidability for capitalist globalization is itself a formidable topic. We will only focus here on one way that it puts critique, and thus critical teaching, on the defensive. Capitalist globalization might be said to collapse the Hegelian distinction taken over by Marx between necessity and freedom. Freedom as the consciousness of necessity nonetheless fails to escape this necessity. As the end of history, globalization is above all necessary. It is necessary because there is no alternative, an argument heard everywhere from the European Union to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam as states sign up their populations for the race of socially necessary labour time and exploitation rates. And this race is buttressed by the proposition that no other arrangement but the price-making market can bring freedom and democracy. Globalization is a necessary freedom and a free necessity. The only path of freedom is one of the necessity of market competition but this market competition is itself an example of freedom meaning the only path to freedom is freedom and the only answer to necessity is necessity. Any attempt to separate the two, to suggest freedom is only possible once the forces of necessity are seen for what they are, as forces of compulsion, appears as an attack on freedom too. As Marx said of the bourgeois historians, with globalisation there is history, but only in the past. There is no longer history. Freedom is here and it is necessity.

### **Critique and the general equivalent**

This makes the critique of necessity tricky. Critique of necessity equally appears as critique of freedom when the two are presented as inseparable. Thus capitalist

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globalization starts to emerge as the deregulation of freedom and critique as the regulation of freedom. This collapse of freedom and necessity is familiar at the level of neoliberal political rhetoric where deregulation is said to be what business favours and regulation what its critics demand. But this rhetoric is just a surface ripple rising from the depths of the capitalist general equivalent, the ability not just to compare but convert all people and all things to each other for the purposes of exchange, through which the contemporary world takes its ideas of democracy, equality, and brotherhood and sisterhood. Any critique that posits a difference questioning necessity and its underlying compulsion, also questions these terms, as they are understood through the general equivalent, and appears to want to limit the scope of these terms, to regulate them, rather than to propose a different social standard of legibility and mutual aid.

But for Marx of course the association of the general equivalent with democracy was undermined by the basic lie of the general equivalent told behind the back of the market – the lie of the wage, which does not exchange for an equal value but produces a surplus value in unequal exchange. But as a form of expansion designed to overcome this weakness in the logic of the general equivalent, globalisation has proved particularly mesmerizing, controlling the time and space that might otherwise be as Marx said the place of human development. Globalisation promises more as compensation for what it cannot resolve, and this is its genius, to make necessity not a limit but a desire, to make populations and nations desire more necessity, more compulsion. Against this desire, critique easily appears as the very limitation on desire it attempts to identify.

And it was the master of recognizing such traps set for the Left by the genius of the general equivalent, Jacques Derrida, who put this most succinctly as a political challenge: how to critique what one cannot not want. And this abstract problem is of course more complex in its concreteness. Any politics among poor workers, landless peasants, Third World women, or indigenous peoples faces the question of how to critique what one cannot not want. Or in other words it raises the problem of how to avoid sounding like one is regulating these populations and their access to wealth by joining in critiques of environmentalism, primitive accumulation, or even anti-racism. How, in other words, can one avoid a critique that appears to be denying such populations the wealth that the critic may well enjoy. The easy answer is to attend to the critiques already being made by these movements themselves, but this only moves the problem to another level – that of how these movements themselves make these critiques without themselves appearing as regulators of freedom, those who would deny the beautiful cars and clothing of globalization (not to mention the dream of converting the General Intellect itself from means to ends) to others and perhaps even to themselves. Indeed even whole movements, such as the environmental movement, face the problem of what one cannot not want in their articulation with other parts of the population. Gramsci suggested this problem of a movement facing other parts of the population might be solved by mass political education, and indeed the people of these movements were what he termed “intellectuals” because they could do this kind of labour.

And here one arrives at the door to the global business school classroom, where the question of what students cannot not want haunts any effort at a global sociology of management and accounting, and directly confronts any critical pedagogy. The students of these classrooms are for the most part better placed within global division

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of labour than the movements of landless peasants and indigenous peoples, but not so well placed that this necessary freedom and the relative surplus population it creates and recreates do not threaten them. They have arrived at the door of the classroom on this wave of capitalist globalization and its restructuring of the global division of labour seeking, most of them, its promise of wealth. They encounter in this classroom a canonical curriculum that presumes the collapse of necessity and freedom in globalization and seeks to show them the way to its wealth. This is also the moment of any critical management education, a moment that seems characterized by the contradiction of how to critique what one cannot not want.

But as numerous accounts in critical management education attest, critiques of business education launched by teachers risk appearing to students as a regulation on their ambitions, and on the wealth globalization promises. Moreover these critiques risk being sorted by the underlying general equivalent into either those critiques which can be assimilated, like those of corporate social responsibility, into the logic of globalization and its social reproduction, or those that cannot, like an anti-imperialist feminism against invention by the USA and Britain in Afghanistan and Iraq, that appears to be against the universality of democracy and sisterhood. These latter critiques risk being coded as limits on freedom, regulations of universal ambition, blocks on what one cannot not want, decreed by those who perhaps already have.

Of course one can object that if the critique is careful enough, it can overcome this misunderstanding. But this faith in the ability of the critical teacher to bring the truth is one that even critical management studies has questioned. And the solution of finding the politics already there in the daily lives of the students once again only transfers this problem to the next level where a repentant or enlightened cohort of educated workers faces the task of critiquing what other workers cannot not want. Critique that does not reverse this regulation by positing a universal larger than that of capitalist globalization will continue to face this aporia of what one cannot not want. Any critical management teacher who believes his or her students are not regulated by critique under the current conditions of the general equivalent and social control through waged labour is displaying what Jean-Paul Sartre meant by bad faith, an act that suspends one's better judgement and then denies it is doing so. At some point, an alternative universality that does not collapse freedom and necessity still needs to be posited. But how? For Gramsci this problem does not appear because it is obvious to him and to those he names intellectuals that a communism which took over the factories and ministries in Italy would represent a wealthier alternative to capitalism. But it is a considerable understatement to say this kind of communist imagination is not easily available today.

### **Anti-globalization and wealth?**

A quite different imagination for instance is at work in many of the contemporary anti-globalisation movements, movements that in different forms post-colonial scholarship and in some cases critical management studies look to as allies. But in particular here we have in mind the movements of the North, those movements that follow on the anti-IMF riots and movements for land in the Global South that Eddie Yuen and George Katsiaficas document as the origins of the present anti-globalization politics (Yuen and Katsiaficas, 2001). In these movements of the North, in Seattle, in Genoa one finds a critique of what one cannot not want through, for

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instance, the notion of the carnivalesque. This aesthetic and performative aspect of these protest, more pronounced in the American movement than the European but growing in both, has been widely noted, including in business studies by David Boje (2005). Sometimes Mikhail Bakhtin's work on medieval carnival is invoked and developed, as in Boje's work.

This "carnival of carnivals" aspect of anti-globalization protest might be said to have evolved in part as an attempt to answer the question of what one cannot not want by claiming enjoyment and invention for the side of protest, instead of locating them, and then trying to regulate them, in the capitalist commodity. But this effort is only partly successful and relies on the notion that carnival is about mocking power alone. Yet Bakhtin's work may be taken to mean something quite different (Bakhtin, 2003). Bakhtin made clear that he was analyzing a specific historical period. For Bakhtin power was already on the side of the peasants in medieval carnival because in these moments of celebration it became apparent that wealth was also on that side. This is a crucial point. In the mockery of the medieval carnival, officials were regarded as impoverished, as mere regulators who had lost the pleasures and possibilities of a bodily, collective life rife with often-uncontrollable differences and excesses. In recitations, dramas, and histrionic regulations these officials are not only mocked but eventually invited back into this life, into its wealth, out of pity for their poverty. This was not a politics of resistance to power, but one of the enactment of power held uniquely among the excesses of the bodily collective. In other words, what one cannot not want turns out to be available without regulation, without compulsion in the carnival. It is not important that Boje or anyone else using Bakhtin chooses to read him differently but it might be useful to ask whether anti-globalization movements can be said to possess this unmarked and excessive wealth Bakhtin identifies with the peasantry's pleasures and can thus be said to have an answer to what one cannot not want against the splendid reification promised by business.

What the peasantry needed for the excesses of wealth was to bring together this bodily, collective life with what was otherwise regulated, the land and their time, and thus the physical sprawl and all-night revelry of the carnival. But to find an equivalent, to find that much wealth, that much of what one cannot not want among the anti-globalization movement in Seattle or Genoa, what would be required for the carnival? Not merely some rebel mobile telephones and "indymedia centres," with all due respect, but access to the massive dead labour regulated by globalization, which is to say access to what are today's productive forces. It is certainly true and potentially revolutionary that so much of the means of production today resides in what Italian autonomists call immaterial labour and the resultant mass intellectuality. But it remains the case that wealth today is made through access to the earth's resources and to factories, laboratories, financial technologies and machines of life and death. This is more than free software and video cameras. Indeed the dead labour the anti-globalization movements lay claim to today often does not come up even to what Gramsci's intellectuals might have imagined they would inherit.

But we must be careful here. In the time of Rabelais, the peasantry did not enjoy real access to the means of wealth, even during carnival, but access to the idea of the means of wealth especially during carnival, that is to a political possibility of what was necessary to fulfil the richness of their interdependence. We are not therefore suggesting that anti-globalization movements must seize control of Microsoft



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headquarters in order to critique what one cannot not want in the name of something more. But in order to critique what one cannot not want in the name of something more, anti-globalization movements must have access to the idea of the means of wealth today, to what Microsoft both holds back and might make possible. To invoke Althusser this means a more fulsome imaginary relation to the real. An anti-globalisation politics that poses anything less, less design, less science, less taste, less enjoyment than what Microsoft poses cannot offer a critique of what one cannot not want. Until the anti-globalization movement can present Microsoft as a regulation holding back what might be achieved, this movement will remain unable to make this fundamental critique, and be doomed to ask others to live a collective life of less. Another way to put this problem facing the armies of anti-globalization is that they need to find a scale of mutuality without sameness, as Randy Martin calls it, in order to make the wealth of differences they rightly parade available to all, in order to make these differences what one cannot not want.

### **Canons**

And it is here that postcolonial theory has certain advantages not yet available to critical management educators who must worry about offering less. For an idea of what might be possible and for reversing the sense of where regulation holds back that possibility, one can look to the so-called canon wars in literature departments. Because post-colonial critique comes out of what Jameson means by theory, often the first move of its critique was a regulating one, noting the limitations and omissions of the curriculum, and operating with a hermeneutics of suspicion aimed at claims to universality, representation, and closure. This is why shrill reactionary critics could claim theory wanted to prevent students from reading the classics. Although this was not of course the point of the postcolonial critique, this aspect of regulation, of denying others something, always haunts such efforts. But post-colonial critique also had the benefit of coming out of anti-colonial and neo-colonial struggles that produced literature, music, art, and dance, which carry as Jameson suggests “the utopian projections works of past and present alike offer onto a future otherwise sealed from us.” These new offerings in the curriculum appear as a new wealth available to students to counter the sense that older texts are being regulated. But these artistic forms do more than that too.

By making available the wealth of postcolonial texts, the postcolonial critic stresses the point that something must have been regulating and suppressing these forms, denying them to students who can now see their richness. Students can see these new works as part of what Marx called “the forming of the five senses (that) is the labour of the entire history of the world down to the present.” And they can come to see colonialism as that regulator, that drain on wealth and negation of a rich history of difference. The novels, dances, plays, poems, paintings, and other performances of the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial world spring forth to form our senses through the act of the postcolonial critic who thus appears to give us more than the “civilization” colonialism classically promised. And the absence of this cultural richness in the disciplines of history, art, literature, philosophy as they were previously constituted before the arrival of theory and the postcolonial critique that came in its wake (but that also made theory possible) appear to make these disciplines regulators of this wealth.

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This is an attractive picture. It is tempting, and probably important, to ask what resources are available to conjure the wealth of what Marx called associated labour against the promise of business? Tempting to ask where are the texts so rich that business must hold them back, regulate them, like the lives of the colonial and postcolonial subjects were regulate by colonialism and continue to be held back by neo-colonialism? It is useful to think about these canonical questions. Critical management studies has certainly achieved a certain questioning, a certain regulation of canonical business and management texts. But obviously one of the vexing points for critical management education is what to put in their place to show them as regulation and critique as the path to wealth, and especially how to indicate through this alternative the global possibilities for which globalisation because the limitation.

There are identifiable efforts in this regard such as the Centre for Working Class Studies in the USA, which juxtaposes the richness of working class lives to the poverty of their wage bargain in the tradition of E.P. Thompson and the History Workshop in the UK. More to the point, postcolonial texts themselves represent important sources for locating the wealth of global labour against its regulation by globalization. Neither of these points however can make up for the lack of Jameson's "utopian projections" at the heart of critical management studies. And while there is plenty of discussion in critical management studies on whether utopian and liberatory politics should be deployed (versus some more "realistic" position), there is little indication that any texts *expressing*, rather than simply advocating, such projections are at hand for this discipline. In the absence of such texts it seems unlikely that students will be persuaded that what they cannot not want lies on the side of critique.

At any rate this is not the only obstacle with which a critical management education seeking the side of wealth against regulation ought to be concerned. As postcolonial theory's autocritique makes clear, a re-politicisation of critical management theory might need to accompany any effort in the classroom. And this too we can speculate about. Because the way globalization has embraced global cultures and registered them within a limited field of difference where they can be measured, managed, produced and sold is also the way globalization has overcome the moves of critical management. This is a familiar story – no one is more critical of business than management gurus like Tom Peters. No one is more critical of business education than establishment figures like Henry Mintzberg. And nothing is as dominant in the annual reports of corporations as the words diversity, responsibility, and sustainability.

Like the celebrations of airport-lounge mobility, neo-liberal multiculturalism, and heritage tourism that co-opt postcolonial critiques of centre and periphery, management itself is today against management and in favour of teams, networks, stakeholder voices and communities of practice. This is a problem not unfamiliar to critical management scholars, and as with postcolonial theory repeated efforts have been made to launch a newly politicized version of the field, from the critical realist movement among labour process theorists to recent manifesto making. Notable recent efforts include Martin Parker's somewhat ambivalent meditation on the politics of the discipline in *Against Management* (Parker, 2002), Christopher Grey's self-assured call to unity (2005), and Campbell Jones and Damian O'Docherty's mischievous *Manifesto for the Business School of Tomorrow* (2005). These come in a long line of efforts at politicisation and indeed to be fair to critical management studies it must be said that the discipline itself was born in part out of political impulse, a parting with the growing

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quietism of industrial sociology and organizational sociology. Harry Braverman and Michael Burawoy's seminal texts in labour process were, it should be remembered, attempts to politicise industrial sociology, as the early works of Stewart Clegg, David Knights, Gibson Burrell and others were efforts to politicise organizational sociology. Tony Tinker, the pre-eminent Marxist accounting scholar, persists to today in a ruthless critique of all that exists in his discipline. There is much to be proud of here in this tendency.

But though these repeated launchings of the political project differ in the substance of their critique, they share what in old-fashioned language might be called the lack of a base in the university among students, and among movements that might care about these students and their studies. And because of this, it is easier to say through these critiques that business is morally wrong or materially contradictory, than it is to maintain that business is materially impoverished. Neither the curriculum nor the students can be mobilized to demonstrate this impoverishment. Because as we have noted, students in almost any literature or film or media studies classroom in almost any Anglo-American university can expect a curriculum transformed and a new wealth to shine in films by Trin Minh-ha or novels by Alejo Carpentier or critiques by Stuart Hall, material that is so rich in what it offers that it makes those who previously denied it look like the regulators of wealth. And as we have also observed, the average business and management student is unlikely to encounter such new wealth laid out in the curriculum against the restrictions of business. It is not that critical management educators are not sufficiently critical, not sufficiently political, but that in contrast to postcolonial scholars they appear to have no greater wealth to offer, no greater wealth to surpass the dreams of capital. Indeed the anti-globalization movement slogan "another world is possible" heard at World Social Forums and sometimes invoked in critical management studies seems to ask students to leave too much in this world they might want to take with them (or simply to take), and when this slogan was upgraded to "another world is necessary" students could be forgiven for placing these slogans on the side of regulation. Manifestos must offer more than what they seek to replace. It is not clear that without a canon of more, re-politicisation can work for critical management studies.

### **Postcolonial projections**

And this is so because these postcolonial texts are not just a matter of pedagogical strategy but rather are a kind of material projection into the classroom of a social imagination possessing postcolonial collectivities. Like previous efforts in black liberation studies in the USA in particular, and feminist liberation studies globally, these social imaginaries introduce a boundlessness into the university disciplines born of a capacity to reverse regulation and to glimpse a richer association with more possibility for wealth. What made black studies and women's studies so threatening to institutionalised power, what produced the culture wars on the campus, was not the critique alone but the possibility of black and feminine bodies exceeding the campus, erupting from within and without this enclosure in an offering of richness in social life, arts, language, and history that undermined the disciplines as the repository of the best of civilization, as the ultimate keepers of wealth (Newfield and Strickland, 1995). Moreover the threat of scholars entering the university in these projections was precisely, indeed remains precisely, that they are not tokens but part of another kind of

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equivalence placed against the general equivalent of capitalism – that they may indeed speak for others in this alternative equivalent, and that, finally their bodies may not be bound by its regulation (Moten and Harney, 1998).

And perhaps to a politics across bodies that is equal to the production across bodies of globalization is where we might return. Here is where we might ask again how to appear among our students not as regulators but advocates of unlimited development and wealth, advocates of what one cannot not want. And it is here that we might want to return to Bakhtin, to the carnival of carnivals in the protest movements, and to the question of textual utopian projections. Bakhtin, as we said, may be interpreted as suggesting that the impoverishment of the official, the regulator, is an alienation recognized by those in the carnival. What would it mean to trust the student to recognize our impoverishment, our regulation, and to be taken back into the dreams of wealth, the bodies of excess, in the classroom? Perhaps it would mean the texts for which we search turn out to be right in front of us.

What if critical management education allowed itself to fall back into the dreams of these bodies in the classroom, into all of their fantasies about luxury cars, holiday homes, financial portfolios and entertainment technologies, but also into fantasies in difference we cannot anticipate, fantasies in which difference becomes the end not the means to further profit? Is there not potentially in these fantasies also a vision of both excess and access so often missing in the call to alternatives? What would happen when these fantasies are taken seriously as political demands? Is it not possible that excess is immanent to the dance of commodities and access therefore an immanent political demand? This would not in the end be very different from postcolonial theory which found right in the form of the novel for instance a wealth not previously acknowledged and with it a demand to access not previously articulated. Indeed even in the canon it critiqued, what postcolonial theory uncovered about the colonial hidden in the nineteenth-century novel on the rise of capital, or what it discovered as the central preoccupation of blackness in the American canon, or what it discovered in the Irish presence in English modernism, did these not hint at a wealth right under our eyes but nonetheless until now regulated? So in the form of these fantasies it may be that student and teacher might stand together to ask for what they cannot not want. Instead of rejecting the luxury car as an environmental hazard or entertainment technologies as alienating and corporatized, the teacher is welcomed back among the students and is invited to give up these regulatory impulses and embrace this fantasy and different fantasies to come.

### **A new politics**

And where would this lead? Instead of the teacher trying to split necessity and freedom and looking like he or she is attacking necessary freedom and free necessity in the process, the tables are turned. Teacher and students together can ask if necessity, the necessity of studying, working hard, preparing for uncertainty, will bring these fantasies to all in the room. It will be in this move that capitalist globalization itself will come to split necessity and freedom for the teacher and students. It will be in this moment that it becomes apparent that these fantasies are not for all, that they are regulated, and that they are regulated by capital. As soon as necessity is split it becomes recognizable again as compulsion, as something one must do regardless of whether freedom is promised, indeed in spite of freedom. Not only do these demands

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call the bluff of capital, but they raise a politics not possible from point of regulatory critique, a fulsome, global politics. Such a strategy allows the room to ask what we would need to access to have what capital is denying us, what finally would we need in order to overcome the regulation that is global business, to use its limitations to think the mutuality without sameness of our fantasies on a world scale? And from here anything is possible, including at this point, and only at this point, new fantasies arising when the limits on fantasies are lifted.

Once the common demand for the general equivalent to be truly general demonstrates business as a limit on both access and excess, against this limit more generalizable arrangements might be sought that do not limit desire, qualities, differences but take them as society's end. Here too one can re-engage Jameson's "theory" to interrogate the way business has represented itself as freedom and to question the regulation that lurks beneath its meanings in the name of something more. And now that our fantasies exceed the regulation of capital we can turn to postcolonial texts and projections and we can embrace them as "a commons" that has been waiting for us in critical management education, waiting for us to want so much. It may even be the case that with so much to offer, critical management education itself in its global form, until now a source of anxiety, can be the bridge to the movements of the South by offering what they, and we, cannot not want. And indeed the business school might become the bridge for the movements of the South to lead those of the North into a carnival capable of both visions of excess and access. In this new carnival of carnivals the question of what one cannot not want would not so much be transcended, but stranded in the realm of the compulsion that forms its trap, and overwhelmed by the formation of new wants in what Marx called the realm of freedom.

### Notes

1. This is a somewhat meek collection politically, locating the origins of postcolonial studies in the academic work of the 1980s rather than the anti-colonial thought of the twentieth century. For a more adequate and politically engaged introduction to the field see Robert Young's *Postcolonialism*.
2. Although this piece was recently anthologised it continues to neglect postcolonial theory as the major source for interrogating the questions the authors raise.

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