**Queering the future of queer in business, management and organization studies**

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A personal opening

 *In 2015 I was fortunate enough to have Martin read and provide me with some feedback on a draft journal article that I had written. Towards the end Martin, funny and perceptive as always, paused, looked directly at me and said (I paraphrase), ‘What are the politics of and your political intentions for the article Saoirse?’*

 *Caught wrong footed I stammered out that at best politics here was with a small ‘p’. I moved on to suggest that queer and transgender theory for me was less political and more personal – something that resonated with me and my own experiences but not something I, then as now, claim any understanding of let alone am able to either influence or use to influence others.*

*I am not blessed with reflexivity so please come and speak with and help me, help us.*

(Saoirse)

Queer has been of interest to management and organization studies (MOS) since at least the early 2000s seemingly triggered by Martin Parker’ (2001 and 2002) proposal of queer*ing* theory as “an attitude of unceasing disruptiveness” (2001: 38) towards what is known and dominant in the academy. Since then, queer theory has been adopted (or borrowed?) by management and organization scholars to (un)cover topics and issues ranging from the construction/disruption of identity in organizations and capitalism (e.g. Parker, 2002) to the (hetero)normative assumptions underlying organizational processes (e.g. Bowring and Brewis, 2009). More recently, some authors have invited us to further the agenda of queer theory to surprise and question the normative, by “queering” various topics, from the business school (Rumens, 2016) to heterosexuality (Rumens et al, 2018), and even queer theory itself (Parker, 2016), demonstrating the contemporary political - as well as the epistemic and ontological - utility of a theory premised on the playful rejection of normativities. Yet beyond these partial and precarious inclusions, it has also harboured its own exclusions, marginalizing for instance ‘non-Western’ epistemologies and voices from the Global South (Rao 2015, Puar 2007, Eng 2010), the complexities of class concerns (Ward, 2008), and the lived materialities and experiences of gender and sexuality (Pullen et al. 2016), leading some authors to warn us against the normativities that queer scholarship might create (Halperin, 2003; Parker, 2016).

In light of this, we think it’s time to ask some questions - to and for queer and trans people, and questions for academics, activists and allies - about the ways we might ‘open’ up the future of queer studies in critical management studies. Moving away from more political calls to “queer the business school”, we instead wish to explore our personal relationships to queer theory as queer and trans academics in MOS, and (re)visit the lived tensions between straight and queer, critical scholars and the neoliberal university, researchers and the queer community. We invite presentations, considerations, performances that may offer a ‘straight’ path with a meaningful end or that may wander about, queer the pitch, bend away from the straight and narrow normative paths (Ahmed 2006) and perhaps joyfully lose themselves in being queer. In our panel, which we imagine as a space to think through and against the grain of ‘queer’ and towards an open (yet perhaps still precarious) future, we encourage, but in no way want to limit, the discussion of the following questions and topics:

* What is the place of queer in our research? Is it theory, methodology, empirical data, positionality, reflexivity?
* What is the value of queer in our articles? Do we need to use queer theory for our research to be ‘queering’?
* How can we better engage with the multidisciplinary queer? What kind of queer knowledge production is privileged and/or excluded in our conferences and how can we make the future more ‘open’?
* What does precarious mean from a queer perspective? How do precarious attitudes, precarious jobs and/or precarious lives impact our open futures?
* How may the margin queer the center (Scheman, 1997), while decolonizing the queer?
* Is cooptation of queer identities a risk, if not already a reality, in neoliberal academia and organizations? What are the complexities of diversity management, pinkwashing, queer normativity and queer resistance in this context? And what are the complexities of the researchers working on these topics?
* Can queer keep speaking (in articles, activism, teaching) through the white noise of straight business, management and organization academia?
* What do and can the politics of queer mean nowadays in our research and lived contexts?

Please submit a 500 word abstract (excluding references and titles) together with your contact information and the style of your proposal (presentation, performance, discussion, other) to c.vitry@lancaster.ac.uk by **January 31st 2019**. We will notify you of our decision by the end of February.

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