



**Monthly e-Newsletter – October 2008**

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**EDITORIAL**

So you've been hunting around secondhand bookstores for years, hoping to find a copy of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiment*. You've been cursing that all of Eleanor Dark's novels are out of print. I've got a list as long as my arm. And I'm just waiting for Australian libraries to set up the same kind of service offered by the Shapiro Library at the University of Michigan. The Espresso Book Machine will print and bind reprints of out-of-copyright books from its digitised collection of nearly two million books. Seven minutes. Ten bucks. Excellent:  
<http://www.ns.umich.edu/htdocs/releases/story.php?id=6735>

We are down to counting the days to the AAIR Forum in Canberra from in November. Recent news is that Senator Kim Carr has accepted an invitation to speak at our humble gathering of AAIRies. Still time to sign up – see page 2 for details.

As always, feel free to contact me at: [rob@](mailto:rob@sharpwords.com.au) with [sharpwords.com.au](http://sharpwords.com.au)

**JOB OPPORTUNITY**

**LA TROBE UNIVERSITY**

**Manager, External Reporting and Modelling (HEO 8)**

Primary responsibilities of this role are to:

- manage the student and staff component of the University's data collection to ensure the University complies with its statutory and internal reporting requirements
- prepare student load and load revenue reports, analysis and projections and the modelling tools to assist faculties and senior managers determine targets
- prepare other reports, analysis and projections and appropriate modelling tools to assist faculties and senior managers plan and evaluate their operations.

**Closing Date: 17 October 2008**

Further information on the Uni's website at: [www.latrobe.edu.au/jobs](http://www.latrobe.edu.au/jobs)

Enquiries to Lyn Rose, Manager, Management Information Unit:  
 Tel: (03) 9479 2029  
 email: [l.rose@](mailto:l.rose@latrobe.edu.au) with [latrobe.edu.au](http://latrobe.edu.au)

**AAIR Committee members**

**President:** Ivan Skaines, University of Western Sydney  
**Immediate Past President:** Wendy Marchment, Griffith University  
**Vice President:** Josephine Palermo, Deakin University  
**Hon Secretary:** Dean Ward, Edith Cowan University  
**Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary:** Marian Thakur, Monash University

**General Committee:**  
 Bruce Guthrie, Graduate Careers Australia  
 Don Johnston, Southern Cross University  
 Dave Marr, Australian National University  
 Andrea Matulick, University of South Australia  
 Rob Sheehan, Sharp Words Editing & Writing Services (Victoria)  
**AAIR website:** [http://www.aair.org.au/](http://www.aair.org.au)



**19-21 November**  
**Hyatt Hotel, Canberra**

## **Enhancing Quality Research: a Global Perspective**

### **PRELIMINARY PROGRAM**

The preliminary program is now available on the Forum website:  
<http://www.leishman-associates.com.au/aaair2008/program.php>.

### **KEYNOTE SPEAKERS**

**Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup>**

**Senator the Hon Kim Carr**  
Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research

**Thursday 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Professor Tim Brown**  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research), La Trobe University  
*Measuring Research Performance in Different Disciplines*

**Friday 21<sup>st</sup>**

**Ms Leanne Harvey**  
General Manager of Research Excellence, ARC  
*Research Excellence – Assessment and Evaluation in the new ERA*

**The Forum is hosted by Australian National University**

**Conference Dinner sponsored by Australian Corporate Software**

#### **Forum Partners:**

Australian Catholic University ♦ Australian National University ♦ Curtin University of Technology  
Monash University ♦ Queensland University of Technology ♦ University of Sydney  
University of Western Australia ♦ University of Western Sydney

#### **The venue?**

I always like to have a bit of a sense of where I'll be when I go to a conference.  
There's a virtual tour of the Hyatt Hotel in Canberra here, and a bunch of photos too:  
<http://www.canberra.park.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/events/index.jsp>

## Strategic Planning and Performance Management Workshop

*Professional development workshop jointly offered by ATEM and AAIR*

University of Technology, Sydney  
Building 10, Level 6, Staff Training Room 2

Thursday 24 October 2008  
10.00am-4.00 pm

This is a repeat of a very successful workshop run last year and back by popular demand!

This workshop covers aspects of strategic planning, including environmental scanning and competitive intelligence scanning. It explores the link between strategic planning and other planning processes, including student load and workforce planning, and the development of performance measures.

This session will focus on planning, review, quality and improvement in the tertiary sector.

The session combines:

- practical presentations by people currently working in the field
- small group discussion where all participants have the opportunity to share experiences.

Cost: \$187 ATEM and AAIR Members  
\$209 Non-members  
(Includes GST, lunch and other refreshments)

**Further details at:**

<http://atem.org.au/assets/StrategicPlanning&PM24October08.pdf>

### OTHER PLACES TO GO – OTHER THINGS TO DO

#### Higher Education Information Technology Summit

6th-7th November 2008

Hilton on the Park Melbourne

Now the critical thing here is to hit town early so you can take in the Melbourne Cup on 4 November.

The conference promises to attend to a slew of issues, including:

- Understanding the emerging challenges associated with e-Research support
- IT supporting the face to face learning environment
- The role of technology in supporting off-campus education
- Enhancing the online admissions process
- Designing a structured program for reducing the IT carbon footprint
- Addressing the increasingly complex issue of information management.
- Effective workforce planning for HE IT.

Visit this extraordinarily long url for more information, and don't forget to pack your hat:

[http://www.informa.com.au/ibcoz/marlin/system/render.jsp?siteid=30000000421&MarlinViewType=MARKT\\_EFFORT&marketingid=20001695520&proceed=true&MarEntityId=10044207861&entHash=254b54361](http://www.informa.com.au/ibcoz/marlin/system/render.jsp?siteid=30000000421&MarlinViewType=MARKT_EFFORT&marketingid=20001695520&proceed=true&MarEntityId=10044207861&entHash=254b54361)

#### World Class Institutional Research

**49th Annual AIR Forum**

**May 30-June 3, 2009**

**Atlanta, Georgia**

The US Association of Institutional Research is AAIR's little North American buddy. AIR's Annual Forum is a major event – there were 1700 institutional researchers at the 2008 Forum.

There's not much detail on the Forum yet, but keep in touch with developments here:

<http://www.airweb.org/?page=4>

#### Research Into Teaching with Whole class Interactive Technologies (RITWIT)

**June 29-30, 2009**

**University of Cambridge**

This looks like a goodie. The website promises a conference focused on 'research into the pedagogy underlying use of innovative tools such as interactive whiteboards, visualisers, tablet PCs, remote input devices, voting systems, etc. How does their use facilitate or inhibit more effective whole class teaching and learning at school level? What are the implications for teacher development and educational policy?'

School education focus, but coming to grips with these tools matters in all education sectors. More here:

<http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/events/conferences/ritwit/>

## UNESCO 2009 World Conference: The New Dynamics of Higher Education

6-8 July 2009

UNESCO, Paris

Allons-y, mes amis. Pack your bags for a summer sojourn in Paris. The 2009 World Conference on HE is the first since 1998, so there's a bit of catching up to do. A series of regional conferences is laying the groundwork before the big bash. Details are a little thin at the moment, other than the conference aims to 'address the dynamics shaping the strategic agenda for the development of higher education and identify concrete actions to meet national development objectives and individual aspirations.'

Updates are promised here:

[http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL\\_ID=56386&URL\\_DO=DO\\_TOPIC&URL\\_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/ev.php-URL_ID=56386&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

If you are so minded, you can take a virtual tour of UNESCO's headquarters here:

<http://www.unesco.org/visit/uk/v4/index.htm>

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### NEWSLETTER NOTES

#### 1. 2008 Conference on Higher Education Data Warehousing – a quick recap

Dean Ward, AAIR Secretary and Minister Plenipotentiary, reports that on 23 & 24 September, at the University of Wollongong, more than 80 delegates from 25 Australian and New Zealand universities attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual AAIR Special Interest Group Conference on Higher Education Data Warehousing.

Data warehousing and associated themes continue to be particularly relevant. The conference provided an opportunity for participants to learn about other universities experiences and to hear updates on the latest developments.

Presentations from the conference will soon be available on the Data Warehousing Special Interest Group page of the AAIR website – where, by the way, you can access papers from the 2007 conference held in Brissie:

<http://www.aair.org.au/Pages/DataWarehouse.html>

#### 2. Everybody's doing it

Ako Aotearoa recently released *Whole of Organisation Approaches to Improving Teaching and Learning*. It's a record of three regional seminars held in April to consider how well, or not so well, NZ universities and polys take a strategic approach to the improvement of learning and teaching. It identifies a range of projects that might be initiated, and lists areas requiring further consideration. Many of these projects and areas will make a call on institutional research skills. The meat of the report is in the first 15 pages: [http://www.nctte.co.nz/files/events/Whole\\_of\\_organisation\\_Approaches\\_to\\_Improving\\_Teaching\\_and\\_Learning\\_-\\_Discussion\\_paper\\_June\\_2008.pdf](http://www.nctte.co.nz/files/events/Whole_of_organisation_Approaches_to_Improving_Teaching_and_Learning_-_Discussion_paper_June_2008.pdf)

#### 3. Simply the best

On 4 September, USQ launched its Teaching Academy. Membership by invitation only and reserved for USQ academics and professional staff who make substantial contributions to student learning:

<http://www.usq.edu.au/learnteach/path/grantsawards/teachacad.htm>

#### 4. Doing it all again

The University of Wisconsin-Madison has an outfit called UWEBI – the UW E-Business Institute. It recently completed a study on what students liked about lecture capture technology. I couldn't find the full report – maybe still to be released.

However, you can check out the exec summary of *Insights regarding undergraduate preference for lecture capture*. Just nine pages of bar charts and white space that report on student responses to a brief survey:

<http://www.uwebi.org/news/uw-online-learning.pdf>

#### 5. I see, I see, I see

Professor Diana Davis of the ANU has completed *First we see: the national review of visual education*. It's an atom-smasher at 270 pages, but then it has a lot of territory to cover – from early childhood to teacher education. The report urges renovation for visual education and the creation of a new trinity – literacy, numeracy and visuacy.

The report points to a sense of crisis, of lost purpose, in visual education, but comes up with ideas to do something about it:

[http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/36372/NRVE\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/36372/NRVE_Final_Report.pdf)

## 6. JCU VC on RN

JCU's VC, Sandra Harding, did an interview with ABC science journo Robyn Williams on ABC Radio National. A kind of survey of where she came from, what the virtues of JCU are, and why HE in tropical Oz is important. Good stuff.

The audio has disappeared, but you can read the transcript here:

<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/inconversation/stories/2008/2/335205.htm>

## 7. Get real

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) has produced a paper called *What are universities for?* The authors are unimpressed with the trashing of the Western model of the university by market forces. Traditions matter.

In the authors' own words: 'Universities are not just supermarkets for a variety of public and private goods that are currently in demand, and whose value is defined by their perceived aggregate financial value. We assert that they have a deeper, fundamental role that permits them to adapt and respond to the changing values and needs of successive generations, and from which the outputs cherished by governments are but secondary derivatives.'

A spirited impugning of the tides:

<http://kampela-leru.it.helsinki.fi/file.php?type=download&id=1323>

## 8. What's your problem?

The Association of Commonwealth Universities has produced *Shifting horizons: Issues facing universities in the Commonwealth – an ACU consultation*. I liked this report just because it presents views about challenges, problems and priorities from universities in Africa, Canada, Oz, Asia and the UK. You get a bit of a feel for how things are, and how they differ, around the globe.

The Commonwealth is an odd sample, but that's part of the charm, I guess. It prompted a few stray thoughts about what partner institutions might be looking for from each other.

<http://www.acu.ac.uk/policyandresearch/publications/ShiftingHorizons.pdf>

## 9. Education at a Glance – OECD – 9 Sept

The OECD gave me a birthday present – it launched *Education at a Glance 2008* just as I was blowing out an excessive number of candles. This volume runs to 525 pages which is close enough to ten times my candle count. A mine of comparisons and answers to questions you haven't thought of: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/23/46/41284038.pdf>

## 10. Can you spare a euro?

The EU generates an awful lot of acronyms, doesn't it? I'd say it outdoes Indonesia, which is an acronym generator *par excellence*.

Anyway, the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education – EQAR – is now inviting membership from HE QA bodies around the globe, as long as their objectives and processes more or less tally with European standards. The hope is that EQAR will, amongst other things:

- promote student mobility by providing a basis for increased trust among HE institutions
- reduce opportunities for accreditation mills to gain credibility
- improve the quality of QA agencies and promote mutual trust among them.

Now, the acronymic smorgasbord. So EQAR was established by ENQA, ESU, EUA and EURASHE, along with BFUG.

More here:

<http://www.eqar.eu/application.html>

## 11. Putting the uni in the community

In the last newsletter I noted that ACU had put a bit of legwork into linking teaching/learning and community engagement. ACU isn't alone as AUQA's Antony Stella and Jeanette Baird point out in *Community engagement and inclusion in Australian higher education: a thematic analysis of AUQA's cycle 1 audits*. Sometimes I worry that there's a bit of convenient rebadging of activities as community engagement practice. We really lack a clear sense of what constitutes community engagement, and measuring it is a challenge for AAIRies to take on. It's worth stepping through this analysis:

<http://www.auqa.edu.au/files/publications/community%20engagement%20and%20inclusion%20final.pdf>



## 12. How do we do engagement?

AAIR's Euro sister – EAIR – ran its 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum in Copenhagen in August. Kerri-Lee Harris and Helen Dedman from Melbourne Uni presented a paper at the Forum titled *Developing the third strand of university activity: mapping the involvement of students and staff in knowledge transfer activities*. They have a pretty good crack at a typology for community engagement, and they bring some focus to the role of students in the exercise: [http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/staff\\_pages/Harris/HarrisDedman\\_2008.pdf](http://www.cshe.unimelb.edu.au/people/staff_pages/Harris/HarrisDedman_2008.pdf)

## 13. Learning to do engagement

Swinburne University's TAFE School of Social Sciences has launched a Graduate Certificate of Social Science (Community Engagement), designed for all those in public agencies – from councils to hospitals, and educational institutions – who need or want to reach out to the community, and to bring the community in: <http://courses.swinburne.edu.au/Courses/ViewCourse.aspx?mi=100&id=21779>

## 14. What the students said

*The Guardian* has an interactive table or two with results from the 2008 UK National Student Survey: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/table/2008/sep/11/students.bysubject>

## 15. What's an RTO worth?

Now I'm going to be a bit discursive here: with a point, with a point. Wait for it. A while ago I included some info in the newsletter about the expansion of Kaplan in Australia, including some background in its acquisition of RTOs as it established a national footprint. There continues to be a lot of expansion activity in the private RTO sector. The VET business is growing.

The Carrick Institute of Education is one of Australia's bigger private RTOs. Carrick sold a 30% share in its business to Tiger Global Management – a US manager of hedge funds and private equity investments – back in March. The capital is going to work.

In April, Carrick announced the purchase of Victorian-based RTO, CMC Training at Work.

Around about now, Carrick is moving its Melbourne-based vocational, higher education and

English language departments to a new site at Docklands for as many as 1600 students and staff.

Carrick has also announced it plans to open two new vocational education campuses in Brisbane and Adelaide. It's branching out into higher ed with a new hospitality degree. You can track all this and more at the Carrick website: <http://carrickeducation.edu.au/>

What was my point? I forget. Anyway, policy changes in VET have increased business opportunities in the sector. There's plenty of work to go round for public and private providers offering the right training of high quality. New private providers are coming into the market, and established providers are expanding (sometimes through acquisitions). The value of RTOs is rising.

So what's an RTO worth? You can follow the values at Education Business Broker.com.au: <http://www.educationbusinessbroker.com.au/index.html>

Apologies to the shaggy dog, whose story this is.

## 16. Queensland smartens up

The Qld Premier, Anna Bligh, last month launched *Toward Tomorrow's Queensland*. It established a series of targets the government hopes to hit by 2020. One of them is that three out of four Queenslanders will hold trade, training or tertiary qualifications. The measure it proposes to hold itself to is the proportion of 25 to 64-year-olds with a Certificate III or higher. It's no mean target – only 50% of Queenslanders fit the target outcome now. Which brings us back to the long term prospects for expansion in the VET sector...

*Toward Tomorrow's Queensland* is here: [http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/library/pdf/tomorrow/Towards\\_Q2\\_Tomorrows\\_Queensland.pdf](http://www.thepremier.qld.gov.au/library/pdf/tomorrow/Towards_Q2_Tomorrows_Queensland.pdf)

## 17. Victoria innovates

While you wait on the federal government's response to the Cutler Review's *venturousaustralia*, the Victorian government's innovation statement might get you in the mood. *Innovation: Victoria's future* targets health, sustainability and productivity. There's a special place in the statement for innovative SMEs – a challenge for education and training providers is how best to meet that market as well as the big end of town: [http://www.business.vic.gov.au/busvicwr/assets/main/lib60027/5039%20vis\\_web.pdf](http://www.business.vic.gov.au/busvicwr/assets/main/lib60027/5039%20vis_web.pdf)

## 18. Speaking of SMEs

The Australian Flexible Learning Framework has a publication titled *An investigation of the enablers and barriers to industry uptake of e-learning: small business*. Given the prospect of substantial numbers of existing workers entering the training system, e-learning options are probably going to expand. And SMEs employ most of us. This report is good for thinking about how. It's based on a national survey of SMEs in property and business services, retail, construction and manufacturing: [http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/flx/webdav/site/flxsite/shared/Benchmarking%20and%20Research/Small\\_Bus\\_Report\\_final.pdf](http://www.flexiblelearning.net.au/flx/webdav/site/flxsite/shared/Benchmarking%20and%20Research/Small_Bus_Report_final.pdf)

## 19. Community Colleges – measuring success

Institutional researchers in six US states got together to come up with better ways of measuring success for community college students. *Test drive: six states pilot better ways to measure and compare community college performance* is the report that tells you where they got to: <http://www.jff.org/Documents/testdriveforWeb.pdf>

## 20. The Graduate Junction

The Graduate Junction is a natty idea brought to our attention by Dave Marr at the ANU. The idea is to link postgrads around the world in an online research community. It's only been up since May but it looks to have grown quickly. There are a couple of good search functions, and thoughtful notions of how to use the website as a networking tool: <http://www.graduatejunction.com/>

## 21. UK theses online

Electronic Theses Online System (EThOSnet) is the UK version of the Australian Digital Theses Program. It goes live on 14th October. So contain your enthusiasm until next Tuesday, when this link will take you to a backroom in the British Library: <http://ethos.bl.uk>

## 22. PhDs Stateside

The US Council of Graduate Schools has released *Ph.D. completion and attrition: analysis of baseline demographic data from the Ph.D. Completion Project*. I've downloaded, but not yet read, the Exec Summary. There are several resources you can choose from here: <http://www.phdcompletion.org/information/book2.asp>

## 23. e-portfolios in the VET sector (1)

*Eportfolios: policy issues and interoperability* by Jerry Leeson has been released by education.au. It seems to me that e-portfolios are likely to become more prominent in the VET sector as RPL becomes more common. This report tells us a good deal about where we are in Oz with e-portfolios in VET – some way behind, it seems: [http://www.educationau.edu.au/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/papers/eportfolios\\_JL.pdf](http://www.educationau.edu.au/jahia/webdav/site/myjahiasite/shared/papers/eportfolios_JL.pdf)

## 24. e-portfolios in the VET sector (2)

The National Symposium on E-portfolios held in Adelaide in June got a bunch of people together to think about the best ways of cracking the e-portfolio nut in VET. There are good resources here: <http://www.educationau.edu.au/jahia/jahia/home/pid/637>

## 25. e-portfolios for learning

The UK's Joint Information Systems Committee has released *Effective practice with e-portfolios: supporting 21<sup>st</sup> century learning*. This report really unearths the ways in which e-portfolios can be vibrant tools for learning and teaching, not just record-keeping: <http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/publications/effectivepracticeeportfolios.pdf>

## 26. Life begins at forty

Brown University in Rhode Island has released *The curriculum at forty: a plan for strengthening the college experience at Brown*. I whizzed through it, but will return to read it again. There are some thoughts here about the use of e-portfolios, the development of capstone projects, and capturing student feedback more effectively: [http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Dean\\_of\\_the\\_College/tue/downloads/Task\\_Force\\_Final\\_Report](http://www.brown.edu/Administration/Dean_of_the_College/tue/downloads/Task_Force_Final_Report)

## 28. What do they think of us?

The ANU has launched the ANU Poll which is a quarterly survey of public opinion about a particular issue of importance. The report of the second survey may interest AAIRies – *Public opinion towards higher education: results from the ANU Poll*. There's news for TAFE providers here too: [http://www.anu.edu.au/anupoll/images/uploads/080804\\_fullreport.pdf](http://www.anu.edu.au/anupoll/images/uploads/080804_fullreport.pdf)

## 29. The ranking obsession

Ross Williams of the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research delivered a paper at the AFR Higher Education Conference earlier this year in which he picked apart the rankings obsession.

Williams observes that 'Australia should be striving for a world class system of higher education. This would include some world class universities in research, other universities with pockets of world class disciplines, and some institutions opting to specialize in the provision of world class undergraduate programs.'

You can access the paper – 'Methodology, Meaning and Usefulness of Rankings' – at this address:  
[http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/publications/reports/AFR/Williams\\_Paper\\_AFR.pdf](http://www.melbourneinstitute.com/publications/reports/AFR/Williams_Paper_AFR.pdf)

## 30. The UK school journey lengthens

In early September, the UK Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, shared a secret with British kids starting Year 7 this term. They would be the first group legally required to stay at school until they are 17:  
<http://www.number10.gov.uk/Page16724>

## 31. Schools, business, universities

Last year the same Gordon Brown established the National Council for Education Excellence. The Council was charged with sorting out how to bring schools and parents closer to business and universities. The Council reported earlier this year and the PM has recently announced that the government would adopt every one of the recommendations it made. You can find the suite of documents the Council produced at:  
<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/ncee/>

## 32. Schools and business

The UK initiative has shades of the recent announcement by Oz Deputy PM, Julia Gillard, that one of the 2020 Summit ideas was now reality with the NAB stumping up \$15m for a Schools First Initiative. I can recommend a visit to the Initiative's website:  
<http://www.schoolsfirst.edu.au/>

The Deputy PM has also announced that financial services firm UBS is supporting the visit to Australia

of Joel Klein, the Chancellor of the New York City Department of Education. Klein has introduced a swathe of reforms in the NY school system which focus on giving schools the resources to do what they need to do in return for greater accountability as measured against an array of performance indicators. School comparisons using indicators are in. There are sanctions for missing targets. Shades of things to come perhaps. More on Klein's policies here:

<http://schools.nyc.gov/AboutUs/ChildrenFirstToday/default.htm>

## 33. A green coda

I've been very green in the last couple of newsletters. Just a tinge this time. The College Sustainability Report Card went up a week or so ago. It covers universities in Canada and the US:  
<http://greenreportcard.org/>

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## IT IS WRITTEN

Our hero/anti-hero, Tertuliano Máximo Afonso walked into his history class and ...

... opened his briefcase, took out the papers, which he placed on the table, saying, I've corrected them all and given marks based on the number of errors made, but I'm not going to do as I usually do, simply hand the work back to you, instead, we're going to spend the class analysing the mistakes, that is, I want each of you to explain the reasons for your mistakes, and the reasons you give me might even lead me to change your mark. There was a pause, and he added, For the better. The students' laughter blew the last clouds away.

- José Saramago, *The Double*, 2002  
(published in English translation, 2004).

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