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Asking Big Questions Again

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A SYMBOLIC ETHNOGRAPHY OF HOPE IN THE ERA OF HYPER- CONSUMPTION: UNCOVERING LOVE AS A NORDIC-TRANSYLVANIAN SYNTHESIS THROUGH BUREAUCRATIC SUBLIMATION

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ABSTRACT

The proposed text is a “thick description”(Geertz, 1973) of the “symbolic order”(Lacan, 2006:12) mediating love letters, emails, and sms-es in the contemporary context of consumption-oriented and media-driven emotional blunting and hypersensitivity to clichés. The text is left on purpose in its raw format in order to allow for an unmediated understanding of the mechanisms inherent to it.

The purpose is to show the paradoxical nature of the symbolic and its transformative potential to the imaginary, which in turn might constitute the very seed of hope for an alternative scenario of contemporary emotional experience. The alternative is uncovering itself through the language of “the system”, “the bureaucratic” or “the symbolic”, understood here inter-changeably, while at the same time working towards a continuous sublimation of its very medium and, by this, making space for itself to be discovered, manifested and preserved.

The two subjects involved in the construction of an inter-subjective space seem entrenched in the symbolic order of Kafkaesque bureaucratic language when they refer to themselves as “The Bureau” in their subliminal attempts to approach and eventually uncover “the real”. However, it is by the very means of bureaucratic language that the subjects attempt to transgress its limitations and to mainstream their desires. In this sense, the struggle for uncovering the “real” could be understood as just another illustration of “the system destroying itself” (Žižek, 2011) and of deconstructing its repressive wholeness.

The text could be regarded as an ethnography of self that could only be translated to the “other” in a wholesome manner through a (cross)disciplinary narrative. For this purpose, the text could be read through the lens of Lacan’s distinction (2006) between “the real”, “the

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symbolic” and “the imaginary”with the hope that it “mirrors” furtive glimpses into “the real”.

Key Words:

Ethnography, Biography, Symbolic Order, Consumption, Love

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Meeting 1

Hi Ioana

I switch to this medium of communication - messaging is too size-restricted.

Thank you for an interesting and pleasant evening, I really enjoyed it. Actually the alcohol consumption approached Danish habits (at least as far as Tuesdays are concerned) - and I must say that I was a little drowsy yesterday...

You really challenged my English, which I enjoy. Usually it takes some hours of conversation to reach one's own baseline. Alcohol may facilitate this process (or at least the feeling of progress...).

I hope that the "grilling" didn't leave unpleasant traces. Personally I enjoyed describing my "popularity cycles". It's somehow interesting to think of life in these terms even though a certain amount of cynicism is unavoidable when considering "markets", economic as well as social or more "fleshy" ones.

I think it would be nice to see you again Ioana. This weekend I will be in Stockholm - my brother is having a non-sacral namegiving ceremony for his daughter (6 months old). Since I have my daughter next week time is a little bit limited. Wednesday late afternoon/evening would be a good time for me. I also have certain flexibility during day-time except on Monday.

So, what do you say?

I hope you'll have a good time in Denmark tonight.

Best regards,

Tor

Hi Tor, and thanks for a nice evening the other day - I had a great time!

I'm writing from the middle of a big packing/move-in action that I had to perform today. I am moving out and into the same apartment actually...could you picture that one?:) The woman who actually is the main tenant is transferring the main contract to me and she is coming this evening to move out all her furniture (which equals almost all furniture and other useful things in the house). This

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means that the next few days will be about buying furniture and bringing in the rest of the things I left behind in different basements of friends in Copenhagen. Luckily it's not much that I own.

Grilling is something I certainly enjoy but I also do not shy away from signaling when it is time to move on to other areas. The context of my remove-in and your grilling made me realize that it's a good time to subscribe to some Swedish newspapers. Any particular balanced and informative ones that you'd recommend - perhaps a daily and a weekly?

You do not seem to have any English language challenges and certainly not in comparison to my Swedish ones which I might have a chance overcoming if I allow myself to utter something soon, anything at all, maybe practicing with pronouncing your name could be a good start.

Next week I have a deadline on Thursday so I am not sure about Wednesday evening (but I might surprise myself and finish everything before the usual 5 seconds before the deadline) and during the day I only have the lunch breaks except Monday and Wednesday (in Malmo though). Don't you go to work next week?

Have a good weekend in Stockholm and talk to you soon!

Ioana

Hi Ioana!

Just returned from a hectic weekend. It all went well, the actual namegiving ceremony, my speech, and my daughter's dance (which I accompanied on piano - that was actually the hardest part...). Surprisingly, the plane was much cheaper than the train so we flew in both directions (strange effect of what is claimed to be an environmental policy).

Seems interesting to "move out" and "move in" in a closed circle or at least in immediate temporal proximity. I guess it, though, ought to be viewed as "good news" getting hold of a firsthand contract? Of course it's also easy to relate to the frustration of fixing new furniture over night, but maybe "congratulations" would be adequate...? Anyway, I hope your weekend has been as enjoyable as the circumstances have permitted.

I'm happy to hear that my spoken English was endurable....And I wouldn't consider equating my English challenge to your (presumably) Swedish one. I've been speaking English since the age of, well let's say

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13 - so no valid excuses really exist. A fairer comparison would probably be my Romanian challenge...

Unlucky that you've already found out that Swedish doctors hardly work...No actually I have gone hard day and night for a couple of weeks with my manuscript and have some moral overtime to take out. During my research the hours are quite flexible and I can work day, night or weekends and therefore have the opportunity to make pragmatic prioritizing (and next week I only have clinical work on Monday)

So you are a deadliner...well probably most of the university folks are, that's at least my impression (and I certainly share that load...)

Anyhow, it would be nice to see you again. If your deadline is Thursday (and you don't manage to produce the surprise of the century), Friday evening might be an attractive option (when I'm also more flexible). What do you say?

Best regards/

Tor

P.S. As far as Swedish newspapers are concerned, there are not that many to consider from your standpoint. Dagens Nyheter (DN) is the largest and I would say the best. Sydvenskan is though not that far behind and then you also cover the regional and local issues (the view of the editorials is some sort of social liberalism, perhaps with a bit more focus on the "liberalism" in both cases. In essence: I would have gone for Sydvenskan during the weeks adding DN during the weekends (alternatively adding Focus - a weekly Swedish magazine covering political and economic issues).

Hi Tor,

You play the piano - I am impressed and also a bit envious...sounds great! So what did your daughter dance on?

Judging from the speed of today and how I feel right now it looks like the surprise of the century is not likely to happen this Wednesday. So Friday is a better time for me, although there is the monthly after-work with colleagues at 4pm where I'd like to stop by and say hello (I might skip it though). So anytime after 5 that is a good time for you too?

I work in a similar way - alternating intervals of intensive focus and intervals of taking out "moral overtime". It very much depends on what needs to be done and when. I like deadlines for that reason.

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They help me focus so that I can later enjoy an interval of being scattered/unfocused (something I need as well in order to get various input for future synthesis under deadline pressure...). The worst is the period when guilt raises - usually after too long an interval of being scattered and no worthy deadline to motivate me to focus...this deadline is a semi-worthy deadline (a review for a journal article), but it needs to be done in my "free" time hence it keeps me busy when I shouldn't be. But it will still leave some guilt traces since it's not THE deadline... (my own article, book or an application for loads of money would qualify for "THE" category). Meanwhile I sound like an workaholic, which of course I am not...on the contrary..:)

Thanks for the tips on newspapers. These were presented to me as right wing - so you get a clue on the preferences of people around me. They buy them too nonetheless, it seems that times have changed in Sweden and there's a lot of nostalgia...it would be interesting to compare this nostalgia with the central-eastern European one...

Cheers,

Ioana

Hi Ioana,

Well, she was dancing on the highly sophisticated Swedish contribution to last year's Eurovision song contest (Eric Saade's "Popular"). Certainly in a new "Lundensian" interpretation...

Semi-worthy deadlines are tricky ones, sometimes I try to pretend that they are more urgent and worthy to get me in a more focused mode...Workoholism doesn't have to be something bad, it depends on how you (one) handles and disposes this load.

The guilt issue is interesting, especially if you also extend it to cover other areas in life and put it all on the same time-balance sheet - where do ambition and work-optimism start to erode other vital areas of life?

It's quite a funny thing these sociological judgments over the flora of Swedish newspapers. On the one hand they are correct - the four largest morning papers have liberal-lending editorials. But simultaneously there is quite an infected debate over the left-leaning journalists impregnating the media landscape with insidious socialism...Who's actually the more correct part. Well, in a way both, I would say (and maybe this "power balance" could prevent the popping-up of a Swedish version of Fox

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news...).

Friday after 5 will be fine - what about 6? I could make it to Malmö and perhaps you could pick a place. Somewhere around "Möllan" would be nice.

Keep up the work!

Best regards

Tor

Hi Tor!

Keeping a balancing act between different areas of one's life (and within each area..) is more like walking on wire in my experience...Trust and understanding, which could be brought about by exercising shifting perspectives, could go a long way for supporting this trial and error process. I like walking on wire, but I have broken a few bones in the process...however I hope to travel a slightly longer length with every try... :)

These days at work are especially challenging since there are at least two camps "cheering" to join their side, and not much friendliness towards a polite decline. Sometimes balancing means joining one of the sides, often the opposite to the one displaying most (unnecessary or misplaced) aggression...

Sweden and Swedish media seem to have quite a good grip on this wire business nonetheless. Maybe that's why I feel at home here really. So far, quite an extraordinary experience for me. Even though also very demanding in terms of keeping a balancing act...

6 is perfect and I could also come to Lund if you'd prefer so - just let me know where. If not, I will let you know what are the options around Möllan.

Looking forward to see you!

Ioana

Hi Ioana!

I hope you have the review-goal in sight...

This walking on wire business (and the ability to find good balance

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points) is one of life's most important and challenging skills (in my views). Both finding the means to make continuous improvements in one's walking capabilities and at the same time detecting the situations when it's time to step down. I reckon that core issues of both maturity and happiness may be hidden here somewhere...

Nice to hear that you feel at home! Maybe this wire ability is a good aspect of the "lagom-mentality"? On the other hand we (Sweden) are quite often accused of having an almost fascist pursuit for consensus. Anyhow, Lund would actually be quite nice, what about Klostergatans Vin och Delikatess at 6?

Looking forward to see you too!

Tor

Consensus is not always needed or desirable, depending on what's the consensus supposed to be on...same is true about opposition...

Tomorrow I'll probably step off the wire and take a train instead - see you there at 6.

Ioana

p.s.: the article turned out to be a "revise and resubmit" kind so I have to come up with more feedback than anticipated - sometimes I wish things were just good or bad

Meeting 2

Ioana!

Thank you for an enjoyable (and thrilling) evening. I hope you've had a pleasant trip to Denmark and that you managed to provide (both) babies with good presents (despite perhaps a slight hangover...?). So far, I'm not quite sure that I've had a good impact on you from an alcohol consumption point of view...

Although a bit tired, the Bureau has been involved in evaluation work and post-hoc analyses. Usually the Bureau has a strict procedure for this kind of activities, but we do make exceptions when there are unusual circumstances. Hence this non-business hour engagement...

All parts of the Bureau are very pleased with the progress so far but don't fully recognize all aspects of its own behaviour...There is a resonance which is not that often seen at this stage of a project and

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therefore might need to be handled in a slightly less orthodox way. The Bureau is also considering advice to be more explicit in its visions and to interpret the responses of its investigees in a more straightforward way...

...so Ioana, I think it would be nice to see you again. How do you feel about an inter-Bureau meeting Monday (my preference) or Wednesday evening (I have my daughter from Thursday and on, which will make me less flexible)? I was considering going to the movies and see the French comedy "Intouchables" (En oväntad vänskap), which all my friends have fallen for (would that be comprehensible to you - French speech and Swedish subtitles...), perhaps in Malmö?

On behalf of the Bureau/

Tor

P.S. I tried your "Swedes thinking of Julian Assange-hypothesis" on two of my best (and actually most sensible and broadminded) friends. Frightening - you were right...

Hi Tor,

As mentioned, exceptions are not part of the rules and principles of this Bureau. I nonetheless understand why your Bureau is considering making post-hoc exceptions, particularly in the light of this Bureau surprising itself with making some ad-hoc exceptions from certain core principles the other night. This Bureau was taken by surprise by the topics and intensity of inquisitiveness of the encountered bureau at this stage of the project, but nonetheless found great resonance in that attitude. Cornered (and grilled) for an ad-hoc response, this Bureau opted initially for temporarily downplaying and blurring the truth using tactics such as side-tracking, time-buying and in one case even deception as ultimate resort. In spite of succumbing to these reproachable and conscious techniques of ad-hoc coping, later on in the evening the Bureau found itself once again (to a certain extent) taken by surprise and unconsciously revealed what otherwise it had tried to keep under control of the supreme realm of consciousness.

This Bureau is now working on methods of integrating the unconscious - an area where its procedures are yet to be refined. The current stage of this integration is still at the level of deciding on an answer to a fundamental question: should the unconscious be integrated into the conscious or the other way round? The Bureau is also considering if and how this question could be answered in a third way, but haven't yet figured out an answer. Since this Bureau

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is operating in the realm of possibility there is hope that more answers to this question will be soon available. Your Bureau could perhaps evaluate the adequacy of these possible answers in the realm of probability.

For now, it is nonetheless the conscious that seems to have a monopoly over processing the information, even though the unconscious is probably doing that in parallel as well, but since there is not yet enough straightforward communication between the two parts the result is still difficult to phantom. Working on a more straightforward communication is indeed something that also this Bureau identified as important. Timing and gradual improvement might also play a role in the success and sustainability of fulfilling this rather important and complex task. Communication of any kind for mutual updating on individual progress is nonetheless advisable in the meantime, something that the two Bureaus seem to be able to conduct quite efficiently.

Monday is tomorrow...and it is the day when furniture arrives. I do not know yet what time - the delivery company will call me tomorrow. So I could text you once I talked to them. Wednesday might be possible but again I am not sure. I could hopefully come up with a more straightforward answer tomorrow during the day. Is that ok? Otherwise when would your time be more flexible again?

Ioana

p.s.:I'd also like to see the Olof Palme movie - I read a review about it the other day and thought of it in the view of our IB and conspiracy theory discussion. Curious to hear how it was. And yes, I'd be fine with hearing French and reading Swedish. It seems that the alcohol level in my blood has reached a balance since I had no hangover yesterday...

Ioana!

I'm pleased to note that our written conversation has now reached a level of complexity where possible future deciphering by any external intelligence organisation seems highly improbable. Given that this correspondence will at some point be made public chances are that it might actually be the starting point of a new emerging science branch - the institutional sublimation...

Applying a gender perspective the interested reader certainly gets a few good hints as in which sex the different Bureaus have their main residency. In passages such as "Cornered (and grilled) for an ad-hoc response" and "unconsciously revealed what otherwise it had tried to

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keep under control" a subtle gender pattern could be deduced.

The more female-lending Bureau, it could seem, also depicts a situation where unconscious currents (more primal emotions?) by necessity stand in contrast to a more rational consciousness. Maybe this line of reasoning could be culturally influenced or an inherited genetic or epigenetic result of successful strategies from a female point of view in past generations, this is hard to tell. There is of course also the issue of expectations in relation to the presumably male-lending Bureau - are its intents actually so elaborate (and stereotype) as is sometimes encountered when it comes to male Bureaus or could it be the case that this is more about an intuitive sense of how to bring in the unconscious in the pursuit of long-term success?

In line with the pursuit for mutual updating on individual progress, this Bureau has an interest in knowing a little bit more about the reasoning by the conscious side of the counterpart (hopes, doubts, expectations etc). There are for instance important concepts mentioned such as "core principles" and "the truth". This bureau is also happy to share information and discuss these subjects.

Ioana, messing me during the day will be fine...

Best regards/

Tor

P.S. The Olof Palme movie was great, also giving a good insight into modern Swedish politics.

P.P.S. I hope this Bureau has succeeded in transmitting its serious agenda rather than giving a picture of more sensual adventuring...

Tor,

I would be happy to have what feels like an imminent inter-bureau meeting and to watch *Intouchable* together. Today however is not the best time for me. The furniture company was delayed and they could only deliver the furniture on Wednesday between 12.00 and 16.00. This means that best for me is to meet on Wednesday around 6, depending on when your train arrives. I could wait for you at the station at Triangeln and we could go together from there. If you want to eat first, we could go just around the corner to Malmo Konsthall where they have a nice restaurant, and also we could scan quickly their exhibitions. After that we could go to see the movie at 21.00. Would that be fine, or would you rather go straight to the movie? We could meet in front of SF at 17.50 if you prefer this other option.

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What do you say?

Ioana

P.S. Just a quick reply on the issue of gender before I go buy a vacuum cleaner: It seems that gender is more a frame of interpretation of the receiving bureau than one in which the message of the transmitter was framed. As evidence, the transmitting bureau could easily picture the situation reversed - such as the receiving Bureau being cornered and grilled and having troubles keeping the conscious with the unconscious permanently connected and thus being vulnerable to sabotage by the unconscious at unexpected moments. In this respect, the gender issue is considered more a side issue or, at best, equally relevant to both bureaus as a realm not only of the unilateral possibilities, but also one of alternation and simultaneity, depending on the preferences and logistics of the moment. This could be a way of avoiding unnecessary stereotyping of either gender, or of nature of either Bureau and of keeping a balancing act, without insisting on walking on the wire by all means and at all existing instances, but more as something worth keeping in mind.

Ioana,

I hope you found a satisfying vacuum cleaner...Even though this bureau is somewhat founded in medical science and therefore slightly reluctant to regard thought experiments as hardcore evidence it must admit that you're certainly right. This bureau definitely has moments when the unconscious is playing tricks with the conscious - sometimes sabotaging, sometimes leading the way to places where the conscious wouldn't have managed to go by itself..

Avoiding stereotypes is an important thing, although they could sometimes serve as good material for discussion. They could nonetheless also build up the blind spots and should be used with some caution.

Looking forward to see you tomorrow!

Tor

P.S. I think we should at some point consider posting this inter-bureau correspondence to Woody Allen. "Passive-aggressive" is becoming obsolete; maybe "institutional sublimation" could have a cinematic future...

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Meeting 3

Hi Tor!

It was actually Satie who participated in the debates and creation of avant-garde art with the Dadaists and early surrealist poets in Paris...I recalled something blurry last night, but double-checked and confirmed. Thanks for reminding me about him. I mean he was among the poets, painters and other Dadaists later affiliated to surrealism and also usually to a certain form of politics...among the rare relics of contemporary surrealism nostalgics, he is considered a precursor.

Hi Ioana!

Thanks for the update on Eric Satie...Looking forward to see you!

Tor

Meeting 4

Hi Tor,

It was good to see you and to get acquainted to your cave over devouring the sacrificed lamb nicely cooked by you the other night. Meanwhile I have been busy assembling pieces of furniture in an attempt to adjust to civilization, but until you lent me your screwdriver I couldn't really put anything together. Your screwdriver speeds up the process. I hope the weather is not too rough these days in your hoods.

Ioana

Hi Ioana!

I'm happy to hear that you've survived the heathen "oktoberblot" in the cave of a semi-stranger....Despite entering daylight your earring is unfortunately still to be considered sacrificed. But the rose is doing fine. Also good to hear that my screwdriver is helping you furnishing your ivory tower. The hood weather is not bad at all. How is forecast in the higher layers of civilization?

Tor

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Well, I left my ivory tower in favour of nature about an hour ago. Now sitting in the sun by the lake watching the fauna and flora in Pildaamsparken. Glad to hear the forecast is friendly and that the rose is doing fine in your hoods.

P.S I have both earrings; I only miss one small silvery part that keeps it fixed to the ear. I hope you did not swallow it by accident.

Nice to hear that the Sun is beaming in Malmö. Actually, I left my hood approximately an hour ago, but for the enchanting lights of my research department. I had almost forgotten how time consuming submitting is. I don't think any silver swallowing was performed (though the bureau is hypothesizing that the sacrifice was done for a good cause...). Has your bureau dealt with this issue?

Since it was only the first time that this bureau participated in an *oktoberblot*, it hypothesized that the missing silver part could be explained by a silver swallowing ritual visible only to the already initiated. The bureau assumes that your submission is not going to take longer than necessary for keeping the project running.

Concerning Nordic rituals exotic elements most certainly exist although silver swallowing is not one of those. Perhaps this is different from a Transylvanian perspective...? Although aware of present responsibilities, this bureau is putting high priority on the project hypothesizing that probabilities and possibilities might converge. If the more female leading bureau has practical suggestions on how to lead the project forward those are encouraged...

The Transylvanian rituals have been transforming due to various cultural inputs across centuries and cannot really remember how they used to be at the very beginning of time. Currently they are in the process of careful selection of exotic elements from Nordic rituals for increasing diversity and complexity of a harmonious whole. Has the Nordic bureau reflected upon and has any suggestions for what is desirable and worth preserving and bringing in and what should be rather left out? The Transylvanian bureau is reflecting upon similar issues. The results of these reflections will help assess the form and feasibility of the project prior to taking further steps.

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Before trying to answer, the Nordic bureau wants to ensure that “leading the project forward” was not interpreted as “brining the project to a deeper level of sensuality” which was not the intended meaning. Perhaps the Transylvanian bureau could also be a little bit more explicit in its questions...?

The meaning of the Nordic bureau reached the recipient unchanged. The Transylvanian bureau reckons that from the many ways this question could be made more explicit one way is to simply ask what is the project?

The Nordic bureau would propose a little experiment. Naturally this question is of crucial importance and also delicate. What about both of the bureaus explaining in simultaneous e-mails their meaning of “the project”. This bureau suggests that if deciding on such a deal we write the emails and text each other when we’re ready. Then we can press send at the same time (in this way we won’t be influenced by each other’s answers). Deal?

This bureau was about to suggest the same except that I thought of paper format exchanged in person instead of an email exchange. What do you say?

It would be nice to exchange fresh impressions after reading each other’s proposals simultaneously as well. But if you prefer we could stick to email exchange. That would also be fine. I suggest we follow some basic guidelines for drafting the proposals, those actually required by you some time ago: goals, hopes, doubts, expectations, core principles, and the truth. But a more general essay-like format titled “The project” is also fine. We just need to agree on similar levels of structuring and the format of the exchange. Let me know your preferences. Any combinations of the above would be fine for me.

Ioana!

I like the idea of a paper format and personal meeting for exchange of fresh impressions. I have Liv until Thursday but would be happy to meet you Friday evening (Malmö is fine). What do you say?

P.S. As for detailed format I would consider it a good thing to include the suggested subheadings (or at least most of them) but in a free, essay-like way. I also think that the title ought to be free...

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Ok, Deal with the format and the free title! Next weekend is fine but let me get back with more precise date and time. Any time when you cannot meet? Sleep well

Ioana!

For me these issues are “evening issues”. So I would prefer either Friday or Saturday evening.

Sincerely, Tor

OK, for me too, I let you know.

Hi Tor, how are you? I think it might be better to have our meeting on Saturday for the simple reason that I am not sure I could finish everything by Friday. I am drowned in work on different projects that need to be done including my apartment and some administration. If I survive this successfully, chances are that I will be able to come up with an exciting project description on Saturday!

I look forward to see you!

Ioana

Hi Ioana!

I can certainly relate to work drowning this week. One always hopes that submitting will go smoother and easier than the last time...But so far this never happened. So, third night with hopes of finishing before midnight...

Saturday sounds fine. Maybe we both have left exhaustion by then. What about Malmö at 6?

Looking forward to see you too!

Tor

Hi Tor, how is the submission going? Things on my desk are slowly but surely clearing out. Would you join me on a train ride to a destination that will only be revealed when we arrive? If yes, I suggest you clear up your Saturday and meet me at Triangeln on the platform at 11.30 am. If not, I could meet you at Yukai at 6 pm. Let me know!

Ioana

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Hi Ioana!

Submission as close to finished as it gets without being finished...I would be happy and curious to join you for a train ride with unknown destination...Alors, see you at 11.30 Saturday.

Sleep well,

Tor

That's great! Then we could read each other's essays in the train. Looking forward! See you there then and I hope you'll manage to submit without too much stress and delay. I am myself still assembling furniture among other activities...you too sleep well

Good morning Tor! A slight change of plans due to me not being close enough to a printer. Do you have the option to check your email on your phone? If yes, we could still meet at 11.30 on the platform and press "Send" at 11.15 before we enter the tunnel since there might be no signal there. We could then read them simultaneously when the train leaves the tunnel. If you do not have a phone email option, we could meet at 12.30 instead and follow the paper plan. Let me know,

Ioana

Hi Ioana!

I do have an email option but would actually prefer the paper plan – these are issues that deserve to be physically materialized...

See you soon!

I agree. I will materialize them. See you on the platform at 12.30.

Ioana

Meeting 5

Deciding to go to Euroacademia together...

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Biographical Note:

Ioana Ionesco is postdoctoral researcher at the department of Culture and Society at Malmö University and Tor Torsson is clinician and PhD researcher at the department of Clinical Sciences at Lund University hospital in Sweden. Despite their differing professional affiliations, both authors share an interest in critical studies and the reorganization of knowledge production and dissemination within and, more importantly, beyond disciplinary boundaries and institutional affiliations. Their radical reliance on first hand biographical material is meant to challenge the deductive and theory based approaches that dominate knowledge production and dissemination, and by this to turn the attention back to experience in its rawest form. Their aim is to create marginal attempts to alternative forms of knowledge dissemination as rehearsing practices of challenging the established legitimate forms and of (self) reflexivity and meta-types of (self) understandings of personal experiences of everyday life.