

A Second Attempt at a Kind of Deconstruction the Conference

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What we have experienced over these last days was, perhaps, an art event of the type we have been theorizing about.

What I would like to do is show how the conference *artistically* deconstructed itself; to show how what the conference set out to do to other organizations happened to it as an organization. What happened to it was it was deconstructed by the binary oppositional term to art, and by that which existed at the margins of the text. The binary opposition to “art” was non-art which, ironically, subverted this organization in the manner that art was meant to subvert other organizations. The text at the margins is the metaphor of the Trojan horse. The Trojan horse was of course an *inauthentic* horse: it was not what it appeared to be. The Trojan horse of this conference contains the artists and it is the artists themselves: They are smuggled in. We talk of ethics, but is it ethical to, quote, “smuggle” ideas in to somewhere else under a ruse of being not what they are? “Revolutionary ideas” smuggled in under the ruse of “harmless art.”

The regulating binary oppositions are:

Art vs. non-art

Artists vs. non-artists

Authenticity in contradistinction to inauthenticity.

This was, ostensibly, an academic conference, which counted amongst its participants artists; but they, ostensibly, participated primarily in a capacity as non-artists. Those of whom we spoke were outside of our organization, and we kept them, or attempted to keep them, at bay. Yet if the art/non-art, artist/non-artist binary oppositions are flawed, we might find that we have in our midst artists who do not appear to be artists. Indeed, we suddenly all of us become artists: temporary artists-in-residence in this temporary organization that is this conference. We have been smuggled in but find that we smuggled ourselves in. We are all the Trojan horse.

Thus, if we are all artists, what might have happened? What was this event? We have asked what authenticity and what artists-in-residence are, what art is and what it is not, and what we have is talk and more talk. We have, in other words, unlimited and uncontrollable semiosis. Writing, alas! (some might exclaim) produces, as Jacques Derrida has insisted, more writing, and yet more writing, and more writing still (see Rorty 1982, 94): exactly what the artists were to do to other organizations external to ours, which we never considered was itself an organization. An example of what we were discussing was under our very noses.

Unhappy with the structure of this organization, an organization divided into four departments, the ministry of justice, the ministry of the good, the ministry of beauty and

the ministry of truth, whose corporate strategy is to mobilize the combined resources of these departments to produce freedom, the shareholders have staged a revolt. After presiding for more than 3,000 years over extended periods of negative growth, low return on investment and meager dividends, the shareholders have ousted the Greek CEO, Mr. Aristotle, and the German director of metaphysical marketing, Prof. Kant. Head-hunted from a highly successful French company, Monsieur Jacques Derrida has been instated as the new CEO. In line with revolutionary postmodern “management-under-erasure” practices he has begun the deconstruction of the entire corporate *structure*.

The irony, and this is why I have thoroughly enjoyed the conference, is that this conference became itself an example of that which it set out to show and thus demonstrated the possibility of what is set out to establish.

Academic Note: I have borrowed in form and in content from Pierre Guillet de Monthoux’s (2004) recent book, *The Art Firm: Aesthetic management and Metaphysical Marketing*.

References

Rorty, Richard. 1982. *Consequences of Pragmatism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Pierre Guillet de Monthoux. 2004. *The Art Firm: Aesthetic management and Metaphysical Marketing*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.