

*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly*  
*Organizations and Demons*

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## **The Devil in High Heels: Drugs, Symbolism and Kate Moss**

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### **Abstract**

This paper contributes to critical voices on the issue of organisational responses to drugs and employee drug use. It does so by exploring some of the symbolism residing at the heart of organisations' relations with drugs and drug taking. Our focus is recent media coverage of, and organisational responses to, the UK tabloid media's exposé of fashion supermodel Kate Moss's cocaine use. We use this case to explore symbolic relationships between drugs, sex and femininity, and organisation. Through highlighting these symbolic connections we question further the rationality of organisational responses to the 'spectre' of drugs and the issue of employee drug use. We conclude by suggesting that workforce drug testing regimes might be fruitfully seen as mechanisms for scapegoating and sacrifice in order to protect the organizational moral order.



## **Introduction.**

The extent to which workforce drug testing<sup>i</sup> and the wider organisational anti-drug discourse represents a rational response to a real and pressing threat to organisation has previously been questioned (Comer 1994). Critics have highlighted (and some supporters have conceded) that there is very poor evidence of widespread deleterious effects for organisations stemming from employee drug use (Harris 2004) and similarly poor evidence that organisational responses to the actual or perceived threat of drugs have been efficacious in reducing employee drug use (Jardine-Tweedle and Wright 1998) or helping employees (Draper 1998). In the light of such critiques of the evidence for managerial interventions some have questioned whether anti-drug policies and workforce drug testing should actually be understood as a response, rational or not, to drug use at all. Instead, it has been suggested that the reported threat of employees' drug use may be a cloak behind which attempts to secure greater organisational control may be hidden. For instance critics have argued that workforce drug testing and anti-drug policies represent attempts to shift costs and responsibility for health and safety issues from the employer to the employee (Draper 1998), attempts to assert greater control over the politics of the labour process through rooting-out those employees with a propensity to break bureaucratic order and imposed rules (Gilliom 1994), and as part of a wider movement toward a surveillance society within which each individual employee feels, and eventually internalises, the gaze of officialdom (Hecker and Kaplan 1989). Though undoubtedly important, such control critiques have in turn been criticised. Warren and Wray-Bliss (under review) for instance argue that they tend to overplay the ideological clarity of management's thinking, neglect the constraining and transforming hand of employee resistance, and fail to properly explore the meanings, experiences and understandings of drug use by the very employees that such anti-drugs discourse is putatively aimed. If, at least in part, we accept that the control critique is overplayed *and* that management may not be introducing drug testing as a rational response to well evidenced organisational risks then we are left with the question as to why management may, in the absence of pressing evidence of drug-induced organisational crises, wish to intervene in employee's drug use? A number of explanations have been put forward. Francis, Hanley and Wray (2003), for instance, have argued that the instigation of anti-drug policies represents not a specific desire to control drug using employees, but rather a dramaturgical attempt to drive down potential employer liability for future industrial

accidents found to be influenced by drug use and, more immediately, to drive down the costs of organisational health premiums and insurance premiums. Cavanaugh and Prasad (1994) have taken a rather different tack focussing upon the symbolism of organisation. They argue that the rise in workforce drug testing and the wider anti-drugs discourse represents a response by management that should properly be regarded as non-instrumentally motivated and largely symbolic in character. In particular, they argue that workforce drug testing can be regarded as an attempt to contain the irrationality and immorality that seems to ever threaten to engulf the precarious managerial myth of the rational, ordered, safe and controlled organisational space. Cavanaugh and Prasad suggest that the spectre of employee drug taking threatens this symbolic order because, in a US context at least, it represents the height of hedonistic, deviant, immoral, self-indulgent and excessive behaviour (also (Brewis, J. *et al.* 2005). For these, largely symbolic reasons, it is outlawed.

It is this symbolic reading that we concern ourselves with in this paper. We explore and extend it by drawing on two of the most ‘symbolic’ of industries, the high fashion industry and the tabloid media. We examine their part in naming, shaming, deselecting and resurrecting fashion supermodel Kate Moss following her much publicised cocaine use. We argue that media and organisational responses towards this subject’s drug use would seem to support the argument that drug use symbolises dangerous excess and irrationality for the organisation. For this reason we are especially interested in the reaction of Swedish retailer H&M who were quick to distance from and dismiss the supermodel. Through this, we extend Cavanaugh and Prasad’s ‘symbolic’ reading by showing how constructions of drug use in this case also intersect (as they have also historically done) with the symbolism of a dangerously seductive, female sexuality.

In addition to seeking to illustrate and extend Cavanaugh and Prasad’s (1994) symbolic reading of organisation and drugs we also argue that this particular case causes us to reconsider the ‘symbolic threat’ explanation for the managerial anti-drugs discourse – at least within this industry – given that the employed subject here was a valued organisational commodity precisely *because* she already symbolised the angelic *and seductive*, the vulnerable *and the dangerous*.

In order to develop these arguments, this paper is organised in three sections. In the first section, we explore Kate Moss's treatment by the fashion house H&M and, drawing upon Cavanaugh and Prasad's (1994) writing, explore this as a product of threat that drug use presented to this particular organisation in the context of its roots in Swedish society.

In the second section, we raise some questions regarding the above symbolic reading of drugs and organisation by considering a little more closely the specific nature of Kate Moss as a sexualised organisational subject or commodity. Exploring images of the supermodel in the fashion industry we show how these illustrate the organisational valuing of her angelic and seductive, vulnerable and dangerous symbolic status.

The third, concluding, section considers the implications of our questioning of the prevailing symbolic explanation of organisations antipathy to drugs, and suggests a further reading in which the elements of rituals, sacrifice, and scapegoats, may serve as ways of describing Kate Moss' fall and resurrection.

### **(1) The symbolic threat of a drug using subject**



Following a UK tabloid newspaper's front page photographs of Kate Moss preparing and snorting lines of cocaine (The Mirror 15/9/05, see left) the Swedish high-street fashion chain H&M responded by expressing concern for Kate Moss's drug 'problem'... and cancelling her modelling contract. Stefan Persson, H&M executive chairman said that because apparent photographic evidence of her cocaine abuse was 'not consistent with the company's clear policy on drugs'.<sup>ii</sup> This statement was

apparently supported by the organisational concern with the effects of drug use in society, being this an important topic in their approach of corporate social responsibility (CRS). As one of the main contributors and supporters of drug prevention charity Mentor, Mr. Persson has a very personal opinion about the ‘problem’ of drug use in society, and the role of the organisations in this area.<sup>iii</sup>

Indeed, this role seems to be linked to the characteristics of their marketing. In their document about advertising, H&M’s policy is clearly stated:

“Our marketing has a major impact. It is therefore essential for us to convey a positive and healthy image... The people we show in our advertising must be healthy and wholesome. H&M deliberately distances itself from drug and alcohol abuse.”<sup>iv</sup>

In lieu of the absence of evidence that a) the model actually had a drugs ‘problem’ or addiction rather than an occasional or recreational taste for cocaine, or b) that her cocaine use was preventing, or was likely to prevent, Kate Moss from being able to perform her role as a model, then to understand H&M’s punitive response we might need to turn, following Cavanaugh and Prasad (1994), to what this public drug use represented or symbolised for H&M. To remind ourselves, Cavanaugh and Prasad argue that organisational responses to employees drug use cannot be understood solely, perhaps even principally, as narrowly instrumental or utilitarian in origin. Rather organisations respond to employee drug use for largely symbolic reasons.

“By virtue of its associations with high levels of personal hedonism and social deviance (Becker 1963, Roszak 1969), drug use also symbolizes self-absorption and consequently is defined as immoral. ... (A)t the level of meaning, drug use threatens the moral order of organizations. Barnard (1938) sees organizations as deriving their moral purpose from the voluntary consensus and commitment of their members. Habitual drug use threatens to weaken the commitment of individual employees to the organization, their obligation to maintaining its collective well-being, and their belief in the work ethic. Therefore, it also threatens the very moral fabric of the organization above and beyond its functional performance. Drug taking clearly represents a crisis of organizational irrationality and immorality.” (ibid: 269)

From the above, Cavanaugh and Prasad seem to suggest that drug use threatens the principles of advanced organisation *per se*, i.e. the moral order or rationality underlying the concept of organization (also Bauman 1989). Elsewhere in their

article they also suggest, by focussing upon the US context, that we need to read the symbolic threat that drugs represent to organisation in the context of organisational location within particular national, political or cultural milieu.

“In North America, drug taking, for the most part is seen as an irrational act (...). Drug use and all its associations with adolescence, deviance and the counterculture (...) overwhelmingly represent immaturity and irrationality. In contemporary America, drug taking signals chaos, a loss of self-control and disintegration, and consequently symbolises the antithesis of organizational rationality.” (ibid:268)

The argument that the symbolic meaning of drug use for organisations, and therefore organisational responses to drug use, is linked to specific contexts of course finds wider intuitive, and academic, support. The links between organisations and prohibition, for instance, can be traced back in the influence of industrialists in the Temperance Movement in the stigmatisation of alcohol habituation and drunkenness, particularly amongst the working classes (Berridge, V. 1985: ; Rumbarger, J. 1989: ; Stimson, G. V. and Lart, R. 2005), both in America and in England (Mills, J. 2003: ; Musto, D. 1973). At the same time, these Temperance values supported the emergence of ‘a new capitalist individual’ from the 1830s onwards:

“Rather than spending his pittance on drink to wash away the drudgery of labour, the teetotalist campaigners encouraged workers to save, thus investing in capitalism and reinventing themselves as prototypes of the modern consumer (cfr. Walton, S. 2001: 132).”

Similarly, it has been suggested that the ‘discovery’ of alcohol addiction, was influenced by the values of productivity and industrialisation in America toward the nineteenth century (Cohen, P. 1990: ; Levine, H. G. 1978). More recently the extensive use of workforce drug testing in US organisations can be linked back to the Reagan administration’s pathologisation of drug use, its policy of requiring federal organisations to implement drug testing programmes and its explicit attempts to recruit non-federal organisations into a national moral crusade or ‘war’ against the ‘evils’ of drugs (Knudsen et al 2004).

Although the American approach to drugs has, as we would perhaps expect given its superpower status and might, influenced the direction of drug policies around the

world, countries have also made their own interpretations of the drugs problem (Dorn, N. and Jamieson, A. 2000: ; Mc Allister, W. B. 2000). Hence, some countries in Western Europe have opted for a more tolerant approach to drugs use. The UK, for instance, though draconian in some respects, has moved towards understanding addiction as a medical matter which can be treated and eventually cured (Mac Gregor, S. and Smith, L. 1998). In contrast, some countries have chosen a more prohibitionist approach, based on the idea of drug use as a menace to community and society, hence punishment is seen as a deterrent for illicit drugs use in these societies (Boekhout Van Solinge, T. 2002). Sweden is a case in point. For although its historical relationships to what are now regarded as illegal drugs has been somewhat checkered – for instance the consumption of amphetamines in Sweden soared at the pinnacle of their industrial production during the Second World War (Boekhout Van Solinge, T. 1997) – Sweden now boasts one of the most radical policies against drug use in Europe. This goal of eliminating drug use is enforced by different authorities across diverse institutions and contexts. For example young people are targeted as a major group of influencing present or future drug abuse. Schools, parents, teachers and other authorities join efforts in creating a drug free society in Sweden. The opinion of Swedish representatives in conferences and other international events confirm this assertion. Programs of prevention of drug abuse are directed to children and youngsters, proving useful in the relatively low proportion of young people using illegal drugs in this country.<sup>v</sup> As Boekhout van Solinge (1997) observes

“Few other countries go as far as Sweden in taking measures to reduce the extent of the drug problem. This has both a financial side, since this policy is very expensive, and an ethical side, in the sense that in the name of a drug-free society the authorities can intervene profoundly in a person’s private life. As a matter of fact, the goal of the drug-free society seems to justify all kinds of means, which are difficult to imagine in many other countries.” (ibid: 11)

From the above, and following Cavanaugh and Prasad (1994), the ‘symbolic threat’ reading of Swedish fashion organisation H&M’s dismissal of Kate Moss becomes apparent. Kate Moss’s drug use could be read to represent a symbolic threat not only to some abstract, generalised and unarticulated notion of ‘organisation’, or organisational rationality or morality, but also a symbolic threat to the explicitly voiced and nationally enforced pathologisation of hedonistic, deviant, immoral, dangerous, and seductive drugs and users of drugs and the cooption or employment of

organisations in support of this national purpose. Thus H&M's swift distancing from and, one might argue, rather brutal termination of Kate Moss may be understood as a symbolic attempt to reassert order, morality and rationality in a context where organisation and locale intersect to construct drugs and drug use as a particular threat.

If the above discussion may be read as supporting Cavanaugh and Prasad's thesis, and illustrating its purchase through reference to another national context and specific organisational event, then the next section may be read to both extend its scope but also to raise some questions concerning its explanatory power. In particular, by highlighting the specific nature of the sexual commodification of Kate Moss as valued organisational subject/ fashion model we seek argue that Kate Moss's value to H&M, and the fashion industry in general, as a seductive symbol of desire resides in her being seen to embody similar qualities of hedonism, seduction, addiction and danger that drugs and drug use have been presented as representing.

## **(2) The angelic and seductive, the vulnerable and the dangerous:**

Fashion modelling is predicated on the need to associate a desirable lifestyle, personality and/ or self-image with the marketed product – so as to appeal to the psychographics of its target market. Moreover, this association happens on a subconscious level and is concerned with an *irrational* response to the product being



advertised (Packard 1981). The choice of fashionable clothing has little to do with functionality and more to do with what the item, style and brand say about the wearer and their (sub)cultural affiliations (Barthes 1990; Baudrillard 1998) – at least to the extent that functionality is solely concerned with the usefulness of the garment in protecting the body from the elements.

Fashion in this regard has been studied predominantly using a semiotic approach

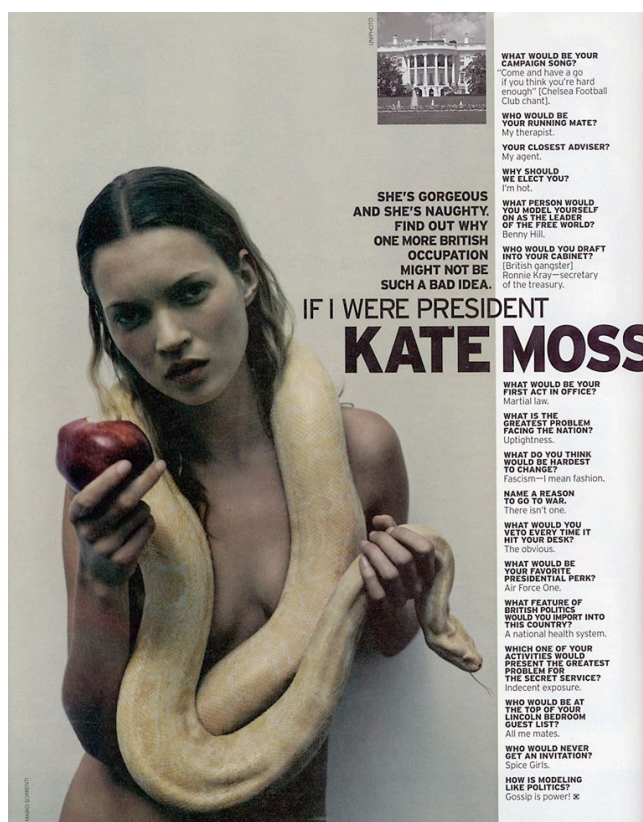
(Barthes 1990) and likewise, the study of advertisements (not just fashion ones) is tackled from a similar stance. In brief, semiotics is concerned with deconstructing an image to discern its meaning for a particular socio-cultural group using a tripartite system of sign-signifier-signified (see Williamson 1978, for a discussion of advertising semiotics in particular.) It is this method we have adopted here, in order to demonstrate how Kate Moss is portrayed as an ‘angelic devil’. The image above exemplifies this. The pose that Kate Moss is striking here is not accidental. Rather it is constructed as reminiscent of the way a shy child might stand when in strange adult company, swaying nervously, fingering her clothing, peeping out from behind her mother’s skirt. The arrangement of her body, the clothes and her expression are all signs that denote (signify) a pose commonly adopted by young children (especially girls) and therefore connote ‘girlish innocence’ which is the signified. However, we also know that Kate Moss is an adult woman and so the fact that her hands are twisting the fabric of her bra, touching her own breasts beneath it is undeniable erotic. Add to this the sideways ‘coy’ glance straight to camera and the parted lips and the message is clearly sexual. Angel and Devil.

When analysing images in this way it is also important to hold in mind the audience for which the image is intended. In this case this photograph is for Calvin Klein underwear and we might assume that its purpose is to persuade a female viewer to purchase the item of underwear that Kate is wearing, or to buy-into the ‘Calvin Klein’ brand. Given that we note above how advertising it intended to tap into a subconscious strata of fantasy and identity we might also surmise that this image is intended to convey that would-be wearers of Calvin Klein underwear could possess the same effortlessly childlike sexual qualities as the model. However, as Stern (2000: 60) notes a gynocentric (that is to say, female) reading of an advertisement image cannot *help* but be based on an androcentric view of the world<sup>vi</sup>:

“... the empowerment of androcentricity as the norm teaches women to ‘to think as men, to identify with a male point of view and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values’ (Fetterley 1978: x. For female readers, the process of reading as a man, far from being normal, provides evidence of the ‘immasculation’ of the woman reader.”



Thus the sexuality of Kate Moss in this image and hundreds other like it is not constructed as *female* sexuality but as what it means to be sexy through male eyes. Although not our primary purpose here, this point is worth making because it further highlights the ‘forbidden fruit’ element of Kate Moss’s image: the sexuality of (female) children being taboo in contemporary Western society, for example. Likewise, MacCurdy (1994: 32) notes that images of women have historically served two (male) purposes; when portrayed positively they represent a path to heightened ‘spirituality’ (angel) and when negatively cast images of women stand for dangerous seduction.



This image, drawn from the American publication *Newsweek* is a more blatant example of Kate as angel and devil. Depicted as a modern-day Eve, complete with apple and serpent, this image signifies the garden of Eden with its connotations of both innocence and the temptation (fall) of mankind as Williamson (1978: 121) reminds us. Once again, we can see that it is the *male* viewer that she is tempting, since we are told it was Adam who bit into the proffered apple.

Contrast this with the everyday paparazzi ‘snapshots’ of Kate taken by fans and the paparazzi (below) and we argue the organizational requirement and endorsement for Kate Moss to act as an temptress becomes even angelic clearer.





In these images, Kate appears as other women; as a mother carrying her child, in deep conversation, smoking a cigarette. Such homely images however do not make the high-profile and valuable fashion model. On the contrary her specific value as organisational commodity rests on her image of being (as the tag line to the above front page suggests) “gorgeous” but also quite “naughty”.

“(Kate Moss’s) breakthrough *Vogue* shoot in 1993 with ‘grunge’ photographer Corinne Day (had) images – which had a virtually naked Moss prone on the bed of an unglamorous flat (Kate’s flat at the time) and surrounded by fairy lights, proved quite controversial. Susie Orbach denounced them as ‘paedophilic and almost like a junkie’, and Moss was instantly established as the leading light of a whole new kind of modelling movement, referred to as ‘heroin chic’.” (Vernon 2006:44)

Her value lies in her being able to be cast in the angel/ devil role; to be seductive and dangerous, to represent beauty and hedonism, self-indulgence and irrationality, and encourage this in others (particularly in their purchase of whatever product she is advertising), to seduce us away from morality, or at least away from asceticism towards aestheticism.

“She now officially embodies all kinds of newsworthy qualities: danger, sleaze-edged glamour, decadence, sex, corrupted youth and ineffable beauty, addiction, money and fashion.” (Vernon 2006: 45)

It is here that we see our work raising questions concerning the adequacy of the present symbolic reading of organisation's responses to drugs and drug using subjects. For in the preceding discussion, the values that Kate Moss embodied as organisational commodity would seem to clearly parallel the values that drugs and drug use is said to symbolise, and be so threatening for, organisation. Thus Kate Moss the model symbolises hedonism, desire, seduction, danger, irrationality, indulgence and immorality and was highly valued by organisation as a result. Whereas Kate Moss drug user symbolised... the same qualities and, according to the preceding thesis, would have been deemed a dangerous threat to organisation accordingly, a threat that warranted and explained her dismissal.

### **(3) A Devil in High Heels: scapegoats and drugs**

So, where does this leave a consideration of the symbolism of drugs for organisation? Where we don't want to take this discussion is to a place that argues for a turn away from symbolic readings to a more traditional view that management and organisation are responding to the issue of drugs in a narrowly instrumental, rational, or indeed consciously ideological, way. As we highlighted in our introduction, we are simply not persuaded that management are operating in such way when it comes to the ever emotive subject of drugs (see Warren and Wray-Bliss, under review), if indeed to (m)any matters.

If we are to retain a symbolic reading then, what directions might we pursue? One possibility we offer here is to explore the connections between drugs, sacrifice and scapegoats in human history.

Firstly, it is interesting to note the ambiguity in the denomination of the term *pharmakon*, in relation to the historical meaning of 'drugs'. Following Derrida deconstruction of this term, in his analysis of Plato's Pharmacy, we see how the term means both 'remedy' and 'poison':

“This *pharmakon*, this ‘medicine’, this philtre, which acts as both remedy and poison, already introduces itself into the body of the discourse with all its ambivalence. This charm, this spellbinding virtue, this power of fascination, can be –alternately or simultaneously- beneficent of maleficent.

The *pharmakon* would be a substance –with all that that word can connote in terms of matter with occult virtues, cryptic depths refusing to submit their ambivalence to analysis, already paving the way for alchemy-“. (Derrida, J. 1981: 70)

Secondly, Escotado (1998) has found that the noun '*pharmakon*', also defines certain type of religious rituals in which ecstatic stages were induced (by psychoactive plants). In a further exploration of the etymology of this term, he found the word '*pharmakos*', used to indicate rituals involving scapegoats sacrifices. For him, the coincidence is not a fortuity, since scapegoats were used as a 'cleaning vehicle' offered to the deities in return of peace, prosperity, or just as a present to alleviate an ill situation:

“The phonetic proximity between 'scapegoat' (*pharmakos*) and 'drugs' (*pharmakon*), is not a coincidence. The therapeutical substances known by the ancient man could have been intermingled with shamanic rituals responding to common 'fears'. To remedy an evil (potential or real) and clean an impurity are the same thing”<sup>vii</sup>

In this line of argumentation, Szasz (1974) has argued that 'dangerous drugs', addicts, and pushers have become the scapegoats of our modern, secular, therapeutically imbued societies (p. xi). He suggested that social ceremonies involving scapegoats, magical or medical, serve to unite individual in groups by identifying a common menace linked to a deviant practice.

Thirdly, it is important to note how certain groups have been identified as menacing for the social order. Witches, madmen, or ethnic and religious communities have occupied the role of the scapegoat in different times and contexts (see Plant 1998). Indeed, women have been a traditionally target for persecution. Accused of witchcraft, prostitution, or moral weakness, the link between women and drugs has profited a continuous stigmatisation. Several examples in history show how drug reformers defined certain drugs as leading 'white moral women' into addiction, immorality and sexual slavery at the hands of oriental or black evil men (Boyd, 2004; see also Conrad, P. and Schneider, J. 1980; Kohn, M. 1992; Musto, D. 1973). In recent crimes, the increasing participation of females in illicit drug use has encouraged agencies and institutions to target this group in relation to the potential

risks in fertility, sexuality and reproduction for the overall society. As argued by Boyd (2004):

Drug laws are supported by myths and ideologies that intensify the regulation of women. Ideology is significant in relation to understanding the thinking that is involved in the formal regulation and disciplining of women who use illegal drugs (p.7).

This connection can also be used for our analysis of the organisational reaction regarding illicit drug use. In this tale, Kate Moss can be understood to represent both the scapegoat and the drug (*pharmakon* and *pharmakos*) which must be sacrificed to restore the apparent order. This theme has also been noted by Kaulingfreks and ten Bos (*forthcoming*). They note how Kate Moss's face was sacrificed in order for H&M to save their corporate 'face', thereby calling into question the ethics of this company's social responsibility agenda. Tabloid media and other authorities lead the ritual, and her dismissal represents this sacrifice. By means of a predictable sequence, her image is sacrificed, and she must pass by the ritual of purification. Indeed, by retreating herself in a 'therapeutical' environment, she emerges two months later, 'rehabilitated', 'cured' or 'saved', ready to continue her escalating career as an icon of modern times. Of course what this scapegoat explanation doesn't still quite address is why this drug using subject must be scapegoated when, as we have suggested, the basis of the symbolic 'threat' they arguably represent for organisation are the same qualities that make particular subjects attractive to organisation.

Could an explanation, we wonder, really be something as simple as the fact that the dangerous, the seductive, the irrational and immoral are all quite acceptable when embodied in an organisational commodity or turned to organisationally sanctioned and organisationally profiting ends, and unacceptable merely when they are not?

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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> Workforce drug testing refers to the organizational arrangement of testing employees' bodily fluids or hair for evidence of traces of past drug use.

<sup>ii</sup> Reported in The Observer, September 25, 2005: Anti-drug billionaire who ended Moss's £1.2 m deal. Reporters: Alex Duval, Nick Mathiason and David Smith.  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/drugs/Story/0,,1577902,00.html>, accessed on June 16, 2006.

<sup>iii</sup> Reported in Mentor website, Mr. Persson asserts that: "Companies are part of society and therefore companies must take an interest in social matters and take on social responsibility. Today's companies often serve as social models and are, furthermore, moulders of public opinion. A problem in today's society is the growing use of drug."  
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<sup>iv</sup> H&M Corporate Social Responsibility Report, 2005.  
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<sup>v</sup> See Report on Wilton Park Conference How Drug Use Can Be Reduced (WP778). March 21-23, 2005. [www.wiltonpark.org.uk/documents/conferences/WP778/pdfs/WP778.pdf](http://www.wiltonpark.org.uk/documents/conferences/WP778/pdfs/WP778.pdf)

<sup>vi</sup> O'Donohoe (2000) problematises the andro- vs gyno- centric dichotomy in advertising readership by remarking how 'female' (and we would argue 'male') are not homogenous and mutually exclusive categories. They can further be fragmented into black, disabled, gay, working class and so on and not all women act in a 'female' way, just as not all men exhibit 'male' traits. Nonetheless, we find Stern's (2000) argument helpful here in establishing that there are *differences* in the way audiences experience an advertisement – what Williamson (1978) refers to as the 'appellation' of the image: working out who's attention the image is 'shouting the loudest' to attract.

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## The myth of belonging

### Theorising Organisational belonging - what Rousseau and Bauman bring to organisational philosophy

#### Abstract

What are Rousseau and Bauman to organizational philosophy and how can organizations be understood using Rousseau and Bauman? Both have been credited with bringing new insights to organisational theory: Rousseau for acknowledging individuality and its struggle for recognition - describing *amour propre* and recognizing the *societas* role in inter-social exchanges, Bauman for seeing individuality as a pre-cursor to *societas* and as an end to community.

This paper will outline and reflect on Jean Jacques Rousseau's and Zygmunt Bauman's positions with regard to individuality in an organization. I will argue that the organization is an *ersatz*-community. I will also highlight similarities between the two in their approach to individuality in *communitas* and *societas*.

#### Introduction

The contribution of organizations to social order in today's society is a modern truism. The concept of Modernity is a central theme in today's cultural debate. Some scholars suggest that we have moved from modernity to post modernity (Best & Kellner 1991; 2000) in thought but that the commercial world is still in a modern state (Kurtz & Snowden 2003). In the move from modernity to postmodernity the focus has changed from a rational cause and effect calculus driven society to an individualistic, personally achieving society. How can we reconcile an organization being modern in one sense but inhabited by individuals?

Our understanding of what is happening in organizations can increase by initiating discourse between Jean Jacques Rousseau, the French philosopher (and musician) behind *A Discourse Upon The Origin And The Foundation Of The Inequality Among Mankind* and Zygmunt Bauman, a Polish-British sociologist most well known to the general public for *Modernity and the Holocaust*.

If we view an organisation as an *ersatz*-community (e.g. of practice, worship, togetherness, control, decision machines), what does an individual give up in

order to belong? And what, if anything, does he or she gain? Is an individual's moral compass given up to achieve the goals of an organization? Is man trading his or her moral beliefs and convictions for a sense of belonging in an *ersatz* community? A lot of people would answer 'yes' to these questions. After all, most people have a mortgage to pay – in a metaphorical sense.

Jean Jacques Rousseau was not absolutely clear in his view of society. His view on how to live one's life was contradicted by his own actions; for example, by giving up his children for adoption and at the same time clearly arguing for the importance of education (in *Emile, or on education*). His wish to raise the individual out of the sea of masses is a stimulating thought – why do we have 'norms' of behavior? His recognition of the possibility for individuals to progress – to move forward – but the fact that in moving forward, vice and corruption is moving closer. He recognizes the importance of individuals progressing, but also sees Enlightenment often walking hand in hand with dishonesty and sleaze. Corruption not only of the mind is a clear and present danger when people are enlightened according to Rousseau.

Rousseau felt that the original love, *amour d'soi*, evolved into *amour propre*, which broke down communities and turning organisations into societal constructions – society. Yet, man does not want to recognize this. Zygmunt Bauman argues that during the transformation from *amour d'soi* to *amour propre*, the individual loses *communitas*, the feeling of community. Only *societas* remain. And yet, man needs *communitas*. Man yearns for belonging as it feels safe. So man treats organisations as an *ersatz* to communities, a surrogate in order to feel a sense of security. Yet Bauman rightly states the fickleness of such surrogates. The organisations today have no place for loyalties. If it exists, Loyalty should only go one way; from man to organisation.

Individuals need to give up something in order to belong. It is when moving from a position of self love - the *amour d'soi* – to the *amour propre*, admiration by others that natural man turns into social man – or savage man. What man gains do not give a positive feeling towards community but rather a competitive streak in society – the interior of man is turned outwards, but needs esteem and recognition in order to thrive and survive.

Zygmunt Bauman treats individuality as a product of the disintegration of community. Bauman's view on individuals is essentialist in the Germanic tradition. He believes there are certain traits that make us human, not all which we need to have in order to belong to a group, or to society.

Bauman's reasoning goes: Man belonged to community. Communities were safe havens. They were our origins. Man *was* community. They were one. But man, or his muscles to be precise, was needed to build the modern society – the capitalist society. Capitalists, via politics introduced land reforms (in the UK) forcing people to move to cities. Thus capitalism destroyed communities and introduced society as an abstract. Man is now all by himself but longs for the safety of the community. Man identifies organizations as communities as an *ersatz*, as a surrogate for the lost safety of community. Something that is not real but man wishes it was.

Rousseau's view can be seen in parallel - although it preceded Bauman by 250 years. Man was initially alone and content. Natural man was full of self love, of inner love. But in order to 'fit in' to community he gave up inner love and attained *amour proper* - proper love, or outside love which is esteem and respect from other people. By acknowledging the breakdown of *communitas* and introducing the concept of society as a struggle, Rousseau exposes the artificiality of society. How do we conceive society when the fact that community collapses when 'outer love' becomes more precious to individuals?

Now I will discuss organizations as surrogates to community. What happens to organizations if we view them as surrogates to communities? What glasses do we need to wear? I will then move on to Rousseau and his concept of *amour d'soi* and *amore proper* and the implications for organizational belonging. Lastly I will discuss the insights that Zygmunt Bauman bring to understanding the transformation from *communitas*-organizations-societas and where the individual fits into the equation.

### **Organisations as *ersatz*-communities**

As a former HR consultant I was intrigued by the way people referred to themselves as 'Ericssöner' (sons of Ericsson), IKEIANER (IKEANS). An organisation

is in a strange way acting like a secondary family for many. People associate themselves with the organization to a high degree. This may be one way of building a communal effort, a sense of belonging by giving up being a Smith (or Smit) and becoming, to the outside a BAVARIAN (with shorts and tail). Labelling the 'insiders' from the 'outsider's is common and building patterns is something man does. Give man a daily commute and he will build a pattern. He reduces uncertainty by leaving home at a certain time, locking his bike at a certain place, getting on the train at the same carriage.

Organisational behaviourists and social psychologists claim that employees are emotionally attached to organisations (v. Knippenberg 2000 etc). This attachment is not a symbiotic relationship where employees and the organization work in an interrelated way. The organization is surrounded by boundaries, its territory framed by legal borders. It is a created and regulated entity – a construction, not a spontaneously emerging unit.

From a sociological and philosophical perspective organisations can be seen to fulfil different tasks. As control mechanisms (Taylor), bureaucratic machines (Weber), decision machines (Luhmann) and as devices for individual interests (Coleman). It is however with Rousseau that we can start looking at how organizations organize themselves and how individuals create organizational settings and why humans try and create bonds where there are none apparent.

Rousseau, according to Todorov (year here), emphasised the communal in man. A social animal that wants needs and craves social interaction. The initial *amour d'soi* man gave up was self love, love from the inside out. This was given up in order to gain respect, esteem and recognition by fellow humans. But in doing so 'community', which was considered an 'edenlike' state became competitive. It turned from a state of mind, of belonging to, to a state of being, wishing to belong.

For an organisation to be seen as a community by its inhabitants, the employees it needs a boundary, a code of behaviour, a shared identity that individuals can adhere to and share. It needs traditions, stories, narratives, habits, customs and rituals. These usually take time to evolve and they are likely to change over time as sediments of memories are slowly, slowly built up, like coral reefs.

From the outside, in order for an organization to exist in a legal sense it needs nothing but a tax number and a name. It does not need any employees. It does not need any infrastructure. It can be a shell containing nothing. It is when the shell is filled with people, infrastructure and ultimately has an organization – maybe with structure, maybe without – that a sense of belonging emerges. The sense of belonging does not come immediately it creeps upon you –like ivy. It is created by the presence of and interactions of individuals.

### **J'aime - belonging according to Rousseau**

In a broad sense Rousseau compounded the problem of organizing by endowing the concept with the mystical notion of the General Will. Rousseau's mythical, and ultimately - by Robespierre's adaptation - *totalitarian*, entity stipulated the sovereignty of the people (or a group) as a whole but excluded the possibility of any particular bodies of citizens or associations enjoying in the state, or organization, any kind of autonomy. The doctrine of sovereignty - by the organization - required that no decision made by the sovereign, whether conceived as the moral God or the General Will, could possibly be resisted by the individual conscience. Sovereignty thus came to possess a status above that of the moral law itself.

How do we reconcile the fact that man generally seeks to belong to an organisation if they are deemed to be morally wrong - this despite the fact that they may have to accept sovereign decisions with which they morally disagree? Rousseau treated belonging as something that was inherent, something given, almost in the DNA of man. In *ersatz*-communities, the struggle for belonging is stronger than the voice of the individual's moral conviction. We can here draw parallels between the sovereign and the organization. An organization, or a company, can be argued to be seen as a community in which humans work. Hence the organisation does take precedence over moral laws. This attitude facilitates yesterday's Enron's and Worldcom's and forthcoming scandals in the business world.

Communitas however is a romantic concept - a construction noted by Rousseau. Man - or the 'noble savage' - was in a state of equilibrium. He then moved into a *famillie* – a small type of community which was destroyed by the introduction, or the notion of society. In the move from community to society, man was forced to

give up the sense of belonging he had for a wish for respect and admiration.

Rousseau writes:

men continue to shake off their original wildness, and their connections become more intimate and extensive. They now begin to assemble round a great tree: singing and dancing, the genuine offspring of love and leisure, become the amusement or rather the occupation of the men and women, free from care, thus gathered together. Every one begins to survey the rest, and wishes to be surveyed himself; and public esteem acquires a value. He who sings or dances best; the handsomest, the strongest, the most dexterous, the most eloquent, comes to be the most respected (2004:17)

It is here Rousseau states that inequalities and vice first appear. By including some and excluding others, societies are built where people are ranked– better at singing, dancing, better in health, wealthier. In doing so, societal norms of behavior and morals are introduced. There is a ranking system of acceptable behavior. After a while, traditions (and stories) emerge through the moral conduct. This creates a shared implicit understanding leading to social stability and order, according to Rousseau. The most dangerous idea Rousseau introduced was that man, and also morals could improve over time.

Rousseau's notion of the concept of inclusion and exclusion of individuals in community and society is something that Bauman concentrates on.

### **Including Bauman**

For Zygmunt Bauman, the journey to organizations starts at the platform of culture and identity. In *Identity*, Zygmunt Bauman outlines where individuals have gone wrong in trying too many identities in the *liquid* modern society.

Modern society, according to Bauman is resting on the pillars of Enlightenment thinking. The introduction of post modern philosophical thinking has in Bauman's terms become *liquid modernity*. In liquid modern times, *societas* is ever ruling and it is for sale.

Unlike Rousseau, for Bauman *community* is something that culturally existed before the industrial revolution. This concept was crushed by the owners of capital and the industrial revolution. The commercial world is a truly modern creation. Thus we cannot see an organisation or a company as a community, as communities are *pre-modern*. Individual rights as understood cannot exist in organisations as they are collective victories. In Bauman's words:

It is in the nature of 'human rights' that although they are meant to be enjoyed separately (they mean, after all, the entitlement to have one's own difference

recognized and so to remain different without fear of reprimand or punishment), they have to be fought for and won *collectively*, and only collectively may they be granted. Hence the zeal for boundary drawing and for the erection of closely guarded boundary checkpoints. In order to become a 'right', difference needs to be shared by a group or a category of individuals numerous and determined enough to be reckoned with: it needs to become a stake in a collective vindication of claims. In practice, however, it all comes down to control of individual movements – demanding unswerving loyalty from some individuals presumed to be the carriers of the difference for which recognition is claimed, while barring access to all the others. (2001:76<sup>1</sup>)

If we apply the above to *ersatz* communities we can see that individuals partly cease to exist as they transfer some of their individual traits for the 'greater good' of the community, as it is only *collectively* that human rights may be granted. The *amour d'soi* Rousseau indicated when writing about the natural man can be applied to an individual in an organization.

Instead of one identity, which Bauman considers too heavy to wear for the duration of a lifetime, he suggests, like Richard Baxter, to wear an identity like a light cloak – ready to be taken off at a moments notice. This in response to Weber's crushing 'iron cage' that would ultimately suffocate – if one can suffocate in a cage? – An individual.

In response to Baxter, Zygmunt Bauman introduces the concept of *cloakroom communities* to deal with the growing demand for multiple identities required in the liquid modern world. Both *amour d'soi* and *amour propre* has a place in what Bauman refers to as *cloakroom communities*. He writes:

Cloakroom communities are patched together for the duration of the spectacle and promptly dismissed again once the spectators collect their coats from the hooks in the cloakroom. Their advantage over the 'genuine stuff' is precisely their short life span and the pettiness of the commitment required to join and (however briefly) enjoy them. (2004:31)

The cloakroom community can be seen as an *ersatz* community. A place where one spends time, taking on a particular identity – an in-between, a mix of savage man and natural man. Both can exist and are recognised.

## Final Thoughts

What insights do Rousseau and Bauman bring to organizational philosophy and how we can view organizations using Rousseau and Bauman?

I believe there are three areas where we can gain greater understanding in organizational thinking with the help of Rousseau and Bauman.

First, by viewing organizations as ersatz-communities we see how individuals view them with nostalgia. This may lead us to recognize the fact that people feel, or say that they feel, emotionally attached to a created entity, a social construct such as an organization. They use the organization as a surrogate, a proxy, an *ersatz* to a community they have lost. We can also give hope to individuality in search of a long-lost feeling of safety. Rousseau and Bauman treat individuality and community differently but are both inherently wistful and romantic when it comes to the individual's fate in a community such as an organisation.

Rousseau has given Bauman the context in which the individual's right is something that can be given up for the good of the community. In its transformation from a state of *amour d'soi* to *amour propre*, man is leaving *communitas* behind and entering *societas*. When leaving *communitas*, according to Rousseau's words:

In proportion as he becomes sociable and a slave to others, he becomes weak, fearful, mean-spirited, and his soft and effeminate way of living at once completes the enervation of his strength and of his courage. We may add, that there must be still a wider difference between man and man in a savage and domestic condition, than between beast and beast; for as men and beasts have been treated alike by nature, all the conveniences with which men indulge themselves more than they do the beasts tamed by them, are so many particular causes which make them degenerate more sensibly. <sup>2</sup>

Bauman senses this but moves beyond the domestic condition of man, indicating that the move from community into society was/is a *mirage*:

It is true that 'society' was always an imagined entity, never given to experience in its totality; not so long ago, however, its image was one of a 'caring-and-sharing' community. (Bauman 2001:111)

The second area where the Rousseau-Bauman pact can be used is to gain an understanding in the moral decline of organizations and individuals. To understand organizational ethics and individual morals using Rousseau and Bauman we have entered a romantic sphere where the state of man was definitely better before. Before what? Before the advent of modern man, of social man, says Rousseau. Before the industrial revolution says Bauman. They are both



grappling with the Self and the necessary attachment and detachment from the Other.

The third area where organizational understanding can be gained is in the concept of Natural man vs. Social man. Or rather, in the interaction or interchange between the two. It is imperative to enter without bonds in a modern day community according to Bauman. By constantly switching between the Rousseauian concepts of natural man and social man, one or several acceptable identities can be located. From a communal view, the less identities the better as the risk of identity inflation can cause trust in an identity to diminish. It is in a communal setting where an interchange of ideas, concepts, beliefs and thoughts a perception of the individual arises. In today's organization, the community of practice concept is probably the closest we today can get to Rousseau's and Bauman's' view of belonging without bonds. 'Man is/was born free but is everywhere in chains' could today be 'man is born free but sure needs his network.' The interchange in a community of practice is that of ideas, theories and views. It is more than that, it connects people into first and foremost a relationship around a problem but may lead onto stronger attachments and friendships as the individuals move from a state of pure exchange of ideas on work related matters to that of interest in the Other as a human.

Human nature is stripped and laid bare in *societas*. If in a surrogate community, such as an organization, morality is given up by the individuals in order to belong, where does that leave society, and states at large? Is it so that, if interpreting Rousseau and Bauman, *societas* is without ethics and morals have taken the place of ethics? Rousseau saw morals as something that was the prerogative of social man – natural man was incapable of morals as his innocence did not know any other.

Rousseau and Bauman state that man is not naturally cruel. There is hope. It is society, or *societas* - forcing him to become cruel in order to gain esteem. In belonging to an *ersatz*-community – an organization, man can attain a feeling of going back to nature, to a state of savage man – that was full of inner love but only seemingly so. When, at the end of the working day, natural man hangs the cloak of savage man in the cloakroom, he has for a brief moment felt the communal – a sense of being in a shared environment where there is a combination of *amour d'soi* and *amour propre*. And it is that feeling that makes

people get out of bed in the morning to go to work – the wish to belong to a community – although it is just a surrogate. They know it is a surrogate but the surrogate is the best they can hope for.

Both Rousseau and Bauman see what Shelley described in *Prometheus Unbound*:

*The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains  
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man  
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless  
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king  
Over himself; just, gentle, wise<sup>3</sup>...*

But both fail to understand the implications. Modern man behind the mask is the man from *communitas* but needed in *societas*; a man *belonging in societas*. A tribeless and nationless man, yet just, gentle and wise. In short a man intent on progress. A man organizing ersatz-communities in the shape of organizations, giving up part of Self to be with the Other.

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<sup>1</sup> Zygmunt Bauman: *Community: Seeking safety in an insecure world*. Polity Press, London, UK 2001

<sup>2</sup> Jean Jaques Rousseau *A Discourse Upon The Origin And The Foundation Of The Inequality Among Mankind*. The Project Gutenberg EBook <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/11136/11136.txt>. 2004

<sup>3</sup> P B Shelley 1820. *Prometheus Unbound*. Act III

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**The Relationship Between Organization and Cinema: a  
chronological examination**

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Working paper, please do not quote without authors' permission

# **The relationship between organization and cinema: a chronological examination**

## **Introduction**

In this article we present a chronological examination of American cinema and its changing relationship to organization as the privileging of the individual develops as a key thematic within film. We develop two closely linked streams of thought within the article. Firstly, the impact of the institution of film and its vast potential to influence general opinion. Secondly, we will consider film to be a medium which over the course of its history has developed an anti-organizational sentiment. We witness a privileging of the individual over mass organization culminating, in recent years, with the production of films which are openly derisory of 'big business'. No matter how critical an individual text may be of rigid organizational structure, the viewer must retain awareness of the especial irony that cinema itself is founded on methods of mass production. The film industry, after all, is an "economic, industrial, aesthetic, and cultural institution" (Belton 2005: xix) which has maintained high profitability throughout the twentieth century. The central contradiction at the heart of American cinema is encapsulated by Powdermaker's description of Hollywood as a 'dream factory'; it is both a medium of art and a vast and powerful both industry.

Generally regarded as the key medium of 'working-class' entertainment, cinema both represents and addresses a figure at the mercy of organization and privileges this figure by awarding heroic status to the central protagonist. The resulting individualist impulse of this mode of representation can itself be assumed as anti-organizational; if it can be taken that the individual and the organization are obverse to each other. Within this paper we will examine both the representation of organizations as commercial entities (as in, for example, Metropolis (1927) and It's a Wonderful Life (1946)) and also the less tangible organization that encompasses societal structures and relationships and the consequences thereof. We will also examine consequences of 'bad organization' (as demonstrated in 'social problem' films such as Rebel Without a Cause (1955)).

We choose to analyse film as the most influential medium of the twentieth century, recognised by Lenin as “the most important of all the arts” (in Tudor 1974: 13), with vast potential to disseminate ideas. Film theorists Baudry and Metz (1970) considered cinema to be an ‘ideological apparatus’ which could variously be used as a tool of mass organization or as a tool of opposition. Similarly, as Jameson theorises, every text is informed by ‘a political unconscious... a symbolic mediation on the destiny of community’ (1981: 70). The analysis of films might not lead to a ‘truth’ about organizations but nevertheless can act as a technique which generates awareness of ‘organizational life’ and of the many subjective and affective aspects of organizational structure (Phillips 1995).

The relationship between cinema and industry is a complex one. Many recent films have discredited the corporations which traditionally have provided the cinematic institution with funding. However, no matter how critical film may be of business, it remains irrefutable that cinema itself is an industry and a vast one at that. Early cinema’s successful utilization of Fordist techniques led to the unprecedented success of the silver screen’s golden years during the ‘studio era’, generally dated from 1927 to 1948. As a business, cinema has maintained high levels of success and has wielded a varying amount of power over its consumers. It is well acknowledged how vast is the influence of media and, specifically, the American media upon behaviour and perceptions; ranging from the tame, such as the power of product advertising, to encouraging vast shifts in attitudes through variously condoning and condemning prejudice. Media in all its forms naturally has the potential, censorship allowing, to expose the masses to whatever information its controllers desire.

The paper develops chronologically, presenting case studies of relevant films at important junctures of cinematic history. Resident within the films we use as case studies we detect two major conflicting fears of corporate control and anarchy respectively, each of which threaten to subsume the individual in a chaotic collective. The periods which we analyse are delineated as the following: i) early 20<sup>th</sup> Century cinema production; ii) the period post World War II; iii) the 1960s as a period of upsurge in ‘independent’ film; iv) the triumph of the ‘blockbuster’ in the 1980s and 1990s; v) present day cinema and our predictions for the future. This paper aims

to draw attention to the influence of the American cinema on the public's conceptions of business and its relation to the individual. The following section examines in depth the construction of the cinema as an 'industry'.

### **Early Twentieth Century Cinema: the utilization of new modes of production**

The process of film-making follows the three basic components of modern industry: manufacturing (production), distribution (wholesaling) and retailing (exhibition). Cinema has at its origin a time of growing industrialism and scientific/technological research of the early twentieth century. This period saw the flourishing of new production techniques, most notably those associated with automobile manufacturer Henry Ford. Various forms of technological innovation can be credited with advancing the cinematic industry: Edison's machine shops produced the motion picture camera, Eastman's photographic works innovated motion picture film, and the research labs of Bell Telephone and others pioneered transmission technologies. These examples are of American origin but we also acknowledge the importance of pioneering European technology in the improvement of projection, and in the introduction of sound and colour to cinema (Bakker 2005).

The early generation of cinema and the automobile are chronologically synonymous and each have had a similarly vast impact on American life. The automobile industry, like cinema, was a self-replicating one which distinctively created and maintained its own method of mass production whilst encouraging consumerism. Both industries shared Fordist methods of mass production, benefiting from the centralization of production, the assembly line, successful division of labour, increasing specialization and professionalization of the work force. These allowed for lower costs for manufacturers but importantly also led to a greater end goal: the potential to reach a mass of consumers. Weber's 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism' considered America at the apex of this spirit of capitalist discipline (Norton 1986: 200). The key figure of this discipline is the self-sufficient, self-made individual, working to benefit from what de Tocqueville considered the fundamental principle of organisation in America: wealth (in Conley 2002: 129). Following cinema's conception in 1896 and its growing popularity in the early part of the twentieth

century, however, the consolidation of the 'studio system' generated a rather different reality for the majority of workers. As in other major organizations of the era, 'sweat-shop labour' was frequently employed to benefit wealthy industry bosses whilst maintaining poor living standards for the impoverished. These contradictions are encapsulated in Modern Times (1936), our first case study, examined below.

### **Modern Times (1936).**

Dir. Charles Chaplin, Prod. United Artists Productions, USA, 1936.

Main cast: Charles Chaplin (Factory Worker), Tiny Sandford (Big Bill), Hank Mann (Burglar).

This silent comedy deals with many of the anxieties felt by the working-class in 1930s America. Chaplin plays an industrial worker who struggles to keep up with a production line and is eventually swallowed into its coils, representing in a rather explicit manner the over-working and subsumation of many factory employees by their monotonous yet difficult labour. Chaplin is sent to a psychiatric hospital, but escapes and is then mistakenly assumed to be a Communist after he is seen waving a red flag and is imprisoned. This film is a cynical examination of technological developments and their chaotic potential, as reflected not only in its content but in its mode of production; made in silent during the era of sound cinema, Chaplin's refusal or inability to embrace new technology (filmic or otherwise) is a derisory comment on the means by which the coming of sound swept aside silent cinema stars such as himself. Aligning himself with the working-class, Chaplin suggests that the means by which workers at all levels may unexpectedly and ruthlessly determined obsolete is a worrying precursor for the future of industry.

The foundation of the motion picture might well have been entertainment, but cinema soon consolidated itself as a business enterprise and became "governed by the primary goal of all businesses: making money" (Jarrett and Linton 1980: 25). Cinema identified as its potential audience the emerging 'working-class' and thus aimed to address this class accordingly and to provide it with the affordable entertainment which it sought; in fact, the film industry is considered to have wielded such an influence over this audience that the creation of cinema itself has been termed a 'social adjustment' (Stead 1989: 1). Although early cinema did not often present characters resonant of its working-class audience members, nor did it directly address

the problems which they faced, it did provide escapism and diversion through marvel at this new technological wonder. Importantly, it was also the first major medium of entertainment which was financially available to most American workers. The output of the film industry soon became so large that it was more financially viable to charge low standard ticket prices for a regular and vast audience than to use the technique present in theatres, for example, which was to charge high prices for a small number of seats.

In the very early days of cinema, short films would be shown alongside other acts in vaudeville shows generally frequented by the working-class. From 1896 to around 1908, cinema as an isolated form of entertainment consolidated itself as vaudeville fell from fashion and the phenomenon of the nickelodeon hit almost every American town. Nickelodeons were small, neighbourhood cinemas costing one nickel for entrance, an affordable price for most members of the working-class; they were not generally frequented by the remnants of the American bourgeoisie, who considered them distasteful. These little cinemas exhibited a range of short fiction films such as Catch the Kid (1907), 'scenics' (views of the world shot from moving trains), and filmed sporting events. After around a decade of growing nickelodeon popularity, attempts were made by several town counsellors and mayors to close these small cinemas due to worries about their affect on public morality. Industry players in Hollywood, listening to such concerns, then decided to attempt to bring the middle-classes 'back on side' by introducing more highbrow content to films growing in length and in sophistication; filmed literary and theatrical adaptations became popular with the theatre-going public.

In 1908 the Motion Picture Patents Company was established by the major film producers in a bid to encourage the world to take cinema more seriously as an art form. Gradually, films became dedicated to narration rather than monstration whilst the popularity of cinema, as both entertaining diversion and more serious medium of art, grew exponentially. Frequented now by both the working- and middle-classes, cinema became a "national pastime" with audience figures between 1929-49 averaging at roughly 80-90 million Americans visiting the cinema each week (Belton 2005: 3). The new collective experience of cinema-going, thus, was partially responsible for the erosion of class differences following the First World War.



As the popularity and potential of cinema were realised, the output of the film industry became gradually more standardized in a bid to 'tap into' the successes of certain releases. Thus, standardization of cinematic output became increasingly apparent with the gradual establishment of what became known as the 'genre system'. This 'system' stabilized the potential diversity of film until the 1960s, when attempts were made to discredit it as restrictive to artistic expression. The most popular developing genres were the melodrama, the gangster film and the Western. Films from each of these respective genres evidence similar storylines, characters, settings and visual iconography. These genres are indicative of the concerns of the era in which they became popular; melodrama, for instance, dealing with the toll taken on the family by urbanization; gangster films portraying urban crime; and Westerns examining issues of frontier security. A quick comparison with today's 'genre system' displays for us the means by which the film industry assures profitability by dealing with contemporary concerns; melodramas are still popular (The English Patient (1996)), as are gangster films (Four Brothers (2005)); the issues examined by the Western, however, are now generally less socially relevant and so the genre has fallen from favour. During the 'studio era' commercial success was the only guarantee of authority for filmmakers who proved not just that they had talent but that they could work profitably 'within the system' (Schatz 1998), producing pictures which could build upon the success of their generic predecessors. Experimental cinema, though it did exist at this time, was generally produced outside of America and rarely reached the phenomenon of vast audience popularity enjoyed by 'genre pictures'.

As output became increasingly standardized, so became apparent a gradual emergence of oligopolistic control by the major studios: identified here as Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (hereafter referred to as 'MGM'), Paramount, Twentieth-Century Fox, and RKO Radio Pictures, most of which are still in business today. These studios, backed by investors from a range of industries, ensured success by their adoption of two practices: 'block booking' and 'blind bidding'. 'Block booking' was the name given to the demand placed by studios on exhibitors to purchase not just one specific film but a studio's entire yearly output; and these exhibitors were 'blind bidding' in that they agreed to purchase the studio's films without having seen them (in most cases, before they had even been put in production). The benefit of these practices for the

studios was that less bankable films were sold alongside the higher budget productions, assuring a high average price distributed evenly over a year's worth of pictures varying in budget and quality.

The oligopolistic control by studios was not solely limited to distribution and exhibition. The dawn of what may be termed 'the cult of the star' meant that performers became increasingly commodified, with it becoming quickly apparent that popular actors and actresses were a major audience draw. To ensure that studios would benefit from the public's adoration of certain performers, favourable actors and actresses were bound by restrictive seven-year contracts to specific studios. Interestingly, these contracts regulated the stars' personal behaviour ranging from public morality to off-screen appearance. Contractual obligation meant that an actor had little or no choice regarding which roles to take, and were cast often in films which critics would later consider to be of poor quality in a bid to assure financial success for potentially unpopular films.

Studios kept under contract not only actors but also producers, directors, writers, cinematographers and other technical staff, in order to have a 'pool' of talent from which to dip for each new production. In order to ensure that they were at hand, offices for most of these staff were created in the vast 'lots' of each studio, which functioned as self-sufficient worlds with their own restaurants, gyms, hospitals, police and fire departments. The office-based structure of these 'lots' resembled that of any business, and reflected the studios' hierarchical system of organisation, with the Chief Executive at the 'top of the chain' making decisions which would influence the actors and directors on-set and the thousands of workers involved in film drying, editing, and other aspects of post-production.

The 'style' with which we associate the major studios was not a little influenced by the tastes of their respective Chief Executives. MGM produced glossy pictures with glamorous stars such as Greta Garbo and Joan Crawford and upheld American middle-class values with films featuring Judy Garland; Paramount made comedies such as the Marx brothers' Monkey Business (1931) and Duck Soup (1933); Warner produced gangster pictures with Humphrey Bogart and James Cagney; Fox targeted a rural rather than an urban audience with period dramas and costume epics; the various

styles of RKO which produced films from King Kong (1933), to Rogers-Astaire movies, to B-pictures such as I Walked With a Zombie (1943) reflected its frequent change in heads of production. It was those films which appealed to the ever-changing tastes of cinema's vast audiences, however, which assured financial success and longevity, as films clamoured for the title of 'classic' and for the profitability ensured by critical acclaim. After 1929, the establishment of the 'Academy' of film critics also encouraged the production of epic releases such as Gone With the Wind (1939) in a bid to earn the ultimate approbation of an 'Oscar', a stamp of quality and a guarantee of financial return.

Notably, most of the films which earned the love of both critics and audiences did not directly reflect the concerns of the majority of their viewers. Generally, cinema during the 'studio era' used the technique, inherited from theatre, of providing escapist fantasy via a representation of the upper-classes, although the contemporary American reality was that the bourgeoisie were diminishing as the urban working-class grew by the day. However, during the 1930s, a new genre of 'social problem' films began to develop in a bid to call attention to the plight facing many of these urban workers. For the first time since the nickelodeon era, members of the proletariat came to dominate the screen in films such as Little Caesar (1931) and I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang (1932). Many of these films had a rather negative focus, concentrating particularly on the problem of urban crime. Nevertheless, the ability for proletarian audiences to recognise themselves and their peers in contemporary cinema was important in the development of a sense of working-class identity during this period; seeing themselves reflected on screen, workers began to view themselves as 'subjects' of their own lives and destiny rather than 'objects', perhaps, of other people's control. Working-class youths were shown that they, too, could be participants (and even heroes) rather than bystanders or mere stereotypes. The impact of this realisation can be detected in the fact that many young workers in England, viewing the same films as their counterparts in the United States, came to adopt American accents, dress and mannerisms (White 1986 in Strinati 1995). Thus, we can recognise the vast power of cinema to disseminate images and ideologies, particularly during the 'glory days' of the studio era. The potential of this power to influence opinion and to generate unrest throughout the creation of destructive stereotypes was never made clearer than in the cinematic demonisation of the Communist regime

which influenced output from the early twentieth-century to the escalation of the Cold War. An overview of this period, charting the portrayal of distrust and paranoia of Communism in film is given below.

### **Early Depictions of Societal Relationships within Film**

One of the major politico-historical moments of the early twentieth century was the growing power of Bolsheviks in Russia, marking the unofficial beginnings of the Cold War which destroyed American-Russian relations. During the 1920s, paranoia spread as suspected Communists were deported from America. In a precursor to what would be known as the 'McCarthy witch-hunts' of the 1950s, performers suspected of Communist activity were blacklisted; including Charlie Chaplin, for instance, who was later exiled. Communism became presented in cinema and other forms of propaganda as being as far polarized from the political and social capitalist ideals of American society as possible. Personnel within the film industry became obliged to condemn Communism at the public hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUACC) during which many members of the film industry identified suspected Communists among their peers. Nevertheless, the encouragement of individual action in the pursuit of what one holds to be true had been a motif of American identity since the Declaration of Independence. Inspiration from the Hollywood heroes who fought adversity to seek justice, such as James Stewart's 'Mr Smith', here influenced reality. A small group of industry executives headed by the 'Hollywood Ten' and supported by stars including Bogart, Bacall, and Gregory Peck, publicly denounced the HUACC. Each of the 'Ten' were given jail sentences after refusing in court to answer the infamous question: 'are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist party?'.

During the 1950s, the virulence of McCarthyism faded, but fears about threats to national security remained evident in films from The Manchurian Candidate (1962) to Top Gun (1986) and beyond. Although certain texts still focused upon the failings of modernity as capitalist production was seen to place restrictions on personal freedom, the attention of the public was diverted by a paranoia regarding an assumed

Communist threat encouraged by cinema. Anti-Communist themes were overtly represented in films such as The Red Menace and I Married a Communist (both 1949), whereas science-fiction films captured the fear of Communist takeover in a slightly more subtle if ever more sinister light. These films represented the threat to humanity upheld by an (implicit or explicit) Communist system which threatened to turn victims into soulless replicants, as central to the storylines of films from Them! (1954) to Invasion of the Bodysnatchers (1956).

We take the earlier film 'Metropolis' as the ultimate example of nightmarish vision of bourgeois control over a downtrodden working class.

### **Metropolis (1927).**

Dir. Fritz Lang, Prod. Universum Film, Germany, 1927. Main cast: Alfred Abel (Johan Fredersen), Brigitte Helm (Maria).

Although 'Metropolis' (1927) was not a Hollywood film, having been filmed in Berlin, it is impossible to conduct any survey of film's relationship to business without considering this phenomenally successful picture. Now regarded as a 'classic', 'Metropolis' predicts a future in which citizens are divided into two classes; the 'workers', who live below the surface of the city, and the 'thinkers', the dominant class which lives at the surface. The fictional city of Metropolis, a predictive prototype for an urban twentieth-century landscape, encapsulates the very real feelings of betrayal which were emerging amongst a working-class audience who considered themselves denied the fruits of their labour. Downtrodden whilst serving a bourgeois public, the working-class audience of 'Metropolis' came to realise that, as on screen, 'the minds that planned the Tower of Babel cared nothing for the workers who built it' (Maria).

When the son of the Lord of Metropolis, a member of the dominant class, decides that the workers are no longer necessary, he invents a robot in a bid to eliminate them; a callous act marking the literal embodiment of Emerson's theory that 'the machine unmans the user' (in Norton, 1986, 34). 'Metropolis' is a member of the futuristic genre which also includes '1984', 'Brave New World' and 'Fahrenheit 451', each of which are mediations on a potential dystopia brought about through the control which has been willingly or unwittingly handed over to vast, nightmarish organisations

which mix business with politics to obtain totalitarianism. Each of these films explore the means by which their fictitious working class are denied access to knowledge which may enable them to raise themselves from their situations.

Importantly, although Communism and capitalist regimes are seen to be polarized in their aspirations, cinema has variously expressed fear of both as contributing to the ultimate modern nightmare: a 'soulless society'. In films such as 1984 (1984), a general tone of loss of faith in formerly protective institutions can be witnessed, as government and industry assumes increasing control of a downtrodden working-class. The conception of a treacherous government organised under a corporate structure is indicative of the twentieth century's greatest fears. The theme of a 'soulless society' retains its dystopian qualities in today's blockbuster films such as I, Robot (2004), and the X-Men trilogy (2000-2006), in which governments are depicted as dehumanising their citizens. The fear of a society which mirrors the organization of modern mass industry, causing life to become standardized, bureaucratic and super-organized under which the individual is subsumed, has been retained throughout the century. In a somewhat ironic twist of fate, however, it was the perception that the major production companies employed similar methods of bureaucratic control that generated the downfall of the 'studio system'.

### **The Period Post World War II: the fall of the 'studio system'**

The practices of the major studios did not go unnoticed, nor did their levels of control over the output of the entire film industry. Just before WWII, the US Department of Justice's Antitrust Division had filed suit against the major studios accusing them of monopolistic practices. In 1948, the studios were ordered to abandon 'block booking' and 'blind bidding', and to give up their hold on specific exhibitors and cinema chains. In effect, production was now distanced from exhibition, with no guarantee that an individual film would be purchased or screened. The studios were hit hard by these changes, and also by further developments within the American media which caused their audience numbers to fall. Potent competition to the 'studio system' was arising in the shapes of 'independent' production and of television. Sensing the impending downfall of the major studios, many studio executives 'jumped ship' and

joined the television industry. Some film-makers formed their own production companies in a bid for increased freedom in the style of the new 'independent' producers; a notable example being that of Liberty Films, which was the result of a union between Frank Capra and fellow directors William Wyler and George Stevens and which was the company behind the 'classic' 1946 film It's a Wonderful Life.

We take the following case study of It's a Wonderful Life to demonstrate the complexities that arise when an individual makes bold moves to confront an organization.

**It's a Wonderful Life (1946).**

Dir. Frank Capra, Prod. Liberty Films, USA, 1946. Main cast: James Stewart (George Bailey), Donna Reed (Mary Hatch Bailey), Lionel Barrymore (Mr. Potter).

'It's a Wonderful Life' tells the story of George Bailey, who hopes as a young man to leave his home town of Bedford Falls and make his fortune. George is obliged to remain when the death of his father means that he must take over the family Building and Loan business which protects Bedford's citizens from the investor, Mr. Potter, who wishes to turn the town into an urban metropolis. After misplacing a vast loan which threatens to ruin Christmas for Bedford Falls, George becomes suicidal, but is aided by a guardian angel who shows him a vision of the disarray into which the town would have fallen without him. The film clearly places self-sacrifice and rural values over urban individualism, but its politic is dubious; the title 'It's a Wonderful Life' seems bitterly ironic in light of George's stifled desire to strike out for himself. The reward achieved by George when he learns to appreciate his life and his responsibilities is a bittersweet one which will also restrict him for the rest of his days, a dark element to this film which is often taken as the ultimate 'feel-good' Christmas movie.

Following the Second World War, a general sense of disillusionment and a feeling of betrayal spread throughout the working-class. Having been forced into warfare or into destitution by recent events, many workers came to consider that they were denied access to the fruits of their labour, and that they would be offered little protection by the society which they had helped to create. A double sense of betrayal was felt by

those who still recalled the effects of the Great Depression, and realised that little would be done to protect them in this time of renewed vulnerability. It was perhaps more during this period than any other that the failings of modernity became apparent. Adorno and Horkheimer's theory that the 'Age of Reason' was in fact an act of 'mass deception' aimed at the 'abolition of the individual' (1997: 154) appears pertinent here. It seemed that the 'Great Promise' of modernity and of the utopian aspirations for an industrialised world was little more than a cheat, an illusion that was fast becoming a nightmare for those who had helped to build this world and now were facing destitution (Fromm 1976).

These feelings were reflected by developments in the thematics of a cinema, and were encapsulated by the emergence of a major new genre: film noir. Protagonists of film noir were often those excluded from the satisfaction of gainful employment in secure organizations; noir classics such as Detour (1945) and The Postman Always Rings Twice (1946) have tramps or drifters as their lead characters, whereas other films such as Double Indemnity (1944), which we take now as a case study, focus upon those who have obtained gainful employment but are despairing at their resultant feelings of anonymity and alienation.

### **Double Indemnity (1944).**

Dir. Billy Wilder, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1944.

Main cast: Fred MacMurray (Walter Neff), Barbara Stanwyck (Phyllis Dietrichson), Edward G. Robinson (Barton Keyes).

Double Indemnity, generally regarded as the classic example of film noir, tells the story of insurance salesman Walter Neff, who meets the alluring Phyllis Dietrichson when he calls on her with regards to updating her husband's life insurance policy. After realising that Phyllis wishes to murder her husband in a bid to cash in his policy, he decides to go along with her scheme and to swindle his own company. The important aspect of this film's thematic with regards to the relationship between cinema and business is that it encapsulates the alienation and powerlessness felt by represented employees, which in this case leads to a lack of loyalty with an organisation and to a lack of scruples about workplace morality. It is an indictment of much American industry that Neff feels no faithfulness to his organisation, knowing



that it would afford no loyalty to him. Although Neff is presented as a deeply flawed protagonist and the film does not justify his actions, we are encouraged, at least initially, to feel some sympathy for him and to his desire to escape the mundane life rendered upon him by his employment

If we may detract our attention from America for a moment, a consideration of the developments which were occurring in British cinema are of pertinence here. British film noir never gained the following of its American counterpart, but instead the British cinema of the postwar period concentrated its efforts largely on 'social realist' cinema, which provides an illuminating comparison and an indication of the developments which were about to occur throughout the film industry. British films of the social realist genre provided direct address to the working-class and to the unemployed. Important texts included Saturday Night, Sunday Morning (1960), the protagonist of which is young factory worker Arthur Seaton, who keeps his head down at work but sartorially regards his bosses as 'dead from the neck up' and lives for the weekends, and the TV film Cathy Come Home (1966) which dealt with issues of unemployment and homelessness in 1960s Britain. Both films had potent effect on the viewers and both fuelled demands for reform; the later release, in fact, was extremely influential in the establishment of the homeless charity 'Shelter'. At this time, much European cinema was made in a similarly gritty, realist style and addressed the legacy of devastation left by World War Two. Although social realism never achieved such popularity in America, it did inspire the new genre of the 'youth film', the pioneering text of which was independent director Nicholas Ray's Rebel Without a Cause (1955). Films such as 'Rebel' and The Wild One (1953) influenced a new generation of dissident youth who were determined not to be duped by the lies which had taken the lives and souls of their parents, broken by the War and by labour either physically or mentally exhausting. Thus, the concept of the 'teenager' was born and the phenomenon developed of the 'angry young man'; an unprecedented new protagonist caught between the institutions of school and employment and determined to escape both. A new generation was arising which would no longer tolerate the restrictive control of mass organization.

## **The Rise of Youth Cinema**

The advent of the ‘youth film’ and the identification of young people as cinema’s major audience would prove the industry’s saviour. By 1953, movie-going had fallen to a low of 46 million Americans a week; and, by the end of the decade, television sets were present in ninety percent of American homes, detracting attention from cinema. Average numbers of hours spent at work were decreasing and leisure activities were becoming more prolific. For many employees, the prospect of leisure or ‘free’ time became a key incentive to get through the working week. Unlike the sense of alienation now so irrevocably connected with work, free time was considered to aid the development of an individual’s identity and purpose; it became thought of as “non-alienated activity” (Young in Hendry 1983: 27). A great deal of American adults now chose to spend this leisure time outdoors as sporting activities became more popular and accessible, whilst the new output of a cinema aimed at youth consumers was distasteful to many.

The proliferation of the ‘youth film’ in the 1950s was the key example of how the post-‘studio system’ cinematic industry has attempted to reinvent itself in order to ensure popularity with a wide audience. The genres of melodrama, gangster films and noir, most of which featured older protagonists, temporarily fell out of favour as production was concentrated on pictures which would appeal to this new viewership. And the impact of this business-like strategy was a vast one; youth culture was reflected and influenced by the events and iconography depicted on screen. The influence of ‘youth film’ on its impressionable audiences extended from the minor (such as the sudden popularity of the ‘white T-shirt and jeans’ style inherited from star James Dean) to the major, as cinema was cited as a key factor in contributing to the burgeoning unrest of an increasingly vocal youth. This unrest would spill over into the 1960s, a decade of nonconformity and rebellion during which mass organization would be further discredited by a libertine generation, and an attitude of independence would consolidate itself within cinema and society in general.

## **The 1960s as a Period of Upsurgence in ‘Independent’ Film**

Throughout the 1960s, representations visible in the dominant cinema shifted their focus away from the white, middle-class (and usually male) American citizen for the first time. We use the term ‘dominant’ here rather than ‘mainstream’ to indicate that

the prevailing American cinema of the decade was one which considered itself oppositional to the standardized pictures which had previously formed the majority of 'mainstream' output. A new sensibility was developing, one which discredited much of previous cinematic output as fanciful escapism designed to detract the public from the true rifts and contradictions now increasingly apparent in American life. In order to address these very contradictions, the 'independent' cinema was conceived, a low-budget form of film-making determined to focus upon the marginalized and to be concerned with truth and art over profit, and one which would release itself upon the world with a vengeance.

The 'independent' cinema was an experimental one, embracing media from the documentary form to the new 'avant garde' cinema in a bid to present the viewing public with truth and with beauty. In contrast to the 'studio system' of the early twentieth century, financial backing was for the first time considered less important than artistic integrity, a fact reflected in the production techniques of many 'independent' films. For instance, films were frequently shot in continuity with the script, in a bid to ensure sound actor-character development, rather than by the more financially-sound tradition of shooting together all scenes set in one location. In a bid to retain control over their vision and thus to maintain integrity, many directors fearful of demands of censorship from cautious investors instead decided to fund their own films, a tradition examined sartorially by Wood, in his tongue-in-cheek delineation of the 'rules' of independent film-making: "the film was made for no money... if there was money involved, it wasn't nearly enough... the film as an enterprise was pure financial folly. Even though it was made for no money, it miraculously stands to lose more money than it would have been made for had it been made for money" (2004, xi – xii).

In its thematics as well as its methods of production, the 'independent' cinema stood in opposition to mass organization and to an ideology of standardization and control. Protagonists of these new films were frequently those who had been excluded from employment or had experienced other forms of suffering. Plotlines were often organised around denouncements of the prejudices surrounding, for example, the impoverished, or people of 'different' ethnic or sexual identities. Many of the prejudices facing such people were in part due to stereotypes which had been

disseminated by the earlier 'studio' pictures. The biggest successes of the 'independent' era, however, were those which tapped into the already burgeoning youth culture; specifically, Bonnie and Clyde (1967) and Easy Rider (1969), both of which examined rebellious individuals seeking an escape from normative society and its associations with mass organization. Nevertheless, the main bulk of 'independent' films was not intended or sufficiently funded to reach large audiences, and by 1971, movie-going had fallen to a record low of 15.8 million Americans a week.

'Independent' output continued throughout the 1970s and is still in existence, but with the exception of a few stand-out texts (such as cult classic The Blair Witch Project (1999)), it generally fell from favour as the rebellious impulses of the '60s started to cool. Gradually, 'independent' production companies amalgamated with each other in a bid for survival – and, presumably, for profitability – turning into more major studios such as New Line Cinema, still in existence. The 1970s would become known as the "movie brat" generation, in which emergent new directors such as Lucas, Spielberg and Scorsese, fresh from film school, hit American screens and soon became household names (Pierson 1996: 8). Although these directors started out making low-budget pictures, their talents were soon recognised and they were commissioned to pioneer the new type of film which would maximise industry profitability once again: the 'blockbuster'.

### **The Triumph of the 'Blockbuster' in the 1980s and 1990s**

A film is generally considered to have achieved 'blockbuster' status on grossing \$100 million, a landmark first achieved by Spielberg with 1975's Jaws. Emulating the big-budget production techniques of the 'studio era' and reviving the concept of 'event cinema', 'blockbusters' generally upheld as protagonist the white American male who had been the dominant force in cinematic representation prior to the 1960s. The concept of the 'super-hero', a patriotic potential saviour for a still-divided nation, proved exceptionally popular in films starring Tom Cruise, Val Kilmer and their contemporaries. During this period, the industry of 'film merchandise', goods extraneous to the film text, such as clothing, novelisations and action figures, consolidated itself as a powerful market. The future of cinematic profitability appeared bright; interestingly, however, a narrow band of political exposes were also

gaining in popularity, counteracting the fantastical elements and the hyperbolic Americanism which characterised the 'blockbuster'. Political and organizational exposes provided a stark contrast to the films which provided definite and triumphant endings. These revealing exposes, such as Michael Moore's Roger and Me (1989), sought to confront cinema audiences and encourage them to seek a 'truth' within the events they presented. An uncomfortable process for audiences who until now had been generously fed with glorious, fantastical films that reaffirmed the glorious potential future of America and purposefully left no room for questioning or doubt. Towards the end of the 1980s independent cinema was entering the Hollywood mainstream, less so in the manner we described previously and more by virtue of increased popularity of its documentary style and actual 'real life' depictions. Moore's documentary Roger and Me quickly caught on after free screenings and was advertised alongside Batman (1989) at Warner Studios. This encapsulates the contradictory forces within cinema at the time: suggesting that the public can comfortably rely on a greater 'one man' force to save their floundering nation, and the other suggesting that the public should themselves be responsible for scrutinizing their own actions, and those of people around them.

As cinema dealt increasingly with the absurd and the fantastical film viewers were presented with heroes that could provide for wish-fulfilment and identification through fantasy. As Dyer puts it, a central thrust of entertainment became that of 'utopianism' through escapism and the fulfilment of desire (in Altman 1981: 171). This, however, was a false identification and unrealizable potential for the audience. Heroes were left in control of their situation (and often responsible for a triumph over technology and industry) whereas the opposite is true for audiences. The self-sufficient, self-made individual, the legacy of the 'American Dream' achieved through hard work and financial gain, who consumes these new films, is now a product entirely of the choices of others; particularly choices made by employers (as proven by the devastation caused by dismissal and redundancy). Thus, we could determine that the Kantian concept of individuality grounded in autonomy and transcendental spontaneity is no longer available to the modern employee (in Heidegger 2002: 18).

## **Present Day Cinema**

The late 1980s and 1990s saw the rise of a new protagonist who would become known as the 'slacker'. Cult heroes of this period were those who manage to avoid work; especially if they manage to cheat a wage by doing so. 'Ferris Bueller' and his increasingly complex schemes to wangle a 'day off' school in 1986 is the precursor of the modern slacking businessman. Protagonists such as The Big Lebowski's work-shy 'Dude' (1998), were shown to get by with an entirely different 'work ethic'; or, in the style of Hunter S. Thompson (as portrayed in Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (1998)) ignored the advice of their employers and betrayed the rules to find their own brand of success.

During the 1990s, many 'independent' labels became subsidiaries of the once-great studios which today act as outlets for distribution; Warner Brothers, for instance, is now a subsidiary of Time Warner, which owns the smaller production companies Castle Rock, Morgan Creek, Fine Line and Village Roadshow (hence the ever-increasing number of studio logos visible before the credit sequences of most films). However, a new potential for resurgence of the true 'independent' cinema was tapped into by filmmakers using the original low-budget style and anarchic ethic to explore the new moralities surrounding work. The key text of this new 'indie' period was Richard Linklater's iconic Slacker (1991), which focuses on the 'lies' told by mass organizations, as encapsulated in the film's famous quote: 'they tell you to look for the light at the end of the tunnel; well, there is no tunnel. There's no structure'. The "alienated labor" conceptualised by Marcuse (1969:45) was still very much a visible presence in turn-of-the-century cinema, as demonstrated in About Schmidt (2002), our next case study.

### **About Schmidt (2002).**

Dir. Alexander Payne, Prod. New Line Cinema, USA, 2002. Main cast: Jack Nicholson (Warren Schmidt), Kathy Bates (Roberta Hertzell), Hope Davies (Jeannie Schmidt).

About Schmidt's eponymous hero is Warren Schmidt, a man in his 60s, who suffers a psychological crisis on realising after retirement that his life was empty. Not a little

due to Nicholson's brilliant portrayal of the leading character, this film enjoyed vast success amongst both audiences and critics, grossing highly at the box office and receiving five Golden Globe nominations.

One of an inestimable number of white-collar workers employed by the insurance organisation 'Woodmen', its stultifying effect apparent in its name, Warren Schmidt is replaced by a younger worker before he even leaves his building for the last time, and his records are immediately obliterated. The 'Woodmen' of About Schmidt can be equated to the 'Hollow Men' of T.S. Eliot's poem, populating a 'dead land', isolated and made obsolete in an instant, and without any true allegiance to one another: Schmidt soon discovers that his closest co-worker was in fact having an affair with his wife. Thus, the film makes a potent and important comment on the means by which an individual cannot impact upon an organisation, and on the fact that the alliance which this individual is encouraged to feel with his employers is empty and is easily annulled. The only possibility for workers, contemporary cinema appears to say, is either to become a passive drone; or, in some cases, to rebel. After Warren's epiphany ('Once I am dead and everyone who knew me dies too, it will be as though I never existed...') he becomes a belated rebel, embarking upon a huge road-trip across America and living in pursuit of his own goals, as, the film seems to suggest, he should have been doing all along.

Influenced by cult 'indie' hits, the theme of alienation from a modern working environment gained in 'mainstream' visibility, being used for comic effect in Office Space (1999) and for horrific effect in One Hour Photo (2002). After all, the concept that 'work brings freedom' had been discredited by its associations with the Second World War which had earlier been responsible for generating such a despondent mood in society and in cinema; for modern audiences, a more general dictum would be 'work prevents freedom'. In recent years, alienation has touched a younger generation, as feelings of isolation in a working environment and a refusal to blend into a mass organization start earlier than ever, during one's years in education. Since A Nous la Liberté (1931), the classroom as factory has been a popular theme, and a chosen withdrawal from enforced organization is a regular socio-political act characteristic of modern rebellious youth. This act can be taken to horrific extremes; for instance, events at Columbine High School, explored in Michael Moore's documentary Bowling for Columbine (2002) and dramatised in independent director

Gus van Sant's Elephant (2003), were considered to have been motivated at least in part by a reaction against organization.

Disenfranchised and discontented youth continue to populate much of cinema, particularly in the hard-hitting youth drama films such as Larry Clark's Kids (1995), and is difficult to imagine these young protagonists wishing to give up the independence for which they strive by entering any form of employment. This new 'Generation X' youth drew some parallels with the 'angry young man' of the 1950s, but lack in his (sic) passion, being characterised instead by apathy. A less potentially dangerous version of disenfranchised youth became detectable in the new figure of the 'comic idiot' of American youth comedy. This protagonist was a confused and often aimless left-over 'slacker' detectable in films from Animal House (1978) to Road Trip (2000) and Van Wilder's Party Liaison (2002). This figure, the antithesis of the ideal employee, has been taken by many critics to represent a newly 'dumbed-down' America and the cinema which reflects it (Washburn and Thornton 1996: 44). Usually a mind-addled marijuana smoker several years older than his friends, this character has managed to stay unnoticed in education far beyond his term and it is unimaginable that he could ever find employment. Interestingly, although this character upholds (wittingly or unwittingly) an anarchic anti-work stance and thus a refusal of populism, he fits easily into the cinema, the ultimate product of popular culture.

As representational strategies in cinema shifted to fit a Zeitgeist of general work-related reluctance in America, so did shifts occur in the operation of film production. Since the 1960s, a split between 'art' or independent film and big-budget pictures was perceptible both in methods of production and in thematic and style. The blockbusters remained as a financially sound business, whereas reluctance among investors to back independent cinema (and reluctance among 'indie' film-makers to request financial aid) meant that the latter remained largely marginalised. However, the 1990s-2000s saw several examples of what are known as 'sleeper' hits – surprise successes – from the 'indie' studios; films from Donnie Darko (2001) to Napoleon Dynamite (2004), which deal with the classic independent theme of disenchanted youth, have caused cult appreciation to reach new extremes amongst an audience large enough to be considered 'mainstream'. As a result, recent films from independent studios have



been relatively well funded (and in many cases have the A-list casts to prove it) whilst maintaining their original 'indie' edge by thematically privileging the outsider or the troubled; Thumbsucker (2005), for instance. The big-budget blockbuster, on the other hand, seems to be waning in its popularity; recent features such as War of the Worlds (2005) have performed disappointingly at the box office. Further aiding to erode the differences between these previously polarized two strands of cinema has been their shared methods of production. Because the 'pool' of contracted talent into which the old studios would dip now no longer exists, a production team must be assembled from scratch for any new film; hence, the six-week shooting schedule of studio productions has been vastly extended and, in accordance, the costs of production have skyrocketed.

With little remaining ground to be covered through technological development as the draw for audiences, cinemas have had to rely upon rises in ticket prices and upon sales from snacks and from film 'tie-in' merchandising to cover the increased costs associated with production and distribution. The almost universal popularity of DVD Home Entertainment, whilst not a blow for the film industry itself, contributed to a slump in box-office takings during the 1990s. In a bid to re-establish the excitement associated with the 'event cinema' of the 1980s, recent advertisement campaigns have focused on the 'experience' of cinema. The self-renewing capacity of the 'dream factory' depends on this; filmgoers do not purchase a durable good, but an intangible one, an experience that vanishes into memory. Thus a recent campaign against piracy (obviously a financial blow to the industry) encourages audiences to choose the high-price cinema ticket over a low-quality pirate copy. Cinema advertisements now strongly emphasize the visceral quality of cinema which home video (and especially pirate video) cannot match, a recent anti-piracy initiative having the tagline "it's the experience that counts". Such tactics are reminiscent of those utilised in the 1950s to remind waning audiences of the unique cinematic qualities which could not be matched by film's key competitor, television. Mid-century cinema attempted to reiterate its potential for visceral excitement with new technology such as CinemaScope's panoramic widescreen and the shortlived phenomenon of '3D'. In recent years, the cutting-edge technology of films such as The Matrix (1999) has attracted curious audiences to film once again. Promotions, too, have helped to control attendance figures; not least the vastly successful 'Orange Wednesdays'

initiative, reminiscent of the earlier mutually successful alliances between studios and big businesses, in which customers of the mobile phone company are able to collect 'two for one' tickets at the box office each Wednesday, which has once again caused the phenomenon of vast queues snaking around city blocks, a common sight during the glory days of the 'studio system'.

As well as in production techniques, changes are detectable in the treatment and representation of actors, who were the main selling point of 'studio' pictures. Whilst in the early twentieth century, stars found it more profitable (and normally predetermined within their contracts) that they would 'play to type', modern actors enjoy reinventing themselves – especially after having achieved financial security. Although the appearance of a 'star' in a big-budget film no longer assures it financial success (as evidenced by films such as the disastrous Gigli (2003) starring Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck), another interesting phenomenon has developed as A-list actors elevate lower-budget films to financial success whilst simultaneously gaining an artistic credence for themselves (for example Nicole Kidman in Dogville (2003)). A generally increased mode of permissiveness obtained gradually throughout recent decades means that an actor who would previously have been considered representative of the 'marginalised' is no longer restricted to being a mouthpiece for their ethnicity, sexuality etc – a marked shift from the studio era in which almost every performer was white and considered heterosexual, with the exception of a few who would be restricted to stereotypical roles. Since the lifting of studio-style contracts, the idea that an actor is responsible to adhere to a certain code of 'public morality' has also become unfashionable, and an entire 'gossip' industry of television shows and publications has been founded on tracking the unpredictable movements of today's generation of 'wild child' stars.

All of the developments delineated above seem to paint an uncertain picture for a future relationship between film and business. Alliances will continue, no doubt, and cinema will remain a high-grossing industry even if profit margins do maintain their current trend of unpredictability. The "natural war in Hollywood between the businessman and the artist" (Kael in Horsley 2005: 7) has metamorphosed greatly in recent years and may be predicted to become yet more complex. Product placement and advertising still aid the funding of films, and financial support from investors is

given to established names who will guarantee success. However, government and arts council funding, coupled with the increased availability of low-budget filmmaking (The Blair Witch Project (1999)) still allows for the existence of a cinema which considers itself 'independent' of corporate support. This cinema and its output, alongside that of higher-budget problems which deal with contemporary social issues, are still vital in the dissemination of images and ideas regarding business and its control over modern life.

A narrow though growing band of films today are as explicit in their denunciation of corporate structure as were their 1960s independent counterparts. These are not only the powerful documentaries such as The Corporation (2003) and The Yes Men (2003), both of which discredit 'big business' through highlighting its ruthlessness. The mid-century examination by noir and by social realism of the alienation felt by the modern working man are central to the plots of films from Fight Club (1999) to the recent black comedy The Weather Man (2005), and it seems as if a pool of pessimism has seeped through from mid-century noir and social realism to characterise many modern releases with a sense of hopelessness and of the sorrowful *Zeitgeist* identified by Lyotard (1984). Less reluctant to probe below the surface of contemporary American life are the big-budget genre pictures, still in production although increasingly less ambitious in their thematic and now overwhelmingly characterised by their tendency to remake or rework earlier successes (such as Alfie (1966/2004)); as Jameson reminds us, the superficiality of postmodern culture is the result of 'the failure of the new' (in Belton 2005: 359). Probably still the most sound investments for financial backers, big-budget cinema has been blamed for much of 'the twilight of American culture' (Berman 2001), a dark era from which the American nation may or may not recover, as emblematised by what has been called a 'McWorld' culture based on consumerism and on immediate gratification without reflection. Obviously more beneficial to the institutions of which these films do not encourage scrutiny, the 'blockbuster' is blamed for encouraging "insensitivity, indifference, [a] dumbed-down mind" (John Simon in Washburn and Thornton 1996: 4) amongst its audience, and now more than ever is associated with the manipulation of a public who are convinced by a vastly escalating amount of similar films and their associated paraphernalia to consume nondurable products whilst their attention is diverted again to the 'next big thing'. The concept of 'dumbing-down' is evident in

much of the poor cinematic grammar in modern big-budget movies, in their superficial or far-fetched plotlines, and in their poor dialogue and characterisation.

The ‘dumbing-down’ of cinema and its resultant associations with postmodern ‘trash’ culture is considered by theorists to have been a gradual procedure, beginning to be recognised in the 1960s but escalating rapidly in recent years. Benjamin in particular bemoans the business-like model which cinema seems to have adopted throughout its history, deriding the standardization of generic pictures as part of “the age of mechanical reproduction” within the ‘aura’ of a work of art withers and is replaced by commodity (1968: 223). Although our case studies have shown that occasional films do ‘break the mould’ and we are optimistic for the future of a cinema with vast potentiality for innovation, we must also face the possibility that Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory of a ‘culture industry’ (1997), within which the only value of art is its marketability, may continue to influence decisions regarding the films which are made available to us. Nevertheless, we have no further excuse for ignorance about the decisions made within this and other industries, and the process by which these affect and can come to dominate the lives of ourselves and our fellow citizens; this knowledge garnered, largely, from the expository nature of recent cinema. For cinema, undoubtedly, still has the influential ability with which Lenin credited it in 1922; and we must be aware that, as former President Ronald Reagan once admitted, we are inhabiting a world and culture in which politics and show-business are practically synonymous (in Postman 1987: 128). What does remain to be seen, however, is whether the public will act, furnished with a savvy awareness of the potential ruthlessness of business and of institutionalization, and what effect, if any, this will have on major corporations and on the way they conduct themselves and treat their workers. For significant changes to be made, we need not a generation not just of interrogative filmmakers but of an entire public determined to achieve the best and fairest lot for themselves and for their fellow citizens – whether this will be achieved with the cooperation or the prohibition of ‘big business’. Otherwise, the cinema of the near future will help to mould, at best, a generation of George Baileys who accept their lot without question; and, at worst, one of stultified ignorance or of fear in which corporate control continues unchecked, as do distracting, generic pictures providing diversion without substance.

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## Filmography

1984. Dir. Michael Radford, Prod. Virgin, UK, 1984.

Main cast: John Hurt (Winston Smith), Richard Burton (O'Brien), Suzanna Hamilton (Julia).

About Schmidt. Dir. Alexander Payne, Prod. New Line Cinema, USA, 2002.

Main cast: Jack Nicholson (Warren Schmidt), Kathy Bates (Roberta Hertzell), Hope Davies (Jeannie Schmidt).

Alfie. Dir. Lewis Gilbert, Prod. Lewis Gilbert, Shelldrake Films, UK, 1966.

Main Cast: Michael Caine (Alfie), Shelly Winters (Ruby), Millicent Martin (Siddie).

Alfie. Dir. Charles Shyer, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA/UK, 2004.

Main Cast: Jude Law (Alfie), Renée Taylor (Lu Schnitman), Jane Krakowski (Dorie).

Animal House. Dir. John Landis, Prod. Universal Pictures, USA, 1978.

Main Cast: John Belushi (John 'Bluto' Blutarsky), Tim Matheson (Eric 'Otter' Stratton).

Batman. Dir. Tim Burton, Prod. Guber-Peters Company, Warner Brothers, USA, 1989.

Main Cast: Michael Keaton (Batman), Jack Nicholson (The Joker), Kim Basinger (Vickie Vale).

Big Lebowski, The. Dir. Joel Coen, Prod. Working Title Films, USA, 1998.

Main cast: Jeff Bridges (The 'Dude'), John Goodman (Walter Sobchak), Julianne Moore (Maude Lebowski).

Blair Witch Project, The. Dir. Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez, USA, 1999.

Main cast: Heather Donahue (Heather), Joshua Leonard (Josh), Michael Williams (Michael).

Bonnie and Clyde. Dir. Arthur Penn, Prod. Warner Brothers, USA, 1967.

Main cast: Warren Beatty (Clyde Barrow), Faye Dunaway (Bonnie Parker), Gene Hackman (Buck Barrow).

Bowling for Columbine. Dir. Michael Moore, Prod. Dog Eat Dog Films, USA, 2002.

Main cast: Michael Moore (himself).

Cathy Come Home. Dir. Ken Loach, Prod. BBC, UK, 1966.

Main Cast: Cathy (Carol White), Ray Brooks (Ray).

Catch the Kid. 1907. Further details unknown.

Corporation, The. Dir. Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott, Prod. Big Picture Media Corporations, USA, 2003.

Main Cast: Jane Akre (herself), Ray Anderson (himself), Maude Barlow (herself).



Corporation, The. Dir. Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott, Prod. Big Picture Media Corporations, USA, 2003.

Main Cast: Jane Akre (herself), Ray Anderson (himself), Maude Barlow (herself).

Detour. Dir. Edgar G. Ulmer, Prod. Producers Releasing Corporation, USA, 1945.

Main cast: Tom Neal (Al Roberts), Ann Savage (Vera).

Dogville. Dir. Lars Von Trier, Prod. Isabelle Films B.V, Denmark, USA, 2003.

Main Cast: Nicole Kidman (Grace Margaret Mulligan), Harriet Andersson (Gloria).

Donnie Darko. Dir. Richard Kelly, Prod. Pandorra Cinema, USA, 2001.

Main Cast: Jack Gyllenhaal (Donnie Darko), Holmes Osborne (Eddie Darko), Maggie Gyllenhaal (Elizabeth Darko).

Double Indemnity. Dir. Billy Wilder, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1944.

Main cast: Fred MacMurray (Walter Neff), Barbara Stanwyck (Phyllis Dietrichson), Edward G. Robinson (Barton Keyes).

Duck Soup. Dir. Leo McCarey, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1933.

Main cast: Groucho Marx (Rufus T. Firefly), Harpo Marx (Pinky).

Easy Rider. Dir. Dennis Hopper, Prod. Columbia Pictures Corporation, USA, 1969.

Main cast: Peter Fonda (Wyatt), Dennis Hopper (Billy), Jack Nicholson (George Hanson).

Elephant. Dir. Gus Van Sant, Prod. HBO Films, USA, 2003.

Main cast: Alex Frost (Alex), Eric Duellen (Eric), John Robinson (John).

English Patient, The. Dir. Anthony Mingella, Prod. Miramax Films, USA, 1996.

Main cast: Ralph Fiennes (Count Laszlo de Almásy), Juliette Binoche (Hana).

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. Dir. Terry Gilliam, Prod. Fear and Loathing LLC, Rhino Films, USA, 1998.

Main Cast: Johnny Depp (Raoul Duke), Benicio Del Toro (Dr Gonzo), Tobey Maguire (Hitchhiker).

Ferris Bueller's Day Off. Dir. John Hughes, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1986.

Main cast: Matthew Broderick (Ferris Bueller), Alan Ruck (Cameron Frye).

Fight Club. Dir. David Fincher, Prod. Art Linson Productions, USA, 1999.

Main Cast: Edward Norton (The Narrator), Brad Pitt (Tyler Durden)

Four Brothers. Dir. John Singleton, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 2005.

Main cast: Mark Wahlberg (Bobby Mercer), Tyrese Gibson (Angel Mercer), Andre Benjamin (Jeremiah Mercer).

Gigli. Dir. Martin Brest, Prod. Revolution Studios, USA, 2003.

Main Cast: Ben Affleck (Larry Gigli), Jennifer Lopez (Ricki).

Gone With the Wind. Dir. Victor Fleming, Prod. Selznick International Pictures, USA, 1939.

Main cast: Clark Gable (Rhett Butler), Vivien Leigh (Scarlett O'Hara).

I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang. Dir. Mervyn LeRoy, Prod. Warner Brothers, USA, 1932.

Main Cast: Paul Muni (James Allen), Glenda Farrell (Marie Woods), Helen Vinson (Helen).

I Married a Communist. Dir. Robert Stevenson, Prod. RKO Radio Pictures, USA, 1949.

Main cast: Laraine Day (Nan Lowry Collins), Robert Ryan (Brad Collins).

I Walked With a Zombie. Dir. Jacques Tourneur, Prod. RKO Radio Pictures, USA, 1943.

Main cast: James Ellison (Wesley Rand), Frances Dee (Betsey Connell).

I, Robot. Dir. Alex Proyas, Prod. Twentieth Century Fox, USA, 2004.

Main cast: Will Smith (Del Spooner), Bridget Moynahan (Susan Calvin), Alan Tudyk (Sonny).

Invasion of the Bodysnatchers. Dir. Don Siegel, Prod. Walter Wanger Productions, Inc., USA, 1956. Main cast: Kevin McCarthy (Dr. Miles J. Bennell), Dana Wynter (Becky Driscoll).

It's a Wonderful Life. Dir. Frank Capra, Prod. Liberty Films, USA, 1946.

Main Cast: James Stewart (George Bailey), Donna Reid (Mary Hatch Bailey), Lionel Barrymore (Mr. Potter).

Jaws. Dir. Steven Spielberg, Prod. Universal Pictures, USA, 1975.

Main Cast: Roy Scheider (Police Chief Martin Brody), Robert Shaw (Quint), Richard Dreyfuss (Matt Hooper).

Kids. Dir. Larry Clark, Prod. Excalibur Films, USA, 1995.

Main Cast: Leo Fitzpatrick (Telly), Sarah Henderson (Girl #1), Justin Pierce (Casper).

King Kong. Dir. Merian C. Cooper, Prod. RKO Radio Pictures, USA, 1933.

Main cast: Fay Wray (Anne Darrow), Robert Armstrong (Carl Denham), Bruce Cabot (John 'Jack' Driscoll).

Little Caesar. Dir. Mervyn LeRoy, Prod. First National Pictures, Inc, USA, 1931.

Main Cast: Edward G. Robinson (Little Caesar), Douglas Fairbanks Jr (Joe Massara).

Manchurian Candidate, The. Dir. John Frankenheimer, Prod. M.C. Productions, USA, 1962.

Main Cast: Frank Sinatra (Capt. Bennett Marco), Laurence Harvey (SFC. Raymond Shaw), Janet Leigh (Eugenie Rose Chaney).

Matrix, The. Dir. Andy Wachowski, Larry Wachowski, Prod. Groucho II Film Production, USA, 1999.

Main Cast: Keanu Reeves (Neo), Laurence Fishburne (Morpheus), Carrie-Anne Moss (Trinity).

Metropolis. Dir. Fritz Land, Prod. Universum Film A.G., Germany, 1927.

Main cast: Alfred Abel (Johhan Fredersen), Gustac Froehlich (Freder Fredersen), Brigitte Halm (Maria/The Machine).

Modern Times. Dir. Charles Chaplin, Prod. United Artists Productions, USA, 1936.

Main cast: Charles Chaplin (Factory Worker), Tiny Sandford (Big Bill), Hank Mann (Burglar).

Monkey Business. Dir. Norman McLeod, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1931.

Main cast: Grouch Marx (Groucho), Harpo Marx (Harpo), Chico Marx (Chico).

Mr. Smith Goes to Washington. Dir. Frank Capra, Prod. Columbia Pictures Corporation, USA, 1939.

Main Cast: Jean Arthur (Clarissa Saunders), James Stewart (Jefferson Smith), Claude Rains (Sen. Joseph Harrison Paine).

Napoleon Dynamite. Dir. Jared Hess, Prod. Access Films, USA, 2004.

Main Cast: Jon Heder (Napoleon Dynamite), Jon Gries (Uncle Rico), Efren Ramirez (Pedro Sanchez).

A Nous la Liberte. Dir. Rene Clair, Prod. Films Sonores Tobis, France, 1931.

Main cast: Henri Marchand (Emile), Raymond Cordy (Louis).

Office Space. Dir. Mike Judge, Prod. Twentieth Century Fox, Cubicle Inc, USA, 1999.

Main Cast: Ron Livingstone (Peter Gibbons), Jennifer Aniston (Joanna), David Herman (Michael Bolton).

One Hour Photo. Dir. Mark Romanek, Prod. Fox Searchlight Pictures, Catch 23 Entertainment, USA, 2002.

Main Cast: Robin Williams (Sy Parrish), Connie Nielson (Nina Yorrkin), Michael Vartan (Will Yorkin).

Postman Always Rings Twice, The. Dir. Tay Garnett, Prod. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1946.

Main Cast: Lana Turner (Cora Smith), John Garfield (Frank Chambers), Cecil Kellaway (Nick Smith).

Rebel Without a Cause. Dir. Nicholas Ray, Prod. Warner Brothers, USA, 1955.

Main Cast: James Dean (Jim Stark), Natalie Wood (Judy), Sal Mineo (John 'Plato' Crawford).

Red Menance, The. Dir. R.G. Springsteen, Prod. Republic Pictures Corporation, USA, 1949.

Main Cast: Robert Rockwell (Bill Jones), Hannelore Axman (Nina Petrovka).

Road Trip. Dir, Todd Phillips, Prod. Dream Works SKG, USA, 2000.

Main Cast: Breckin Meyer (Josh Parker), Seann William Scott (E.L.), Amy Smart (Beth Wagner).

Roger and Me. Dir. Michael Moore, Prod. Dog Eat Dog Films, Warner Brothers, USA, 1989.

Main Cast: Michael Moore (himself), James Blanchard (himself), James Bond (himself).

Saturday Night and Sunday Morning. Dir. Karel Reisz, Prod. Woodfall Film Productions, UK, 1960.

Main Cast: Albert Finney (Arthur Seaton), Shirley Anne Field (Doreen), Rachel Roberts (Brenda).

Slacker. Dir. Richard Linklater, Prod. Detour Filmproduction, USA, 1991.

Main Cast: Richard Linklater (Should have stayed at the bus station), Rudy Basquez (Taxi Driver), Jean Caffeine (Roadkill).

Them!. Dir. Gordon Douglas, Prod. Warner Brothers, USA, 1954.

Main Cast: James Whitmore (Police Sgt. Ben Peterson), Edmund Gwenn (Dr. Harold Medford).

Thumbsucker. Dir. Mike Mills, Prod. Scared Little Animals LLC, USA, 2005.

Main Cast: Lou Taylor Pucci (Justin Cobb), Tilda Swinton (Audrey Cobb).

Top Gun. Dir. Tony Scott, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 1986.

Main Cast: Tom Cruise (Lt. Pete 'Maverick' Mitchell), Kelly McGillis (Charlotte Blackwood), Val Kilmer (Lt. Tom 'Iceman' Kazanski).

Van Wilder's Party Liason. Dir. Walt Becker, Prod. In-Motion AG Movie and TV Productions, USA, 2002.

Main Cast: Ryan Reynolds (Van Wilder), Tara Reid (Gwen Pearson).

War of the Worlds. Dir. Steven Spielberg, Prod. Paramount Pictures, Dream Works SKG, USA, 2005.

Main Cast: Tom Cruise (Ray Ferrier), Dakota Fanning (Rachel Ferrier).

Weather Man, The. Dir. Gore Verbinski, Prod. Paramount Pictures, USA, 2005.

Main Cast: Nicholas Cage (David Spritz), Michael Caine (Robert Spritzel).

Wild One, The. Dir. Laszlo Benedek, Prod. Stanley Kramer Productions, USA, 1953.

Main Cast: Marlon Brando (Johnny Strabler), Mary Murphy (Kathie Bleeker), Robert Keith (Sherrif Harry Bleeker).

X Men Trilogy. Dir. Bryan Singer, Brett Ratner, Prod. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. USA, 2000-2006.

Main Cast: Hugh Jackman (Logan), Patrick Stewart (Prof. Charles Xavier), Halle Berry (Ororo Munroe).

Yes Men, The. Dir. Dan Ollman, Sarah Price, Prod. Yes Men Films LLC, USA, 2003.

SCOS 2006  
Ballard/Diggines

Main Cast: Mike Bonanno (himself), Andy Bichlbaum, (himself) Michael Moore (himself).

## **Organizational crowds = Tribalism, violence and indifference =**

### **Floor Basten**

In literature about organizations, the audience most frequently addressed is management. Authors help managers by offering them frames for how to see the phenomenon 'organization'. For instance, organizations are frequently presented in metaphorical terms (just google 'organizational metaphor' and you will find 2,910,000 hits; feel free to check them out yourself) or as configurations (13.200 hits for "organizational configuration"). And after the frameworks are presented, there is usually another 'how to' that follows (not necessarily from the hand of the same authors): the 'how to deal with the interpreted organization of choice and start managing it as if it were real'. And so all sorts of theories – contingency theory, taylorism, systems theory, the learning organization, Humans Resource Management / Development, just to name a few – are offered to help managers *deal* with the organization. This makes the choice for management as the audience for books about 'organization' both obvious and odd. Obvious, because managers are at least literally the people who manage. Odd, because it separates managers from their organizations, so it is problematic just what it is they manage. None of the literature I know about presents organizations as 'just a bunch of people', including managers, workers and the like. The reason why organizations are not considered 'just a bunch of people', is because they are attributed a purpose, which makes this bunch of people purposeful, not arbitrary. They are gathered around a common goal, which is not individual, but organizational. But is this still the case? If anything, recent management behavior shows the opposite of a joint purpose (just google 'management scandal' and you will be served with 13,000,000 hits). Fournier and Munro (2004) describe two seemingly contradictory themes: on the one hand the spreading of management principles and practices ('managerialism') and on the other hand, under the rubric of empowerment and autonomy, the ever-increasing withdrawal of managers from the scene of action. To use Castells' (1997) analytical frame: managers leave the space of places to enter the space of flows. Their management becomes a virtual reality. For them the organization they manage has become arbitrary. But that is not all. The workforce has experienced a shift from lifelong employment to lifelong employability. Along with this shift, managerial responsibility for the workforce moved to self management of the individual worker. And so, for the workers the organization they work for has become arbitrary as well. If the organization is arbitrary for managers and workers both, then it is odd to still speak of 'purposefulness' as the discriminator between an organizations and 'just a bunch of people'. In this article I will consider organizations as the latter. What can be said about 'the naked organization', the organization we see when we take away the purpose and paraphernalia such as logos, buildings and technologies?

### **Tribal hordes**

Maffesoli (1996) claims that mass culture has disintegrated and that social existence is conducted through fragmented tribal groupings, with a collective feeling of *puissance*. Puissance, as the inherent energy and vital force of the people, is opposite to *pouvoir*, the power of institutions. Agreeing with Baudrillard – to whom I will turn later – Maffesoli does not see the twentieth century masses in terms of the proletariat or other classes, but as the people without a logic of identity or a precise goal (in fact, both agree that sociology is

unable to define the masses anymore, because the traditional categories for describing them have become obsolete). These masses are not subject to any historical movement and the tribes that crystallize from them are unstable, “since the persons of which these tribes are constituted are free to move from one to the other” (1996: 6). Maffesoli is interested in the untidy aspect of sociality and his goal is “to show, to describe and to analyze the social configurations that seem to go beyond individualism, in other words, the undefined mass, the faceless crowd and the tribalism consisting of a patchwork of small local entities” (1996: 9). He coins this most recent period the emphatic period, marked by the lack of differentiation and the loss in a collective subject. This resonates with Sloterdijks proposition that all love stories are stories about form and that every feeling of solidarity implies the formation of spheres, that is: the creation of an inner space or bubble in which there are compelling reasons for being together. For Maffesoli the being-together is a basic given as well. Indeed, the attraction is not so much in its exclusivity as it is in its exclusiveness: “the characteristic of the tribe is that by highlighting what is close (persons and places), it has a tendency to be closed in itself” (Maffesoli 1996: 141). Sloterdijk labels this a form-greenhouse: the inner circumstances of the people who live together enjoy an unconditional priority over so-called external relations.

### **The aesthetic**

In this age of neo-tribalism emotional communities make up the aesthetic of the ‘we’, a mixture of indifference or disdain for any projectivist attitude and periodic bursts of energy and intensity in whatever action these communities undertake: “The community is characterized less by a project (*pro-jectum*) oriented towards the future than by the execution *in actu* of the ‘being-together’” (1996: 16). In fact, “justice itself is subordinate to the experience of closeness [and] abstract and eternal justice is relativized by the feeling (whether hate or love) experienced in a given territory” (1996: 17). Territory is important – the mass is a genius of place – and linked with ethic, “not an indifferent *a priori* theorizing but one which on a daily basis serves as a vessel for the collectivity’s emotions and feelings. In this manner, with varying degrees of success and in a given territory, we all adjust to one another and to the natural environment” (1996: 20). The age of seeing (*theorein*: to see) in which distance prevailed, writes Maffesoli, is transformed into a ‘tactile’ period in which proximity predominates. This transition leaves an opening for the emergence of a vital instinct; the masses have the ability to resist and outlast political change, to regenerate themselves. This is what Maffesoli means with *puissance*. What results from the decline of great institutional and activist structures are the basic communities built on what he calls a *proxemic* reality whose finished form is nature. This proxemic reality relates to Sloterdijks definition of the intimate, which can only exist in shared, consubjective and interintelligent inner spaces in which bipolar or multipolar groups participate, in autogenous reservoirs that people create by huddling together, incorporating, invading, entwining, joining and resonating. The homo sapiens aestheticus, Sloterdijk writes, couples charm with selection benefits. This is the facial genesis, the start of the protraction process in which humans interidentify their faces as human. People recognize themselves in the face of others and become to each other the air that they breathe. They create spheres in which they covibrate and the buzzing conversations about themselves is the primary climate-creating function of society. This is what Maffesoli defines as vitalism or *puissance*.

### **Puissance**

Sloterdijks *perichoresis* (from the ancient Greek ‘dancing around’ or ‘to be swung around in a circle’) implies the impossibility to locate people in an outward, physical space;

instead, people themselves create the spot they are in by their relationships. Contrary to ex-tension which, according to Maffesoli, creates vast and impersonal structures, in-tension creates social density, which helps puissance reach another space-time: “over time, and because of the inevitably increased rigidity of institutions, we see an increasing separation which may lead to divorce. When this happens, this ‘density’ will be exiled to another space-time while waiting for new forms in which to express itself” (1996: 36). Maffesoli identifies several anthropological and psychological roots of these ‘black holes’ of sociality, such as grottoes, niches and shelters, as well as the maternal breast and uterus (also richly described in Sloterdijk). Following, among others, Dorflès and the Surrealists, Maffesoli writes that “any construction requires an interior space on which to rest” and that there is a “necessity of an *underground centrality*” that serves as “places of freedom” (1996: 37). Dorflès writes that in the past, contact of man with signs was rare (there were only a few books, frescoes were only found in churches and the streets were empty with publicity signs); in recent times, however, the frequency of this contact has risen to a level that we have lost the interval between images (*l’intervalle perdu*) and therefore have lost the sense of silence, the taste of things and the necessary distance that gives relief to our lives. The loss of the interval results in monotony and in a way to death by “too much” (*la mort par “trop plein”*). Aware of a *horror pleni* we feel the need for a pause in the stream of images. We sense the desire for lost space. In Sloterdijk’s terms: we create spheres as morpho-immunologic structures. And once these become institutionalized (intoxicated), the free spirit will look for alternative spaces to breathe.

## Secrets

This lost space is surrounded by secrecy: “there is always, to borrow an expression from Simmel, ‘a secret behavior of the group hidden from the outside’. It is this behavior which, following the more or less established eras, is the basis of social perdurability and which, apart from occasional declines, guarantees the continued existence of the phylum. If it should be necessary to clarify further, I am talking about an ideal type which does not exist in pure form, which is rarely presented as such by the protagonists themselves, naturally enough; however, it is certainly this ‘secrecy’ which allows us to measure the vitality of a social group” (1996: 37). The essence of secrecy is self-preservation (Sloterdijk uses the image of the arc – from the Latin *arca* = closed/secret – to illustrate the project of selfharbour and selfsurrounding of a group against an outside that has become impossible to live in); the group needs the neglected margins and sidelines to develop into a larger whole: “the secret society [...] is secular, decentralized, without the baggage of dogmatic and intangible doctrines. It is on this basis that the resistance resulting from the people’s aloofness can continue, invariably, across the centuries” (1996: 92). This aloofness in the eye of the political intellectual is in fact the vitalism or puissance of the life without qualities: “the crowd is hollow, vacuity itself, and it is in this that *puissance* resides. [...] It is only in its hodge-podge, its effervescence, its disordered and stochastic aspects, its touching naivety, that the vitalism of the people is of interest to us. It is because it is in this *nothingness* which gives shape to everything that, relatively speaking, we can see an alternative to decline; but at the same time it tolls a bell for modernity” (1996: 38).

## Underground strategies

The productive power of the masses lies in their puissance, which energizes them to begin grand eras or flourishing cities; only later there is confiscation by a few self-appointed managers, owners and clerks of legitimacy and knowledge. But masses cannot be domesticated and resist domination because of pluralism and the ‘perverse’ (*per via* = detour) procedure of simulated acquiescence: “To restate a situationist expression, rather



than 'fighting alienation with alienated methods' (bureaucracy, political parties, militancy, deferment of pleasure), one uses derision, irony, laughter – all underground strategies which undermine the process of normalization and domestication which are the goals of the guarantors of the external and hence abstract order" (1996: 50). Political intellectuals who measure with the yardstick of the 'project' will find the ambiguity and monstrosity of the masses always proof of their incapability of being something else; but masses, claims Maffesoli, are self-sufficient; they are not finalized, have no goals or projects, and so they do not even need political intellectuals. In fact, their "sole *raison d'être* is a preoccupation with the collective present" (1996: 75). In the combination of proxemics, pluralism, nature, the collective, the present and the tactile, Maffesoli labels the wandering tribes of today as aesthetic: a way of feeling in common and of recognizing ourselves. This 'being-together' is based on a vital spontaneity and an anarchist logic.

### **The mediator**

Being-together in constituted micro-groups in networks is, according to Maffesoli, the most final expression of the creativity of the masses. The pluralism in this system of differentiated alliances is balanced by a mediator. This is, says Maffesoli, the outsider: a person or a group "which acts as a counterweight, which plays the role of intermediary, which simply makes up the numbers, thus strengthening the balance of a given whole" (1996: 142). He links this role with the function of proxemics in ancient cities, who functions as a links between the various ethnic and national groups that made up these cities. The 'proxenus' (close) is the one who brings closer; this allows the stranger or outsider to take an active part in the city, while remaining foreign: "Thus, the recognition of diversity and the ritualization of the discomfort that it occasions leads to a specific adjustment which in a way uses the trouble and the tension as useful balancing factors for the city" (1996: 142).

But what happens if the stranger, proxenus, foreigner or outsider is unable to keep the balance? What happens if the trouble and tension are not adjusted? The equilibrium can prove very fragile, as I will show in the next section.

### **Violent mobs**

The magic of the face is the sharing of joy, but the identification of strangeness is also the origin of terror. In case of endogenous disproportion, the bubble can either extend and assimilate the strangeness (a form of pacification), or it can burst. But there is a third option Sloterdijk mentions: the bubble can shrink by eliminating the cause of the disproportion. In 1989 Girard presented his scapegoat theory based on four stereotypical elements. I will discuss these in the following paragraphs.

### **Indiscretion**

First, there is a period of social turmoil in which differences are disintegrated. This situation is disastrous, because people lose their social orientation points and become unable to navigate themselves through their lives. Normal institutions collapse in a time of crisis and there is a sense of "extreme loss of social order evidenced by the disappearance of the rules and 'differences' that define cultural divisions. [...] Institutional collapse obliterates or telescopes hierarchical and functional differences, so that everything has the same monotonous and monstrous aspect" (Girard 1989: 12-13). In such a cultural eclipse social and moral causes are sought. Sloterdijk connects the lack of indiscretion (between subject and object, between object and sign) and the corresponding threat to the reality of the symbolic superinstitution to the lack of genetic difference when siblings, mothers and sons

or fathers and daughters mate. Both indiscretions herald the end of society: when everybody is the other and nobody is himself, then a drab perichoresis arises which dashes the optimistic plans of every founding principle. Via the anarchistic – not necessarily incestuous – drive of many people the undoing of differentiation always lures. When the disproportion grows out of proportion, however, the bubble is in danger and order must be restored.

### **Vicious crimes**

Second, therefore, there is the revelation of a vicious crime that transgresses borders. Girard mentions power-related crimes against people whom it is most criminal to attack (powerful kings and fathers, powerless children), sexual crimes (rape, incest, bestiality) or religious crimes (profanation). Agamben quotes among others the *terminum exarare* (eliminating borders) and *verberatio parentis* (violence of a son against his parents); both are examples of the crimes Girard finds stereotypical for scapegoating and both are, according to Agamben, crimes that do not violate a judicial norm and so do not call for a regular punishment. Sloterdijk evokes the specifically expressive punishment for the extraordinary crime of high treason, in which the traitor's attack on the heart of the political system is answered with a counterattack on the traitor's heart. The expulsion from the circle of the living and saved is a recurrent procedure in all executions and excommunications, but Sloterdijk finds cutting out the living heart of the traitor an exceptionally hysteric way of putting someone to death and to express that 'death' and 'outside' are one and the same. He furthermore does not explicitly label atheism a crime, but he does point out that atheism effectuates a loss of spirituality, which makes the difference between dead and vital bodies meaningless. Between the citizens of the polis indifference of all to all rules, because lacking a uniting principle these citizens cannot tell themselves apart.

The people are indifferent, but by no means apathetic. The crime Girard puts forward is directly related to the disaster; it originates from a collective blindness for more obvious reasons (for instance natural causes) and therewith explains the crisis in terms of control. This collective blindness resonates with a taboo, a potential danger which becomes reality once its name, that fatal word, is mentioned. The crime is typically transgressive, precisely to serve as a simile for the taboo, which will remain unnamed (in fact, not using the proper name serves as verbal exorcism, that is: the refusal to name makes the dreaded word a linguistic scapegoat, an offer or sacrifice to a higher power). In this situation "public opinion is overexcited and ready to accept the most absurd rumors"; there is "appetite for persecution" and "a propitious climate for massacres" (Girard 1989: 6). The wrongdoers are blamed for either attacking the community directly in violating its cultural and social foundations or for starting the disintegration process in their own sphere. Rather than blaming themselves, mobs blame either society in general or people who seem "particularly harmful for easily identifiable reasons" (Girard 1989: 14).

### **Guilt and secret**

Third, then, a guilty party is appointed. This is not just any party, it is a party capable of polarizing the crowds in an 'us versus them' (in terms of Maffesoli: the pronexus brings the tribes closer together). The parties most likely to be chosen seem to be ethnic and religious minorities, but there are also physical and mental criteria: "Sickness, madness, genetic deformities, accidental injuries, and even disabilities in general tend to polarize persecutors" (Girard 1989: 18). Also the poor and marginal outsiders as well as the rich and powerful marginal insiders risk the wrath of the mobs. The victims are held

responsible for their individual acts that are considered harmful on a global level; the accusation mediates between the microcosm and the macrocosm, the bubble and the globe. The stereotypical victims of mobs are however not accused because of their difference, but because they are not so different at all: "The signs that indicate a victim's selection result not from the difference within the system but from the difference outside the system, the potential for the system to differ from its own difference, in other words not to be different at all, to cease to exist as a system. [...] Difference that exists outside the system is terrifying because it reveals the truth of the system, its relativity, its fragility, and its mortality" (Girard 1989: 21). Maffesoli coins the foreign element a reminder of the polytheism of values: "This intrusion of the foreign element may function as an *anamnesis*: it reminds the social body that had a tendency to forget it, that it is structurally heterogeneous; even if for reasons of ease it tended to try to restore everything to unity" (1996: 108-109). Sloterdijk places this unity in the transition from bubble to globe, that is: from the intimate sphere to the political system. In the latter, the orderly and transparent science of geometry is the only science that provides useful interpretations and explanations for theology and political theory: understandability, roundness and optimality converge. In order for the centre (the All) to communicate with the individual points, an intimate communication is required to substitute the intimacy of the bubble. This intimate communication results in panoramic attention of the gods and only the malevolents will feel threatened by and want to escape from this hypertransparency. The disturbers of order are without exception arrested. But the inherent heterogeneity in unity reveals a stressed compulsion for order that rather frightens than founds, because people are commanded as if they were not free agents, but instruments, not rational beings who chose their own goals, but will-less officials serving a totalitarian god. So for the domination of the gods to work its charm, persuasive arguments must not contradict the sense of freedom. The idea of heteronomy is deflected and transformed into the idea of self-determination: the rational person is a voluntary co-worker of the gods and partner in the creation of the all-inclusive and inspired cosmic sphere. But this new sphere is not without its paradox: either the sphere is all-inclusive and also includes atheists (who claim that there is no godly inspiration), or it is not and in excluding atheists it proves their point. The consequences of this paradox are surprisingly enough not problematic: the atheist is put in jail and after his death his body will be thrown over the borders where it will not be buried. Sloterdijk concludes that the unproblematic ease with which this paradox and its consequences are displayed (not secret) demonstrates the immunization of the global sphere: as long as a polis cannot survive without the possibility of excommunicating its enemies, an all-inclusive globe cannot stay in shape if it cannot expel what it is unable to integrate.

In Agamben's analysis, the homo sacer or bare life is privileged to form the foundation of the polis by way of his expulsion. The homo sacer is the life that can be killed but not sacrificed. Agamben claims that sovereignty is not a positive power, but a negative one. It is the power to exclude oneself, to create something new out of the exception by formulating new norms and thus a new normality. It is the paradoxical power to identify yourself as 'not outside' and thereby identifying yourself as an exception, as 'outside'. Rule and exception remain related: "It is not the exception that gets subtracted from the rule, but the rule that, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and only in this way can constitute itself as rule, by constantly maintaining a relation to it" (Agamben 2002 – see note in reference list). The sovereign decision to exclude is the original judicial-political structure in which who is included and who is excluded gains significance. But in doing so, the sovereign power itself is also unidentifiable. It is similar to the Fibonacci numbers, in

which the next number is defined by adding up the two previous numbers: 0, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13. The numbers obey a simple rule, but in its origin, they start with an exception, that is: the relation between 0 and 1. It is not considered problematic that 1 comes out of 0, that something arises out of nothingness (read: undefined, undetermined, without qualities nor quantity). In terms of the sovereign: the potential (with its positive and negative power, that is: to ... and to not ...) is the form in which being founds itself sovereignly, without anything preceding and defining it, except its own power not to be. It is the reality that realizes itself by giving up its power not to ... . Following Badiou's remarks that the state is not based on a social contract, of which it is thought to be expression, but on its decomposition (*déliation*) which it forbids, Agamben states that decomposition is the dissolving of an *a priori* relationship, but this relationship has in its original shape an exclusive character. The homo sacer is the original figure of the life that is banned and in this he is the reminder of the original exclusion from which the political dimension could arise out of nothing. Maffesoli explains how a group declares itself, delineates its territory and therewith confirms its existence; he sees "this nothingness" at the foundation of tribes from the positive side, since from nothingness everything can emerge; however, Girard and Agamben are less optimistic and point out that there is a price to pay for revealing social origins. Exposing the foundations of society as 'nothing' resembles "revealing the truth of the system", and so fourth, in order to purge the community and safeguard its survival, there is collective murder. It is, as writes Sloterdijk, every social unity's fundamental duty to not only keep the dead in a protected nearby distance, but also to banish evil from its inside and secure its borders. That is why the inner spaces of cultures are affective arenas who tie their participants together by giving them a role in the most exciting, binding and attractive of all social projects: the violent expulsion of evil from their midsts. The sanctification of the inner space is closely related to the denunciation of the outside.

### **Collective dyslexia**

In general, states Girard, the persecutors are honest about their violent deeds, because they are convinced that they are right and that their actions are justified. Their belief in the guilt of the victim, of his unique power as a powerless individual to bring down a society, is a full system of representation. Girard speaks of the "unconscious" persecutors imprisoned in this system and in "their own illusions of victimage" (1989: 41): "The terror inspired in people by the eclipse of culture and the universal confusion of popular uprisings are the sign of a community that is literally undifferentiated, deprived of all that distinguishes one person from another in time and space. As a result all are equally disordered in the same space and the same time", Girard writes (1989: 16) and in a way, we might say that persecutor mobs suffer from a form of collective dyslexia. A dyslectic has the ability to complete fragmented pictures. He enters a stage of disorientation when he encounters an unknown object. This triggers his brains to change observations. Once the object is recognized, the disorientation fades. A dyslectic also has the ability to actually live his distorted observations. He experiences his mental representations as if they were real (Davis 2004). Given these characteristics of dyslexia as an individual phenomenon, it is interesting to see if they can be applied to mobs as well. Sloterdijk writes about autosuggestive conviction systems and cognitive autohypnoses. Girard speaks of "distorted presentation", of "illusions shared by a great number of people" (1989: 39) and of witch trials in which persecutors, witnesses and even witches themselves – despite the prospect of their horrific fate – all agree with the reality of magic: "the mind of a persecutor creates a certain type of illusion and the traces of his illusion confirm rather than invalidate the existence of a certain kind of event, the persecution itself in which the witch is put to death" (Girard 1989: 11).

## **Original sinners**

According to Girard all myths about the founding of societies reflect at least two of these stereotypes and concludes that "All myths must have their roots in real acts of violence against real victims" (1989: 25). Often these myths evoke a situation in which it is neither day or night, gods mingle with men, sun and moon are twins, etcetera. This lack of difference is the first stereotype. Then appears a criminal or prankster who must be punished. This is the second stereotype. The victim carries the marks of the victim, is for instance crippled, stricken with the plague, a foreigner or extremely beautiful. The physical and moral are inseparable and instead of baring some monstrous features, the victim is totally monstrous and therefore one with his crime. Agambens homo sacer is similar, as the homo sacer is defined by his close symbiosis with death, without actually belonging to the world of the dead nor of the living. He elaborates the figure of the werewolf, half man half wolf, but also the vampire fits this profile. Both are equally dead and un-dead, incorporations of the ultimate border (and its transgression). Agamben writes that the werewolf, a monstrous hybrid, is originally the figure of the one expelled from the community.

In the pacification of strangeness lies the paradox, writes Sloterdijk, that this process of inclusion creates new exclusiveness because the obstinate hordes that do not want to enter the civilized, lukewarm bath of the empire must be stigmatized as opponents. "Indeed, it is in protecting the stages of a revolution, the reasons for a conspiracy or more simply through passive resistance or 'aloofness' with regard to a particular (political, state, symbolic) power that a community is forged. Whether explosive or silent, there is a violence whose founding functions we have only begun to explore" (1996: 37-38), writes Maffesoli. Girard has in fact explored the founding functions of violence and concludes that all societies are violent in their origins, although they hide their aggression while they evolve. The victims of collective murder in myths are transformed into cult objects. They are worshiped since their death is the beginning of a revived or even new social or religious order: "There is only one person responsible for everything, one who is absolutely responsible, and he will be responsible for the cure because he is already responsible for the sickness" (Girard 1989: 43). Therefore the collective murder is both violent and liberating. In reversing the relationship between victim and mob it produces the sacred, making the first an active omnipotent and the latter a passive reception group. The once repelled scapegoat, responsible for social turmoil, is now an idol capable of reconciliation. The original murders in myths are usually eliminated or transformed into less violent representations (less brutal and individual instead of collective; the four stereotypes of the scapegoat are revised or softened), but nonetheless they are real. Violence, says Agamben, is the root of justice. The sovereign is the point where violence and justice are indistinguishable. The 'outside' (defined by identifying 'not outside') is actually 'inside'. There is a free and judiciously empty space inside the order. The sovereign power both includes the homo sacer and in the meantime excludes him from both profane and religious rights (he can be killed – without punishment – but not sacrificed). A relation (inclusion) will always remain, for it is impossible to communicate 'I'm not talking to you' without communicating. It is with violent communication that the homo sacer is excommunicated.

Girard concludes his analysis stating that "human culture is predisposed to the permanent concealment of its origins in collective violence. [But] once understood, the mechanisms can no longer operate; we believe less and less in the culpability of the victims they

demand. Deprived of the food that sustains them, the institutions derived from these mechanisms collapse one after the other about us" (1989: 100-101). This revelation, he writes, is precisely what the Gospels perform: they defeat the persecutors' perception of their persecution – that violence can cast out violence and that scapegoats can save men – and expose "its total mistake, its perfect example of nontruth. [...] By revealing that mechanism and the surrounding mimeticism, the Gospels set in motion the only textual mechanism that can put an end to humanity's imprisonment in the system of mythological representation based on the false transcendence of a victim who is made sacred because of the unanimous verdict of guilt" (1989: 115, 166).

### **The sovereign**

The morpho-immunological spheres we build point to a sovereign on both the macro level (immunity as exemption, resisting internal influences) and the micro level (immunity as resisting external influences). The size of the globe is much bigger than that of the bubble. How can the sovereign as the central power stay in contact with his centrifugal points? Sloterdijk suggests that for the centre to remain attractive for even its most distant points, it must let other places share in the sweetness of power, in other words create shareholders to manage its signs in the periphery. The sovereign owns the monopoly on transmission. He propagates the signs autonomously. The message must come across uncorrupted and undistorted. The channels have to be clean and cannot be leaky or blocked. This demands authenticity and loyalty of the representatives: at any cost it must be prevented that the audience fails to recognize the words of the lord in the message they transmit. Therefore they must operate without egoism and sloth. A messenger who thinks of himself does not perform adequately. This is the eternal concern of the transmitting system. The representatives should never develop a self or an ego, or rather: their ego must be taken away from them even before they are appointed and be replaced with the subjectivity of the lord. Representatives become part of the sovereign power. Improper and selfish use of this power equal rebellion and treason, the cardinal political crimes.

Both Girard and Agamben point out similarities between the legislator / sovereign and the scapegoat / homo sacer and place them in a political dimension. "It is as if the power of the state", writes Girard, "nonexistent in this type of society, comes into temporary but nevertheless real rather than symbolic existence in these violent forms of unanimity" (Girard 1989: 177). For Agamben there is a structural, even symmetrical resemblance between the sovereign power and the homo sacer, in which the sovereign is the one to whom all people are potential homines sacri, and the homo sacer is the one to whom everyone behaves as a sovereign. Agamben adds that the killing of the homo sacer resembles the killing of the sovereign in that both killings fall outside the regular judicial system and both are not considered murders. And neither sovereign nor homo sacer can be sacrificed. This is a different perspective than that of Girard, who claims that the sovereign is a vulnerable power with the stereotypical marks of the victim: "The supreme legislator is the very essence of a scapegoat who had been made sacred" (Girard 1989: 178). This difference can be explained by looking at the social constellation. For Girard, the typical soil for scapegoating is lack of social difference. Agamben positions his homo sacer in a differentiated society. However, he also claims that differences are fading, as the exception becomes the rule and we all are potential homines sacri.

The type of the werewolf suggests that one can secretly change in and out of one's human form. The transformation of the werewolf corresponds with the situation of the exception, during which the city has crumbled and people enter an area in which they no longer

differentiate themselves from animals. Again: the stereotype of lack of difference. Girards mechanisms for the creation of scapegoats agrees with Agambens conclusion that Hobbes' *homo hominis lupus* should be interpreted as the condition in which everybody is a homo sacer (werewolf) to everybody. Man becoming wolf and wolf becoming man is the always possible exception to the rule. This might mean that the third stereotype, that of the marks of the victim, should be revised; we are all potential victims to the exception. For Maffesoli this is not an immediate problem, but it risks becoming one: "being 'on the outside', as may be observed in the social networks, does not imply the end of the being-together, but quite simply that this being-together is invested in forms other than those recognized by the instituted legality. The only serious problem is that of the threshold at which abstention, the fact of being 'on the outside', sets off the implosion of a given society" (1996: 96). It is modernity that revealed the emptiness of the sovereign signs and that marks the end of the transition of bubbles into globes.

The implosions of spheres, says Sloterdijk, result in foam. Foam is a collection of bubbles without the metaphysical sense of being-together. It is a spherical pathology with a triple focus. The political focus is that foam is naturally uncontrollable and tends towards a morphological anarchy. The cognitive focus is that groups and individuals living in foam are no longer able to see the world as a coherent and all-embracing whole. The psychological focus is that individuals in foam structures tend to lose their ability to create a physic inner space and to shrivel into isolated depressive points in a random 'around' (environment). *The globalization is in fact a universal war of one foam against the other. In differentiating different forms of peace the true world war begins: the battling out of the antithesis between power (root, control, apparatus, culture) and mind (uprooted, resistance, anarchy, art). If there were to be an end to history, Sloterdijk concludes, it would be the disappearance of these opposites.*

But battling out presupposes some form of interaction and communication. What would happen if one of the opposites remains passive and silent? In the next section I will focus on the lack of difference in masses and the impotence to involve them.

### **Indifferent masses**

If the centre of the all-inclusive global sphere communicates with the individual points, no beam will be lost: instead, all beams depart from the centre to specific turning points, where they are reflected back to the centre. But if history has made one thing clear, it is that not all of the beams are send back. There is a pale external wilderness beyond which no reflection or salvation can occur. It is precisely the presence of this wilderness that undermines the legitimacy of the centre: if the possibility of non-salvation exists, then what good is the saving centre for? If there is an area where the emanations of the radiating centre are so weakened that they do not cause any effect, then the radiating god, in spite of this attributed infiniteness, has a dark edge wherein his organizational powers cease to penetrate. Gods weak spot is an ontological outer world that is his opposite and from which he cannot return to his own wholeness. This proves, writes Sloterdijk, that even the most creative attempts to make the world god-immanent are doomed to produce symptomatic weak spots. As soon as the world is considered as an enlarged, heavy and dense body, an indigestible residue, a tiny, annoying, obeying its own laws – or rather: obeying its own lawlessness – 'outside' puts itself in the foreground to question the immanence of all things in the light sphere. There is lost matter as there are lost souls.

### **Inertia and implosion**

The unclear accumulation of the social, claims Baudrillard (1986), revolves around a sponge-like referent, an opaque and at the same time translucent reality, a nothing: the masses. In a literal sense they absorb all electricity of the social and political. They are not adequate conductors of the political or social nor of meaning in general. The appeal to the masses has in fact always remained without response. They are inertia. They are the power of inertia and of the neuter and *a priori* more powerful than any power that is wielded over them. In our traditional image of the masses, we see them oscillating between passivity and wild spontaneity; they always have a potent energy. But the masses do not have any latent energy that needs liberation. Our incapacity to accept and understand implosion is an obstacle for all our meaning systems, that resist with all their strength by concealing the collapse of meaning behind a festering of meanings and a barrage of meaners. The social space is crossed with interstitial objects and crystal-like piles (Sloterdijks radiating god), that float around and encounter each other in a clair-obscur of thinking. The mass is a collection of individual particles of social rubbish and media impulses. An opaque nebula of which the increasing density absorbs all energies and rays of light in its environment to finally collapse under its own weight.

### **Meaninglessness**

Only those who are liberated from their symbolic obligations from masses, because locked in infinite networks they are destroyed and condemned to function solely as the countless endpoints of the same models that fail to integrate them and end up producing them as statistical waste (the wasteland; Sloterdijks pale wilderness). The mass has neither quality nor reference; that is its definition of radical undefinability. There are no poles between which opposites interact; hence the impossibility to let meaning circulate. Baudrillard states firmly that the imperative of production of meaning, that is expressed in the constantly renewed imperative of moralizing information (to inform better, to socialize better, to elevate the cultural level of the masses) is bull shit. None of the efforts has effectuated a conversion to the seriousness of the content, not even to the seriousness of the code. And it is also nonsense, he writes, to claim that the masses are fooled. That the masses would spontaneously strive for the natural light of rationality has always been a hypocritical hypothesis that serves to secure the intellectual peace of the producers of meaning and to avert the opposite: masses have always rejected meaning and satisfied their lust for spectacle in full freedom. The denial of this freedom is robbing the silent masses of their indifference; even their apathy cannot be inherent but must be attributed. But not only are the masses passivist (in contrast to activist), they also choose openly, with a clear conscience and without even wondering why, a football match over a personal and political drama. Here a connection with Maffesoli is clear: "Laughter and irony are an explosion of life, even and especially if this life is exploited and dominated. Derision underlines that, even in the most difficult circumstances, one is able, together with or against those responsible, to reappropriate one's existence and, in relative terms, to enjoy it. This is a thoroughly tragic perspective, which is aimed less at changing the world than getting used to and tinkering with it. [...] while it is undeniable that there exists a 'political' society, an 'economic' society, there is an unqualified reality, and that is the social existence as such which I propose calling sociality and which may be 'the play-form of socialization'. In the framework of the aesthetic paradigm so dear to me, the play aspect is not bothered by finality, utility, practicality, or what we might call 'realities', but rather it is what stylizes existence and brings out its essential characteristic [...] the 'undirected being-together'" (Maffesoli 1996: 51, 81).

### **Polling**



Baudrillard states that the silent majority of the masses as an imaginary referent does not mean that it is not there, but that it is impossible to represent it. The masses are no longer referents, because they do not want to belong to the order of representation. They do not speak out, they are polled. They do not think, they are researched. The referendum has replaced the political referent. Opinion polls, questionnaires, referendums and the media are the operating parts that no longer belong to a representative dimension, but to a simulative one. The significance of the silence is paradoxical: it is not a silence that does not speak, but a silence that forbids that it is spoken for. Nothing can represent the silent majority and that is its revenge. For centuries it seemed that power rested upon the passivity of the masses. This is what amazed Etienne de la Boétie when he wrote about voluntary slavery over four centuries ago. How is it possible, he wondered, that so many men and women, so many villages, so many cities, so many people tolerate a tyrant who has no other power over them than the power they give to him, who can only harm them for as far as they let him, who could not hurt them the least unless they prefer to endure him instead of defeat him? The tyrant will be defeated when his country no longer agrees with its own slavery. If people stopped serving, they would be free. His answer to the puzzle is twofold: people get used to slavery and forget freedom, and they easily become weak cowards under the regime of a tyrant. Baudrillard offers no answer to his questions, but remarks that the inertia the power has stirred up now turns against it as a sign of its own death. That is why strategies are developed to reverse the process: from passivity to participation, from silence to speaking. But it is too late: the threshold of the critical mass, the involution from the social by inertia, is crossed. To prevent the mass to fall back into its silence and inertia, it ceases to fall under the regime of the will or the representation and falls under the guidance of diagnosis, the pure and simple prediction. Hence the universal predominance of information and statistics; the mass must be listened (in) to and sounded out in order to worm out some oracle. But instead of energizing the masses, information produces only more mass. The mass has cooled down and now absorbs all social energy without reflecting it. It absorbs all signs, meanings and messages without beaming them back: it consumes them. Baudrillard defines the masses as cemeteries for the dying social, whereas Maffesoli points out that they are characterized by a puissance or vitalism that enables them to resist and outlast politics and history and to recreate sociability.

## Hyper

Masses do not make choices; they do not create difference, but indifference. And they have never been consciously politically or historically engaged, other than to leave everything in the lurch in full irresponsibility. These days, however, the dominant and submissive roles are turned. Everyday life and people in their banality are not the insignificant side of history. The retreat into the private domain could be a direct challenge addressed to politics, a form of active resistance against political manipulation. The platitude of normal life, all that was once thought bourgeois, despicable and a-political will now set the standard, while history and politics have to go seek a more modest stage elsewhere. Will they disappear? Now, they will make a comeback, but in grotesque forms. Masses do not reinterpret messages using their own codes; they simply do not care about codes. They accept everything and transform it *en bloc* into the spectacular, without needing a different code, a meaning or fundamental resistance. The masses display hyperconformity. They let everything slide into an undefined sphere. This sphere is not even a sphere of nonsense, but of omnipresent fascination and manipulation. But our society is not ready to embrace its grieve over the loss of the real, of the power and inherently the loss of the social itself. We try to escape through an artificial revival of them. This is a doubling of the representation: power survives only to conceal that it has

vanished. All is becoming simulacra and the process is irreversible.

Sloterdijk, in a more optimistic tone, disagrees with the irreversibility of the process. The ethics of living in foam, he writes, demands moving around in an immensely broad world with an unparalleled modest perspective. Within the decentralized small and middle-sized bubbles discrete and polyvalent mind games must develop so we can learn to live with ever-changing perspectives and without the illusion of one overpowering point of view.

## Organizations

I offered some interpretive frames for looking at organizations in the nude, that is: organizations as just a bunch of people. What now follows is not a 'how to', but an attempt to recognize the different aspects of 'just a bunch of people' once we put the organizational clothes back on. Have we developed X-ray vision and can we point out the traces of tribalism, violence and indifference under the organizational garments?

Tribalism is about the aesthetic, the tactile, the proxemic, secrecy and puissance. We recognize tribalism in how people create their realities in organizations, as described for instance by Shaw (2002). Shaw understands the art of creating bubbles in which people find themselves again. She also describes how to enter the bubble she creates is no *sine cure* for employees who are trained to think in terms of efficiency only. They have to get used to her consultancy style which is not based on *a priori* conclusions and advise, but a joint search in the here and now by all parties involved. I call these bubbles free havens (see also Haffmans 2006). The unconditional prioritizing of the inner circumstances of the people who work together over so-called external relations (Sloterdijks form-greenhouse) is precisely what free havens are all about. They are located in the sidelines and margins, the shadows of an organization: "the organizational structure of this conjunction happens to be the network, the cause and effect of a parallel economy, society, and even administration" (Maffesoli 1996: 92). The secrecy needed to tap into puissance again is guaranteed by not naming them free havens, but training sessions or management development programs.

Violence is about indiscretion, origins, revelation of secrets, transgression, expulsion, sovereignty and loyalty. In the violent origins we recognize Schumpeter's creative destruction. The consequences of lack of difference is food for thought when flat organizations are hyped. But also hierarchical organizations can be analyzed in terms of violence. The radiating sovereign and the consequently required hypertransparency can be found in the increase in control systems. In the worldly domain bureaucratic evil, Sloterdijk posits, the vain interruptions of the messengers and the tendency of officials to serve themselves must constantly be contained, be it with sharpened performance control or more efficient educational and reward systems. There are ample examples of repressing freedom in organizations, also under the heading of self-determination (self-steering teams, for instance). Furthermore, the tragic figure of the bell-ringer who reveals organizational misconduct shows us a homo sacer who is excluded both by his company and society. His punishment for revelation is double. We also recognize the mass cuts in lower ranked personnel (that serves as a contingent buffer) and the theatrical persecution of higher ranked managers gone bad. Additionally, Westhues (2002) shows examples of mobbing in academe. He finds that the most likely victim is "an average or high achiever who is personally invested in a formally secure job, but who nonetheless somehow threatens or puts to shame co-workers and/or managers. Such a worker provides no legally defensible grounds for termination."

Indifference is about inertia and implosion, meaninglessness, diagnosis and hyperconformity. The element of polling is taken seriously by Surowiecki (2004), who claims that crowds have wisdom. He pictures organizations that treat their CEOs as superheroes and look on most of their employees as interchangeable drones. This is a pity: organizations should tap into the wisdom of the many. Under the right circumstances, crowds are smarter. These circumstances are diversity (so that people bring different pieces of information to the table), decentralization (so that no one at the top dictates the crowd's answer), an assembler (to reach a collective verdict) and independent participants (who pay attention to their own information and do not worry about what other people think). The best questions to ask are cognitive questions. In fact, this is what Baudrillard called the polling of the masses. If there is indifference, then no information will come out of the mass, because the mass does not reflect. Furthermore, the scenario of labor, writes Baudrillard, resembles the double representation of the power: it must conceal that the reality of labor and production has gone. The ideology of labor, the traditional morale that would keep the 'real' labor process and the 'objective' exploitation out of sight, is not pivotal anymore. The scenario of labor is. We see this in meaningless jobs that are unable to integrate workers in the organizational passion. Professionalism is at risk when managers put their trust in spreadsheets instead of people. The flexibility in and globalization of the labor market has created disposable jobs and therewith disposable employees. It will be hard to ignore the signs of a laconic workforce that dedicates itself to other interests than the organization.

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**'Between A Rock And A Hard Place'**  
**Towards a Theorisation of The Role of Gender in Junior**  
**Management**

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## **‘Between A Rock And A Hard Place’**

### **Towards a Theorisation of The Role of Gender in Junior Management**

#### **Abstract**

This paper seeks to theorise the role that gender plays in the careers of junior female managers. We do this by drawing upon two separate empirical studies, firstly a large-scale study based on interviews with female managers in the West Midlands (UK) is used to explore the growth of female participation in junior managerial roles with reference to the notion of managerial careers as seduction. We explore the routes the women have taken into junior management careers and the barriers that exist to progression toward more senior roles. Secondly, a small-scale ethnographic study of a large service-based organization, also based in the West Midlands, is documented in an attempt to theorise the organizational role of female junior managers. While the dominance of masculine values and practices in organisations is explored, we also argue that growing female participation at junior managerial levels can only partly be explained by female managers adopting, or appearing to adopt, masculine behaviours. We seek to contribute to a fuller explanation by drawing attention to the way in which senior managers in the case study sought to employ female junior managers particularly for their perceived feminine skills. Significantly, however the ethnography reveals the ambiguously gendered construction of female junior managers roles through an exploration of the enactment of both masculine and feminine practices during the ‘doing’ of management.

## **Introduction**

The growing recognition of organizations as locations of gender processes (Marshall, 1995) has led to accounts of the experience of female managers as embodying these processes (Mills and Tancred, 1992). Attention has usefully focused upon the inequality that exists between male and female managerial careers in terms of initial access, promotion, progress and reward (Davidson and Burke, 2000). A central theme to emerge from this literature is the extent to which female managerial careers appear to be overwhelmingly restricted to lower levels of management (Powell and Graves, 2003). This paper seeks to explore and theorise the role of female junior managers by drawing upon a large scale study based on over fifty interviews with female managers in the West Midlands region of the UK, along with a small scale ethnographic study of a large service-based organization also based in the West Midlands. The interview data presented seeks to outline the scope of managerial careers for female managers whilst documenting the enduringly seductive appeal that managerial opportunities seem to offer female employees. Furthermore, the extent to which female managerial participation is restricted to lower levels of managerial hierarchy is explored.

The growing attention paid to the gendering of managerial careers has usefully highlighted the requirement for successful managers (however this is defined) to adopt, what are culturally considered, masculine characteristics (Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Kerfoot and Knights, 1998) with a corresponding / resultant peripheralisation and/or devaluing of feminine characteristics within the organizational realm. In exploring the experience of doing junior management, we argue that female participation at junior managerial levels can only partly be explained by women



adopting masculine characteristics. We seek to contribute to a fuller explanation by drawing attention to the way in which senior managers in the case study organization sought to employ female junior managers or team leaders particularly for their perceived feminine skills. Despite the construction by senior managers of team leader roles as requiring feminine characteristics, we explore the fragility of such assumptions by documenting how the nature of the role/tasks performed within the specific organisational context of the case study exercises a strong influence on the feminine/masculine behaviours of these female junior managers. By doing so, we argue that the ways in which these women do management were subtly, yet ambiguously and contradictorily, gendered.

Our contribution therefore is firstly to document the experiences of female managerial careers through an analysis of extensive interview data. This focuses attention on the perceived seductive nature of managerial careers for many women whilst drawing attention to the lack of real opportunities and barriers for progress beyond junior levels. Our theoretical contribution seeks to fill the existing gap within the literature on masculinities and femininities at work by drawing attention to the ways in which feminine skills are demanded, in specific sectors and managerial roles, specifically for the way in which these are employed to control other employees (Tancred-Sherrif, 1989) and enchant customers (Korczynski, et al., 2000, Korczynski, 2005).

## **Women and Management**

There is evidence that, among other factors, the increased proportion of females in the workforce<sup>i</sup>, equal opportunities legislation and current debates and research on gender

in management have influenced the increasing representation of women in managerial roles<sup>ii</sup>. While the proportion of women managers may be increasing<sup>iii</sup>, an examination of the representation of women in managerial ranks reveals that the increase is limited to junior and middle levels and that women do not achieve leading positions in private and public organisations. Women comprise less than five percent of senior management in the UK, in the EU, and in the US (Davidson and Burke, 2000). Adams (2002) reports that within the largest 100 listed companies the number of women in executive positions is very low (less than two percent)<sup>iv</sup> and that 42 of the 100 FTSE companies have no women on their boards. In the UK, thirty-seven percent of companies do not employ women in management positions while the average European percentage is fifty (Vinnicombe, 2000). In addition, it has to be highlighted that a greater proportion of women are employed in professions than in corporate management and in female-dominated sectors than in male-dominated industries (Reskin and Roos, 1990; The Women's Unit, 2001).

Research (e.g. Powell and Graves, 2003) suggests that it does not seem to be only a matter of time until the gap between women and men in management positions is closed. A change in cultural values and practices is needed within organisations, as well as within society, for women and men to achieve equality. In reviewing the status of women in management, Powell (2000) brings together the reasons for the increased proportion in recent years of women in junior managerial levels. He reported that among the factors that influenced the increased proportion of women in management is the increased number of women earning university degrees in all disciplines in the US, in Europe and in many other countries. The increased educational attainment and enhancement of academic credentials of women has

subsequently accompanied an increased commitment to professional and managerial careers. Simultaneously, economic and legal developments (e.g. legislation on equal opportunities) benefited women's progression into managerial positions. Due to economic expansion, western countries experienced a higher demand for labour in a period of declining labour supply (due to a decreasing fertility rate since the 1970s). This translates into more opportunities for educated women to enter newly created managerial jobs. The global shift from a manufacturing-based to an information and service-based economy, which values highly educated workers, with emotional or aesthetic skills (Hochschild, 1983; Bolton and Boyd, 2003; Witz et al., 2003) over manual skills, has also boosted the presence of women in junior and middle managerial levels.

Whilst the proportion of women in management is increasing at junior and middle levels, the proportion of women in senior roles remains relatively small. Researchers have explained this with the dominance of the patriarchal social (and organisational) system, in which the male has power and authority (e.g. Walby, 1986; Witz, 1992; Ledwith and Colgan, 1996; Powel, 2000; Katila and Mariläinen, 1999, 2002), and the subsequent dominance of masculine values and practices in organisations (e.g. Cockburn, 1991; Gherardi, 1994, 1996; Collinson and Hearn, 1996; Kerfoot and Knights, 1998; Priola, 2004).

Theoretical understandings of the dominance of masculinity in organisations have tended to be produced from within a poststructuralist feminist framework (e.g. Irigaray, 1985, Butler, 1990) where masculinity is seen as a discursively constructed mode of being. Masculinity and masculine identities refer to 'values, experiences and

meanings that are ascribed to men more than women in a particular cultural context' (Alvesson, 1998, p.72) and which in the workplace are associated with aggressive competition, goal driven and instrumental pursuit of authority, dominance, control and success (Kerfoot and Knights, 1998)<sup>v</sup>. Among others, Kerfoot and Knights (1998) and Collinson and Collinson (1997) suggest that women managers can survive and progress only if they encompass those behaviours and practices regarded as masculine. Hearn (1998), likewise, argues that women do management in different ways without fundamentally challenging the long established masculine culture. Thus, gender processes within the workplace highlight the potential for a multiplicity of gender positions within any given role within the organizational hierarchy.

However, it has also been suggested that women often are not passive recipients of masculine practices but that, while experiencing conflicts and tensions in managing their identity and subject position, may be implementing some changes in the ways they do management. Such different ways of managing may not be determining 'feminine' working cultures but result in more open communication, more supporting and nurturing working environment (Priola, 2004) and/or may refer to the exhibition of 'enchanted' behaviours in order to achieve greater control of subordinates and collaboration with customers (reference removed for review).

## **Methodology**

In attempting to explore and theorise the role of female junior managers this article draws upon two studies that were designed and implemented separately. The deliberate combination of research methodologies and data is not designed to

overcome the problems associated with either methodology, nor do we advocate this ‘mixed’ methodology as a practical solution to the challenges of gender focused organizational research. Rather we believe that the combination of the findings from these different studies does provide insights into the contemporary position of female junior managers in organizations. The interview data provides a useful discussion of a large sample of female managers by providing insights into the concept of career as being seductive for many female employees and by highlighting the difficulties to progress within masculine systems of work. The ethnographic data explores the lived experience of a small team of call centre workers who were managed by a female team leader. It highlights the typical roles that were required to perform by the team leader (a typical junior management role) . The combination of findings from both these studies allow for a tentative theorisation of the role of junior managers.

The large-scale study was based on 56 interviews conducted with women managers within various sectors<sup>vii</sup>. This study was part of large multi-methods project looking at Women in Management in the West Midlands (Gilbert et al, 2005)<sup>viii</sup>. The research aimed at investigating the experiences of local women of specific personal, organisational and cultural barriers that may be holding them back and the factors that act as forces for their participation and progression into managerial careers. Women participants occupied different roles within their organisations and the majority were at junior and middle management level. A few women (eight) were directors of their own company. Among the women who participated in the study, the majority worked for the public sector (61 percent) and a high proportion of them were managers in more female-oriented sectors (e.g. education, health service and care services)<sup>ix</sup>. The

managers in the private sector (34 percent) worked in retail, banking, construction and engineering, IT, business consultancies and care homes.

During the interviews, women were also asked to complete a biographical 'career map'. They were asked to identify and report on a A3 format paper, and in whatever format they preferred, the steps they had taken since leaving school, up to where they were now and where they were heading. In devising their maps, the interviewees were stimulated not only by the researcher/interviewer but also by some questions reported into boxes at the four corners of the paper. These were:

1. When were the times and occasion?

What were the 'tools' you used...

What were the ways...

Who were the people...

That helped you in your careers so far?

2. What were the times and occasions?

What were the 'weapons'...

What were the ways...

Who were the people...

That hindered you in your career so far?

3. Looking back, what/who would have/could have made a difference?

4. When would it/could it have made a difference?

The second study involved the researcher adopting a complete participant (Gold, 1958) role within the large call centre based in the West Midlands. The researcher

applied for and was successful in securing employment within the call centre for the purpose of conducting ethnographic research. Whilst the term ethnography is contested, specifically in relation to the problematising of processes of description, reference and the construction of authority (Linstead, 1993), in this context it is used to suggest a research process designed and conducted to allow the researcher to become a full participant in the everyday life of the call centre worker. Similar techniques have been widely used in researching gender in organizations (see for example Adkins 1992; Cavendish, 1982; Collinson, 1992; Filby, 1992; Hodgson, 2003; Pollert, 1981). The researcher, upon commencement of employment was therefore involved in all aspects of the call centre work process and worked along side other Customer Service Representatives and was subject to the same terms and conditions. Collection of data was facilitated through the compilation of a fieldwork journal or log, which was written whilst within the call centre and took the form of an extensive word document stored on the researcher's call centre workstation. The fieldwork journal was used as the basis for data analysis after completion of the observation period and follow-up interviews were conducted with key call centre staff following withdrawal from the field. The follow-up interviews allowed for ideas and concepts to be discussed with call centre workers whilst observations of interest and clarifications of various practices were also sought. Both data sets (a) the interviews notes and the women's 'career maps' and (b) the fieldwork journal and the follow-up interviews) were analysed searching for emerging discourses and themes.

### **Why Management?**

In exploring women's routes into management, it emerged that education and self-determination are at the core of a career in management. However, it appears that educational qualifications act both against women's participation in management and in favouring women's managerial progression. While in the UK, approximately three-fifths of further and higher education students are female (UNESCO, 2002), the proportion of women studying business compared to men is lower (30 percent) than those studying law (44 percent) and medicine (44 percent). In addition, only a quarter of MBA graduates are women (Vinnicombe and Colwill, 1995). The discussion of the reasons why fewer young women than men aspire and prepare for a career in business go beyond the aims of this paper. However, women's education attainments (whatever the disciplinary background) act in their favour in sectors where routes to management are clearly delineated and where the majority of part-time workers are likely to be women (e.g. retail and service sectors). Steven (2000: 23) points out that people who require part-time work are usually 'limited in their choice of occupation by what is obtainable to fit in with the specific hours for which they are available'. The implication is that they may find themselves in jobs for which they are over-qualified or, for those previously in work (e.g. women who have taken a career break), their part-time job may be of lower status than their previous employment. When such women decide to take on a full-time position their qualifications and experiences may act as an advantage for them to move on to managerial positions. While this aspect may contribute to the explanation of an increasing proportion of women at junior managerial level, several other issues contribute to the lower proportion of women in senior levels.



From an initial examination of the interview data it appears that women's self determination to progress and succeed is fundamental to their career progression. The reading of the women's accounts of determination and perseverance, in spite of the difficulties and obstacles they experienced, leads to the question: why did/do they want to be in management? The research suggests complex motives and this session explores this issue further.

It has been suggested (Whitehead, 2001) that management contains seductive elements that makes it an attractive career path for both women and men. The 'promise' of organisational power and status and the ability to control others (as well as oneself) make the position of the manager particularly attractive. This was evident in most women's responses. They all talked about the difficulties they experienced throughout their career and emphasised their strong determination to overcome these and achieve a position of influence. Status and power exercise a strong attraction but the ability to influence, perhaps even to control others, seems a strong pull for the women below who emphasise the possibility to 'facilitate people coming together strategically', to be 'listened to' and to 'help people develop'. In investing in the subject position of manager, they both engage with discourses associated with the 'people management' aspect of the position. Most interviewees (with the exception of a few entrepreneurs), in fact, constructed management as 'nurturing people', 'influencing people', never as 'making decisions', 'solving problems' or 'determining processes'. In emphasising her influential position within her organisation, Anita, below, also highlights the status that, through her job/profession, she has achieved within her community and the benefits that it has brought to her family and friends.

I want to remain in a position where I can facilitate people coming together, strategically. .... what matters is to make something bigger over what I am given, find points of interest and feel supported and listened to by both male and female colleagues' (Rosemary: Project manager in a large public sector organisation).

My father influenced my career choice and my husband is a driving force ... I am determined and find that in my position it is important to be able to have influence and help other people develop. ... I am well known in the community, through my profession I have helped family and friends (Anita: retail/professional service partner and managing director).

For both women in the extracts above to achieve their positions they had to overcome difficulties. Rosemary experienced discrimination and lack of support, she changed directions many times and decided that she wanted to remain in a position of influence and have the respect of her clients and colleagues. As well as the power to influence others, from the interview with Rosemary, it emerged that the power to control herself and overcome her weaknesses exercised an equally strong attraction. The position of the manager as rational and self-controlled becomes even more seductive when experiencing the need for emotional support and emotional strength. While Rosemary refers to her determination as associated to the process of overcoming periods of low self-esteem and progress further, Anita emphasises her determination as associated to the support of her family. Self-determination is constructed by Anita as a strength enthused by the emotional support of her husband, the influence of her father in her career choice and the help of her mother in looking after her children.

I didn't get support in my career choice, being Asian my family wanted me to become a professional .... but I want to demonstrate that I can do better and achieve success in such competitive environment (Shamila: IT manager in a large IT MNC).

Some women may be seduced by the promise of status and power to influence others and oneself. Others may be seduced by the wish to prove themselves and others that they can do better and achieve success in environments, which are traditionally male dominated (as Shamila above) or that may represent difficult challenges (as Mandy below).

I have developed leadership skills all throughout my life. I was a leader at youth club and at 14 I won the Duke of Edinburgh's award, which laid the foundations for my later experiences. Systematising this type of opportunities for teenagers could make the difference.... After I had the children I took a career break during which time I re-trained as a teacher and did some part-time teaching, but I didn't enjoy it, so, while at home, I started a small business as an importer of fashion. When the children were more independent, I went back to college and set up my home care business which currently employs 30 people (Mandy: owner and managing director of a small care company).

For Mandy above, being able to 'lead', take decisions and being in control of the processes which influence her job is fundamental. Her teaching job was seen as fitting in with her family requirements, however it did not fit in with her desire to be in control of her activities. She saw the option of being entrepreneur/managing director as an opportunity to achieve a position of leadership, status and influence (as been in control of the business processes and her subordinates).

### *Barriers to Management Progression*

Among the 56 women managers interviewed only one held a senior level position as a regional director within a public sector organisation. Other eight were directors of their own companies, one of which was a limited company. All other women were in junior and middle managerial roles. In discussing the difficulties associated with their career progression, most of the interviewees referred to the masculine culture of their workplace, in particular in heavy industry such as engineering and construction and in consultancy. Some women suggested that they did not or could not do anything to change the masculine system but only tried to have good work relationships, be respected and fit in.

During my MSc I was one of few female students, it was a technical course. After I progressed into a career in a traditionally male dominated sector. I never fit in, not only I was a woman, but also I was discriminated against for being educated. It was extremely demoralising and I lost my self-confidence, I needed to feel listened to. After a big crisis, I left that career and went to work in African villages (Rosemary: Project manager in a large public sector organisation).

My organisation and specifically my department is very male dominated, there is strong competition, a long hours culture, the work is really based on a male model. It is difficult if you are a woman, even more difficult if you have a family (Rose: manager in a public sector organisation).

Along with the experiences of competitive environments, some of the aspects that women reported when asked clarifications on what they referred to when they talked about 'male models', 'male domination', 'male systems' were the lack of training provided to them, the lack of support offered by superiors and the limited

expectations they perceived their managers had of them. They attributed these factors to their gender. This impression was that because they were women it was implicit that they would leave in the future to have a family and, if they would come back to work after maternity leave, that they would stop from seeing their career as a priority in their lives.

In my first job, I was motivated to move on quickly. I continually asked for training courses and opportunities to learn in order to progress but my manager was always reluctant until I started applying for other jobs. I could see that some of my male colleagues were moving on within the company (Suki: marketing manager in the banking sector).

As a black woman I have experienced racism and people generally had low expectation of me. I have never received career guidance... However, self motivation and strong family values have helped me in my career (Fay: project manager)

Throughout my career path I have experienced racism, sexism and other obstacles such as harassment and bullying. It was very difficult to get encouragement and support. However, I have worked through these issues and have found an area of work which I am relatively happy with (Robi: senior care manager in a public sector organisation).

Those women who could not fit in and adjust to the masculine environment have changed organisations and sectors and often opted for a more female-dominated sector. Among these, however, a few suggested that even in sectors such as education and health care there were lower expectations and support for women and that the culture was still based on masculine values and practices.

When I got my professional qualifications I moved into project management. I was a young female working with two older men. I felt used, I didn't like the position I was in, I couldn't get

the respect I needed from both the team and the boss and I needed more emotional and professional support. I was feeling very isolated and stressed and started to experience panic attacks. For the second time in my career I felt that I needed to escape but this time rather than go away I changed career and sector ... I don't think I can change the predominant consultant male model (Rosemary: Project manager in a large public sector organisation).

Having used the interview data to explore the routes taken into junior managerial positions of the respondents and the barriers that existed to their career progression, this article now turns to consider the role of female junior managers at a call centre in the West Midlands.

### **Theorising Junior Management at FirstCall**

As a call centre worker the researcher was part of a small team, which was dedicated to the provision of IT support for a specific client organization. The team consisted of between five and seven members over the period of the observation and included a team leader (Diana) and Problem Manager (Rob). The labour process of the call centre is detailed elsewhere (references removed for review), however it is necessary to note that the Call Centre exhibited a relatively flat hierarchy. Work was organised in teams (10); a team leader, assisted by a problem manager, led an individual team. Yet despite a roughly equal gender divide between Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) the vast majority (90 percent) of team leaders were female. The following section seeks to compare the team leader role with that of the subordinate but more technical role of the problem manager.

#### *Problem Manager: Job for the Boys?*

Problem managers, as the name suggests, were often required to handle ‘problem issues’ such as complaints, reports and difficult clients. Problem Managers exercised some degree of autonomy over their own working patterns and were generally thought to be less monitored than other CSRs, having already demonstrated their commitment to the organisation by achieving the status of senior CSR in time-served fashion. Problem managers were also invested with a degree of authority granted via the individual team leader and, as such, they were often placed in a pseudo-supervisory position *vis à vis* other CSRs. Although it was not unusual for problem solvers to be female, the majority (80 per cent) were male. Despite the lack of financial reward the increased status that accompanied the role of the problem manager meant that the position was highly sought after amongst the more aspiring CSRs. In discussing career objectives with CSRs the role of the problem manager was nearly always identified as being desirable and attainable.

The basic work process involved the answering and coding of incoming calls from client employees reporting computer problems. Call Centre CSRs would complete a scripted interaction to ascertain the extent of the problem and all relevant information. Once the call is concluded the CSR would prioritise the problem and pass on details to one of many external support agencies for resolution. In this respect the call centre’s role is best considered as an interface between organizational IT problems and third party resolutions. From a management perspective the key criteria upon which the call centre’s performance is judged is the degree to which all incoming calls are answered (and how quickly) and the number of current open calls which have not yet been resolved. Therefore, in spite of the fact that the CSRs were not in

themselves able to resolve the IT problems they were presented with (except for very routine or minor problems), considerable pressure (in terms of contract negotiation) is placed upon the call centre to ensure the problems are resolved quickly. Within the context of the team, therefore, pressure is exerted from the team leader and problem manager to ensure that calls are answered quickly, details taken accurately and, most importantly, that open calls are quickly resolved. This became apparent from the experience of the work process as staff were continually urged to answer calls before the “second ring” whilst actively and sometimes aggressively seeking to close existing or open calls.

Promotion to the role of problem manager reflected significant experience as a CSR. The role often involved handling the most difficult calls and these were conceptualised as being technical in nature. The call centre offered limited promotion prospects but the twice-annual appraisal and review process was designed to highlight how CSRs could demonstrate skill and competencies that were considered to be of a problem solver level. More often than not these skills were explicitly technical in nature, they involved the resolution of some problems without recourse to third parties (known as first-time fixes) and mastery over the call centres own internal technical instruments. They also included elements such as the ability to cope with the pressure of numerous incoming calls, to identify the nature of the problem quickly and some skills relating to the client such as being able to explain solutions and problems in non-technical terms. The role of problem manager was therefore constructed as being active, technical and at times heroic. The version of entrepreneurialism, itself a masculine discourse (Collinson and Hearn, 1996), which emerges from discussion with CSRs clearly foregrounds the requirement for activity



and the appraisal processes required that potential problem managers were expected to enact these clearly masculine characteristics. This in part, we suggest, accounts for the overwhelming tendency for the call centre to overwhelmingly promote male CSRs to the post of problem managers despite the equal gender divide with respect to the general CSR pool.

#### *Team leaders: Job for the Girls?*

The team leader was in overall responsibility for ensuring that calls were answered promptly and that open calls were resolved as quickly as possible. Despite this responsibility, however, most the tasks in relation to these goals were devolved to problem managers who made these goals the specific objectives of day-to-day workplace routine. Thus, the researcher observed how Rob, the problem manager, reviewed the numbers of open calls on an hourly basis, constantly sought to remind CSRs about the importance of responding quickly to incoming calls and sought to minimise CSRs time away from answering calls, with constant verbal communication with the rest of the team.

Team leaders were more likely to be occupied with formal assessment of performance through the appraisal system, the management of the overall team and negotiation between senior call centre managers, the team and the client. It is in these areas that this paper argues that feminine skills were perceived as being of particular value, hence accounting for the disproportionate level of females who occupied these junior management positions. The location of the role of team leader as interconnection between senior management and team and between senior management and client

organizations meant that the role often included the need to be diplomatic. The reasons for this varied but often revolved around the need to represent the interest of the team to senior manager, such as representing poor team performance as a resource issue, rather than a team failure. The following discussion with Diana the team leader revealed the advocacy required as part of the team leader's role.

**Researcher:** Can you tell me a little bit about your job?

**Diana:** Well the buck really stops here, it's me who's responsible to make sure we reach out targets in terms of grade of service and that open calls are resolved. But you know about that – you've seen how I make sure that you're all on top of the calls.

**Researcher:** yes, but I was wondering about the thing you do that we don't see

**Diana:** well there is a lot to that too. Very often I feel like it's my job to stick up for you guys, when the SDM's (service delivery manager) got a bee in his bonnet over our call times it's me who has to point out that we're one CSRs down and actually if they got their act together to sort more staff out we'd reach our target easy. I think that's a really important aspect of the job!

**Researcher:** Do all team leaders do this?

**Diana:** You have to, it reflects on you! When they criticise your team, they are really saying that you're crap that you can't organize a piss up in a brewery, so you kind of have to fight your corner.

As the above comments make clear, team leaders reported that they often felt the need to act as an advocate for, or on behalf of the team. Despite the protective and nurturing dimension to this type of work it is clear from Diana's use of language such as 'fight your corner' that such representations were often constructed in pugilistic, even violent terms. This was also true to the extent that team leaders were required to act as an interface between the team and the client. During the observation it became

clear how Diana engaged in daily contact with key client personally via telephone calls. Diana referred to this as 'touching base' or time set aside, normally within the first hour of the shift starting, where she would make contact with key client staff. Diana stated that this was part of her job although she saw it as being proactive by ensuring that any issues that the client had regarding the levels of service offered by the team could be "nipped in the bud".

Closely linked with the role of 'advocate' for the team, is the key role that the team leader played to reward good performance with acknowledgement:

**Researcher:** How do you know when you have done a good job?

**Guy:** The team leader will say well done – that is a really good job. We don't really get a lot of feedback from the service managers as to whether you have done a good job, you are just providing a service to them and they are probably so busy that they just get on with it. You will hear about bad comments. If you have done something wrong you will hear about that. It is a shame that you don't get more feedback saying 'well-done', say on reports or if you have done something extra for them. But mostly it's the team leader, I have had a couple of e-mails from her, which is nice really, makes you want to do your job doesn't it? Being a problem manager you are dealing with problems all day and usually it is complaints and it does get you down a bit actually so its nice to have the acknowledgement that I'm doing something right.

The issue of praise and support was an area that many CSRs reported as making a huge difference to their daily lives. The team leader was identified in nearly all cases as being the originator of this support and it was claimed to be especially important to 'bring through' new staff; that is to say to encourage them with praise and support. Whilst informal feedback and support of this nature have a very nurturing dimension to them, contradictorily, more direct control over CSRs labour process often took the

form of the ‘bollockin’ and consisted of a collective reprimand from the team leader. The following interaction was recorded whilst on a lunch break which was spent observing CSRs.

**Diana:** [shouting] oi, you lazy bastards, [addressed to the rest of team] look at the grade of service figure! Get your fingers out ... Jenny, stop chatting up Chris and answer some calls, Matt get off wrap-up you’ve been on there for 8 minutes...

**Jenny:** [indignantly] ... I’m not chatting anyone up, I’m closing down a call...

**Diana:** Jenny, [exasperated] I need you to answer calls, look at the queue! ... it’s my head on the block up there [points to Call Centre managers desks]

Diana firstly appeals to the team’s sense of purpose, suggesting that the team are being lazy; this implores the deployment of greater productive activity. Secondly, she uses the phrase ‘*get your fingers out*’, although a common phrase, this has a quite literal meaning in the context of the Call Centre. It suggests that the CSRs should engage in more productive activity, clearly using their fingers to manipulate the telephone or keyboard. Thirdly, Diana appeals to the grade of service figure – a seemingly objective and rational measure of team performance, in this sense the grade of service provides a proxy measure of productive activity. When the grade of service figure starts to decline, the team leader reasserts control relations over the team in an effort to correct the decline. Significantly, the grade of service figure helped to maintain productive activity, not merely when the figure was declining, but more generally through a carefully fostered culture of competition:

**Diana:** ... [shouting across the Call Centre] haha, look at InsuranceDesk [rival team] ... 45 percent grade of service ... just like the team leader ... bag of shit.

Much of the existing call centre literature highlights call centre environments as being characterised by electronic surveillance (Ferne and Metcalf 1998, Taylor and Bain, 1999, Kinnie, et al., 2000) and it became clear from observations made over the course of the fieldwork that team leaders were required to monitor the performance of the CSRs within their team. This was also known by the CSRs and the following interview response makes it clear.

**Researcher:** So what do you think of the monitoring system? Do you think it is a good way of monitoring your performance?

**Mel:** I think so. I suppose the team leaders are always listening out to you phone calls making sure that you are polite to the clients. There is nothing statistical to say that you are being rude or aggressive!

The role of monitoring performance became a key issue for a number of call centre staff. Diana was known to monitor her team extensively, and, although unhappiness with this arrangement was not expressly voiced, the concept of such close managerial surveillance was a theme that generated a certain amount of dissent. Interestingly Diana frequently justified such monitoring as being an on-going form of monitoring for training purposes, by suggesting that she could identify specific training needs from remotely listening into her team's conversations with clients.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

In exploring routes into junior management our data reveal the role that seduction plays in making careers appear attractive to female potential managers. The data

highlight the determination that female managers have shown in securing managerial roles and in terms of being successful and a sense of perseverance in terms of overcoming barriers to entry. Many barriers to managerial careers were conceptualised as being based upon existing masculine organizational cultures and in some cases these barriers are considered to prevent further progression. Powell and Graves (2003) suggest that when women believe that they are disadvantaged by the glass ceiling (however one may interpret it), they may be less likely to express an interest in open top management jobs than equally qualified men. The frustration experienced by women seems to motivate some of them to quit their organisation and move on to a new career path, often to self-employment (see also Marshall, 1995). This is not only evidenced by our study but also by recent government data, which report that women in the UK are starting businesses at more than twice the rate of men (The Women's Unit, 2001).

The embodying of masculine characteristics as a means for progression supports existing frameworks such as that offered by Knights and Kerfoot (1998). Such a framework offers a plausible account of the success of female senior managers by arguing that success more often comes to those female managers who are able to adopt and display masculine characteristics. Furthermore, many female managers report a desire to exert organizational control and influence, which was seen as an important factor in understanding the enduring appeal of managerial careers. We argue that this can be understood as a desire to exercise control and autonomy of one's own career as much, if not more so, than wanting to exercise control over others. The rational, self controlled and autonomous managerial abstract was often contrasted with notions of irrational, subservient non-managerial carers. This

interpretation is supported by the espoused concern on behalf of female managers to offer leadership in terms of the development and support of others rather than in term of decision-making. In addition to the developmental and support discourses, management was also constructed around terms such as influence rather than authority and control.

The interview data presented here are used to give voice to women managers themselves and to explore the construction of management and managerial roles from their own perspectives. In contrast, we use ethnographic data to explore the doing of junior management roles from within the case study location. This provides an opportunity to explore the process of how, for example, the roles of team leader and problem manager embody gender differences and identities in relation to the types of tasks required. The role of team leader has been highlighted in comparison with the junior but more technical role of problem manager. We argue that the gender composition of the team leader role shows an organizational preference for the employment of female team leaders. In contrast to this, the gender composition of problem managers and senior managers were both overwhelmingly male. In attempting to account for this, we draw attention to the types of tasks that both problem managers and team-leaders were typically required to perform. The role of the team leader appeared to be distinguished within the call centre as requiring the mediation of tension between call centre managers, the team of CSRs and the requirements of customers. In the case study the tasks required of team leaders were conceived as feminine; we suggest that this is why the organization seems to show a strong preference for the employment of women in this role.

Despite the perceived feminisation of the team leader role, the ethnographic data reveal that team leaders often adopted what might be considered more masculine characteristics in terms of exerting direct control over CSRs and encouraging competition between rival teams. We argue that this draws heavily upon masculine discourses of entrepreneurialism and heroism and as such challenges the idea of specific feminine and masculine gender differentiation. As suggested by Gherardi (1994: 601) 'in our working lives we create both material products and the symbolic product of a role assumed by a sexed body and performed by a gendered actor for an audience, which not only judges the appropriacy and coherence of the performance with the symbolic universe of gender, but actively participates in the production of competence rules'.

The interconnected location of the team leader role and the specific organisational environment seems to exercise a strong influence on the ways in which the female team leaders do management and ambiguously and contradictorily (Hearn, 1998) construct their gendered roles of women and managers. Diana displayed feminine behaviours associated with nurturing and supporting the team and negotiating with the customers as well as more masculine behaviours aimed at providing discipline and motivation through competition and direct control. We argue that the specific call centre context determines conflicts and tensions over the more feminine aspects of negotiation and support required by the team leader subject position. In fact, the issue of employee control has been central to much of the growing call centre literature, which shows how integrated telephone and telephony systems, together with other forms of electronic surveillance 'render perfect' managerial control (Ferne and Metcalf, 1997). Specific aspects of call centre control are highlighted as regulation of



the pace of work through call distribution systems, monitoring and evaluation of work through collection and analysis of detailed statistical data and recorded copies of individual interactive service encounters, and finally the reward and discipline of the workforce through HR systems supported by recorded data. The degree to which call centres might usefully be characterised as panoptic environments, thus denying the potential for worker resistance, has been highly contested (Knights and McCabe, 2000; Bain and Taylor, 2000, Taylor *et al.* 2002, Taylor and Bain, 2003). Callaghan and Thompson (2001), drawing extensively upon Edwards' (1979) notion of contested terrain, show how the fundamental aspects of workplace control as established by Edwards: pace and direction of work, monitoring of work and reward and discipline of the workforce, are structured within call centre environments.

The interconnected location of junior female managers within the call centre has a strong resonance with Tancred-Sheriff's (1998) analysis of adjunct control tasks that female clerical workers are often required to perform. Significantly, however, whilst acknowledging the seductive nature of participating in the authority of management (ibid: 48), clerical workers and, in this instance junior call centre managers, have little opportunity to influence the nature of the labour process they perform. In fact, the role of the call centre team leader seems constructed around feminine discourses associated with more 'feminine' communication and relations (with subordinates, superiors and customers), which explains the female dominance at this level. However, it is also embedded within specific masculine practices of competition, monitoring and surveillance which determine and constrain the ways in which female junior managers relate to their ambiguously gendered managerial subject position.

Thus, in accounting for the growth of female participation at junior levels of management the study articulates the enduring appeal of managerial careers which will ensure new entrants into this arena. It also shows that while management in general is perceived by the women interviewed as associated with masculine ideals, their specific managerial subject position is constructed as associated with more feminine discourses (e.g. influence, support). From the ethnographic study, it is also clear, that the enactment of junior management, in this case at least, often involved not simply the embodiment of traditionally masculine characteristics but a position in which the boundaries between male and female universes become fluid, negotiable, intersected and merged (Gherardi, 1994). In the call centre example it was women who were perceived as offering the necessary fluidity to be able to successfully respond to these contradictory demands. This requirement is highlighted most clearly when the role of team leader is compared with the role of problem manager with its robust and permanent attachment to heroic values of technical specialism.

A key issue to emerge from this research is the way in which the masculine culture of organisations educes in women managers (as experienced by the women in the interview study and by the call centre team leaders) the experience of contradictory positioning (see also Gherardi, 1996). To preserve their feminine identities, they construct management as associated with feminine discourses. However, in positioning themselves as managers they resort to masculine behaviours mainly aimed at controlling the work environment. Although not evident from this research, it has been suggested (e.g. Gherardi, 1996; Prichard and Deem, 1999) that such contrasting positions may elicit unpredictable behaviours and anxiety concerned one's competence, abilities and work relationships.



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<sup>i</sup> Women constitute over 50% of the UK workforce (Equal Opportunities Commission, 1998, in Davidson and Burke, 2000).

<sup>ii</sup> The proportion of women managers increased between 1980 and 2000 from 26% to 45% in the US, 14% to 26% in Australia, 25% to 35% in Canada and 16% to 29% in Sweden (Powel and Grave, 2003). Whilst the Equal Opportunities Commission reported that the number of female managers increased by 20 per cent between 1991 and 2000. (EOC, 2002)

<sup>iii</sup> This trend seem to be universal, although the proportion of women in management may vary considerably across countries in relation to differences in national cultures and in the definitions of the term 'manager' (Powel and Grave, 2003).

<sup>iv</sup> "Out of 600-plus senior executive jobs in Britain's boardroom, only 10 are filled by women" (Adams, 2002).

<sup>v</sup> Masculinity should not be seen as a fixed category but rather as fragmented, diverse, ambiguous subjectivities which are multiple and shift according to cultural and historical contexts (Collinson and Hearn, 1994).

<sup>vii</sup> The interviews were conducted in 2004. Women participants worked in public (34), private (19) and voluntary (3) organisations of various sizes. All organisations operated in the West Midlands but were not necessarily regional establishments. Some were large national or multinational organisations.

<sup>viii</sup> The project was co-financed by the European Social Fund and the Learning and Skills Council (Black Country).

<sup>ix</sup> This reflects the national picture, where women workers are concentrated in the public administration, health and education sector (4.788.000 women compared to 2.141.000 men) (The Women's Unit, Cabinet Office, 2001)

**The Numbers of the Beast:  
Quantification, Measurement and Biopolitics**

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## Introduction

Number and death have long been associated: ‘Your days are numbered’, ‘Your number’s up’ or, as the Bible has it, “God hath numbered thy kingdom and finished it” (Daniel 5:26). There are many ways in which we might be able to approach this seemingly natural kinship between death and number. We could, for example, explore the argument that behind the apparent neutrality and objectivity of enumeration there lurks the danger of ideology, whether it involves nineteenth century craniology or whether it takes the form of an I.Q. test in the twentieth century, the results of which may be plotted on a graph to form the infamous ‘bell curve’ (Gould, 1996). It is only a short distance from such techniques of measurement to the practice of eugenics, accompanied perhaps by forced sterilization and ‘racial hygiene’.

One might even be tempted to invoke an entire family of philosophical concepts in relation to capitalism and quantification: ‘abstraction’, ‘objectification’, ‘reification’, ‘rationalisation’, etc., all of which serve to alienate, exploit and, perhaps, maim and kill. It is also worth noting that Marx himself does battle with the capitalist mode of production by laying out several statistical tables of death-rates in the first volume of *Capital*, comparing different industries, regions and percentages (Marx, 1990: 406-7, 595). Enumeration is locked in combat with enumeration.

These are not the only possible approaches to the question of death and number. We could alternatively provide an analysis of crime statistics, with its murder rates, its knife-attack body-counts, its prison population figures or, by contrast, its unknown ‘dark figure’ of unrecorded offences (Campbell, 2000; Reiner, 1996: 198-201). This would be to return to some of the earliest objects of statistical inquiry, which were all forms of social deviance: crime, suicide, madness, disease (Hacking, 1990: 3). In fact, in the mid-1800s the ‘moral statistician’ Adolphe Quetelet claimed to be able to enumerate the total amount of annual criminal activity in advance, to the extent that he would describe the statistical regularity of crime as a “kind of budget for the scaffold, the galleys and the prisons, achieved by the French nation with greater regularity, without doubt, than the financial budget” (cited in Hacking, 1990: 105).

Finally, we might discuss the peculiar difficulty of counting the dead, from John Graunt's scrutiny of mortality registers in the seventeenth century to the fluctuating estimations of those killed in the attacks on the World Trade Centre in 2001 (Graunt, 1964: 335-435; Best, 2004: 109-11). As the recent controversies over the precise amount of civilian casualties from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate, counting the dead is by no means a simple matter.<sup>1</sup>

However, I do not wish to look into any of these areas in any detail, although they are all no doubt productive domains of research. What will preoccupy us in this paper is the question of what Stuart Elden calls the 'politics of calculation' (see Elden, 2006: 1-11; see also 2002, 125-151). To examine the conditions of possibility for this conjunction between calculation and politics would be to analyse how measurement and quantification are centrally important to the constitution of the modern state (Elden, 2006: 3). One important element of the modern state is, of course, the population. It is the life and death of this political object that interests us here: what are the conditions, from the seventeenth century, for its management and regulation or, in turn, its quarantine and annihilation? The problem of this division between one population and another is therefore a politically urgent question that penetrates to the very core of our modernity (Foucault, 1998: 143; see also Agamben, 1998).

At the beginning of *Speaking Against Number*, Elden asks: "What is required in order that humans, groups and organisations can be understood as either the same or different?" (Elden, 2006: 3). This determining of sameness or difference requires the recognition that things are similar enough to be quantitatively compared to one another. As we shall see, from the classical period to the modern age, the determining of sameness and difference has been achieved in various ways; it is for us to clarify the precise set of relations between number, population and political power.

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<sup>1</sup> There have been several high-profile estimations of the civilian death-toll in Iraq since the 2003 invasion: the independent Iraqi Body Count organisation currently sets its estimate at between 38,059 and 42,434, while the *Lancet* medical journal reported in October 2004 that there had been an excess of 100,000 deaths in Iraq since the beginning of the war (Iraq Body Count, 2006; Roberts, et al.: 2004). US General Tommy Franks, meanwhile, is reported to have said in response to a question regarding the amount of civilian casualties in Afghanistan in March 2002 that "We don't do body counts" (cited in Epstein, 2002).

My primary aim in this paper is to outline an area for future research. Specifically, I shall suggest that if we are to use productively Foucault's concept of biopolitics – outlined in the last chapter of the *Will to Know* and the final lecture in "*Society Must Be Defended*" – then it will be necessary to analyse the way in which 'population' is constituted as an object of knowledge and power. What is required, in short, is an *archaeology of the 'demographic sciences'*. I hope to at least point to directions which this project might take in management and organisation theory.

In the first section, I shall look at Foucault's conceptualisation of biopolitics; in the second section, I shall critically examine this conceptualisation; and in the third section, I shall suggest that we can locate biopolitics not just in the modern period, beginning from the nineteenth century, but also in the classical age (roughly, 1660-1800). Throughout, I will attempt to approach Elden's question – "What is required in order that humans, groups and organisations can be understood as either the same or different?" – by reading Foucault's description of biopolitics alongside his historical analysis in the *Order of Things*. This intersection, I suggest, will provide the opportunity to explore the relations between discursive and non-discursive practice insofar as they relate to 'population'.

## **The Politics of Calculation**

In the Book of Revelation, there is only one number of the Beast: 666. Now, though, matters are somewhat more complicated: if God is dead, then so too is Satan – and, along with them both, the morality of Christian numerology. Hexakosioihexekontahexaphobia (the fear of the number six hundred and sixty-six) has all but disappeared.

But numbers still have a murderous effect, and the number of the Beast has been infinitely multiplied. To be more precise, techniques of quantification and measurement have witnessed – as passive bystanders or as keen participants – countless atrocities from famines to genocides. Bauman, for example, explored the machinery of technical rationalisation involved in organising mass murder in

*Modernity and the Holocaust.* One of the key points he makes is that in any bureaucratic organisation, ‘moral responsibility’ is effectively replaced by ‘technical rationality’ (Bauman, 2000: 98). He cites a number of examples relating to the functional division of labour to support this claim. The first is the office worker, who has only an ‘abstract’, ‘detached’ knowledge of the final outcome of his or her actions, “the kind of knowledge [that] is best expressed in statistics, which measure the results without passing any judgement, and certainly not moral ones. In their files and their minds the results are at best diagrammatically represented as curves or sectors of a circle; ideally they would appear as a column of numbers” (Bauman, 2000: 99).

In the second example, Bauman invokes the railway system that transported the Jews, Roma, homosexuals and others to the concentration camps: “For railway managers, the only meaningful articulation of their object is in terms of tonnes per kilometre. They do not deal with humans, sheep, or barbed wire; they deal only with the cargo, and this means an entity consisting entirely of measurements and devoid of quality” (Bauman, 2000: 102-3).

In both cases, Bauman suggests that bureaucratic organisation permits, even demands, qualities to be reduced to quantities, concrete entities to be replaced by abstract figures on a graph, and moral decisions to be supplanted by a technical rationality. Leaving the merits of this argument aside, we can clearly see that Bauman draws a straight line from the office to the death camp: it is a bureaucratic continuum whose field is not only measured but also *constituted* by numbers. It is no coincidence, then, that ‘rationality’ derives from ‘ratio’, which means *to reckon* in the sense of calculation as well as consideration.

Foucault also elaborates on the Nazi administration of life and death and its reliance on measurement and quantification, albeit in somewhat different terms from Bauman. One central difference is each thinker’s approach to the question of ‘rationalisation’. Bauman speaks of ‘rationalisation’ in the singular, which refers largely to Weber’s conception of modern bureaucracy as a mode of organisation that relies on precision, speed, efficiency, a mean-end calculus, the reduction of costs and the universal application of rules (Bauman, 2000: 12-8; see also Weber, 1991: 214-6). By contrast,

Foucault is more attentive to different *types* of rationalisations, that is to say, the historical examination of “how forms of rationality inscribe themselves in practices or systems of practices, and what role they play within them” (Foucault, 2002a: 230). Accordingly, what must be studied in the relation to the Third Reich is not how ‘rationality’ is exercised to maximum effect – which would presuppose an absolute essence of ‘reason’ – but, rather, what specific techniques were available for use and how they operated within a certain ‘regime of rationality’ (Foucault, 2002a: 229-30).

Along these lines, then, Foucault is able to identify ‘biopolitics’ as a particular form of political rationality that enabled the number-crunching Nazi experiment to emerge. The origins of biopolitics aren’t to be found in the Third Reich, however, but it does reach a particularly pervasive and generalised form with the Nazi emphasis on race, biology, heredity, etc (Foucault, 1998: 149-50; 2003a: 259-261). For Foucault, biopolitics emerged from a set of discourses and techniques that developed not in the twentieth century but in the second half of the eighteenth century. But what is biopolitics?<sup>2</sup>

In the last chapter of the *Will to Knowledge*, Foucault suggests that the ancient sovereign right to kill has been replaced, from the seventeenth century onwards, by a ‘power over life’ (Foucault, 1998: 138-9). This power over life is “a power that exerts a positive influence on life, that endeavours to administer, optimize, and multiply it, subjecting it to precise controls and comprehensive regulations”. But that is not all: the underside of “the power to guarantee an individual’s continued existence” is “the power to expose a whole population to death”. This is so “not because of a recent return of the ancient right to kill” but because “power is situated and exercised at the level of life, of species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population” (Foucault, 1998: 137). This power over life Foucault calls ‘biopower’, and it is subdivided into two further modes of political power (which eventually become articulated on one another): a disciplinary *anatomo-politics of the human body* and, emerging later, a regulatory *bio-politics of the population* (Foucault, 1998: 139). In short, biopower is that which refers to and eventually links both these ‘poles’ of

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<sup>2</sup> Until the lecture series *Sécurité, Territoire, Population* and *Naissance de la Biopolitique* are published in English translation, we will have to make do with the description of biopolitics that Foucault provides in the *Will to Knowledge* and “*Society Must Be Defended*”.

political power, bringing “life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations” (Foucault, 1998: 143).

In the final lecture of “*Society Must Be Defended*”, which was presented in March 1976 – some months before publication of the *Will to Knowledge* – Foucault’s conceptualisation of biopolitics is given a similar though lengthier analysis.<sup>3</sup> Foucault suggests here that the processes that biopolitics seeks to control include the ratio of births to deaths, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of a population, etc. (Foucault, 2003a: 243). Furthermore, these processes become domains of political intervention at the level of mass and serial phenomena: “The mortality rate has to be modified or lowered; life expectancy has to be increased; the birth rate has to be stimulated” (Foucault, 2003a: 246). Above all, biopolitical techniques have to establish “an equilibrium, maintain an average...and compensate for variations within this general population and its aleatory field” (Foucault, 2003a: 246). In terms of the politics of calculation, Foucault stresses the role that statistics, estimates and forecasts play as mechanisms of biopolitics (Foucault, 2003a: 246). In particular, this emphasis on statistical forms allows us to see how the so-called ‘law of large numbers’ is at one and the same time also a ‘politics of large numbers’ (see Desrosières, 1998; see also Porter, 1995). These mechanisms, furthermore, are instrumental in the very constitution of population, as Foucault argues in ‘The Politics of Health in the Eighteenth Century’:

The great eighteenth-century demographic upswing in Western Europe, the necessity for coordinating and integrating it into the apparatus of production, and the urgency of controlling it with finer and more adequate power mechanisms cause ‘population’, with its numerical variables of space and chronology, longevity and health, to emerge not only as a problem but as an object of surveillance, analysis, intervention, modifications, and so on. (Foucault, 2002a: 95).

There is the suggestion here that in the same way as anatomo-politics causes the ‘soul’ to emerge at one end of the pole (see Foucault, 1991: 25-30), ‘population’ is similarly instituted as an object of knowledge and power at the other end by biopolitics.

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<sup>3</sup> One minor difference, however, is that biopower and biopolitics, on at least one occasion, serve as synonyms (Foucault, 2003a: 243), while at other times they are implicitly distinguished from one another (Foucault, 2003a: 253-4).

The key question for Foucault in the final lecture of “*Society Must Be Defended*” is the following: “How can a power such as this [i.e. biopower] kill, if it is true that its basic function is to improve life, to prolong its duration, to improve its chances, to avoid accidents, and to compensate for its failings?...Given that this power’s objective is essentially to make live, how can it let die?” (Foucault, 2003a: 254). It is here, Foucault suggests, that ‘racism’ intervenes and inscribes itself in the mechanisms of the state. We are to understand ‘racism’, in this sense, as “a way of introducing a break into the domain of life that is under power’s control: the break between what must live and what must die” (254). It is this ‘racism’ – the ‘other side’ of the biopolitical task of optimising the health and wealth of the population – that comes into play during the nineteenth century and reaches a ‘paroxysmal development’ in the Third Reich (Foucault, 2003a: 259).

At this juncture, we may return to the question we began with: “What is required in order that humans, groups and organisations can be understood as either the same or different?”. What is required, at the level of the population, is precisely this biopolitics, this ‘racist’ technology of power, by which the ‘biological continuum’ of the human species is divided into racial categories: it is on this basis that one population is separated from another, which enables the possibility of determining which one must live and which one must die.

In the next section, we shall critically examine Foucault’s description of biopolitics in the *Will to Knowledge* and “*Society Must Be Defended*”, focusing in particular on the concept of population. We shall then consider the use to which biopolitics has been put in management and organisation theory.

## **Life and Population**

We have seen how biopower functions as a ‘power over life’, with the disciplinary anatomo-politics of the body at one extreme and the regulatory biopolitics of the population at the other. However, Foucault says at various points that biopolitics

refers itself to ‘population’, ‘life’, ‘species’, ‘human race’, ‘race’, etc., without drawing proper conceptual distinctions between each of these various terms (Foucault, 2003a: 239-263; 1998, 137).

This would not be such a significant point if Foucault, elsewhere, is so attentive to his own archaeological task of describing the organisation of a field of statements in which concepts appear and circulate (Foucault, 2002b: 62).<sup>4</sup> One example of this would be Foucault’s treatment of the theme of ‘instinct’ as it functions in nineteenth century psychiatry in the 1975 lecture series *Abnormal*: here, Foucault seeks to determine “the conditions of possibility for the appearance, construction, and regulated use of [this] concept within a discursive formation” (Foucault, 2003b: 131-2; see also 137-163, 273-287). Such methodological attentiveness to the concept of population, among others concepts, is singularly lacking from Foucault’s discussion of biopolitics in the *Will to Knowledge* and “*Society Must Be Defended*”. The most that can be said is that Foucault is at least *aware* of the sudden appearance of this concept in the eighteenth century, if not at this point particularly attentive to its specific conditions of existence in a given discursive formation (Foucault, 2002a: 95; 2003a: 241, 245).

In other words, while Foucault provides certain reference points to which we might turn in order to conduct this specific archaeology of knowledge – the work, for example, of Quesnay, Moheau and Süssmilch and the tables drawn up to analyse wealth and its circulation (Foucault, 1998: 140) – he does not, however, appear to engage with these texts following his own method: he should be describing the conditions of possibility for the appearance and application of the concept of population in a discursive formation, and determining how it is used in relation to statements on an intra-discursive level, discourses on an inter-discursive level and events on an extra-discursive level (Foucault, 1996a: 38; 2002b: 32). In short, an archaeological analysis needs to be conducted before we can speak of the ways in which population is invested by biopolitical power.

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<sup>4</sup> The argument has been made that, from the early 1970s onwards, Foucault was more concerned with ‘genealogy and power’ rather than with ‘archaeology and discourse’ (Burrell, 1998: 17-22; Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 104-117; Sheridan, 1980: 113-134; Smart, 1985: 54-60; Starkey and Hatchuel, 2002: 642). However, Foucault’s own statements would appear to decisively contradict this view (Foucault, 1980: 61, 66; 1983; 1996a: 212, 375; 1996b: 397; 2003a: 10-1; 2003b: 26, 60).



But where Foucault is imprecise in his conceptualisation of population (not to mention ‘species’ and ‘race’), the concept of life is analysed according to the archaeological method; or, more precisely, Foucault’s archaeological description of the concept of life in the *Order of Things*, written ten years prior to the *Will to Knowledge* and “*Society Must Be Defended*”, is redeployed in order to combine the analysis of discursive practice with that of non-discursive practice. Since the French Revolution, Foucault argues, the discourse of history has become a tactical instrument in the political field in three distinct ways, which correlate to the objects of knowledge studied in the *Order of Things*, ‘language’, ‘labour’ and ‘life’:

One is centred on nationalities, and is therefore essentially in continuity with the phenomena of language and, therefore, philology; the second centres on social classes, views economic domination as the central phenomenon, and is therefore closely related to political economy; the third direction, finally, is centred on neither nationalities nor classes, but upon race, and views biological specification and selection as the central phenomenon. (Foucault, 2003a: 190)

Despite this attempt to elaborate a ‘vertical axis’ of non-discursive practice in “*Society Must Be Defended*” to complement the ‘horizontal axis’ of discursive practice in the *Order of Things* (Foucault, 1996: 23-4; see also Hacking, 1980: 279), we are however left to draw our own conclusions from Foucault’s remarks: the connections established between nationality and language, classes and labour, and race and life are no more than tentative suggestions.

In any case, it is clear that Foucault is interested in mobilising his earlier description of the modern episteme – roughly from 1800 until our own time – in order to examine the way in which biopolitics functions. The concept of life, then, has already been described in the *Order of Things*, and its use in the *Will to Knowledge* and “*Society Must Be Defended*” is to be read in light of this archaeology. However, in contrast to the strict determination of the concept of life in the modern period, Foucault is less than meticulous in his use of the concept of population. Instead of accepting, at face value, the use to which ‘population’ is put in Foucault’s works, we would do well to examine how it functions in a given discursive formation (or, indeed, how it is absent from a given discursive formation).

There is, to reiterate, no life ‘as such’ and no population ‘as such’, and certainly no species or race ‘as such’. Indeed, in the *Order of Things*, Foucault strongly rebukes those who seek to use such concepts as if they remain constant through history:

An attempt is apparently being made to reconstitute what the ‘sciences of life’, of ‘nature’ or ‘man’, were, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, while it is quite simply forgotten that man and life and nature are none of them domains that present themselves to the curiosity of knowledge spontaneously and passively. (Foucault, 2002c: 79)

In the same way, ‘population’ is also located in a specific discursive formation and therefore subject to its rules; the description of this formation is the task of archaeology. We must, in short, take into account “the conditions of possibility for the appearance, construction, and regulated use” of the concept of population in the demographic sciences from the seventeenth century onwards. Foucault considered ‘life’ (and ‘living beings’) in the *Order of Things*; if we were to outline paths for future research, we might do the same for ‘population’ (and, if necessary, for ‘multitude’, ‘populace’, ‘the people’, etc.).

The model of biopolitics, then, must be reworked if it is to serve as a productive concept for historical analysis: its chronology must be amended, the objects to which it is addressed must be archaeologically described, and the discourses and techniques through which it functions must be more thoroughly detailed.

Before we move on to this conceptual and chronological reworking of biopolitics, let us first briefly examine the use to which biopolitics has been put in management and organisation theory.

The first point to make would be that the concept of biopolitics has been given rather short shrift in management and organisation theory, perhaps owing to its rather brief and decidedly equivocal elucidation in Foucault’s corpus of work, in comparison to the far more extensive and detailed analysis of ‘disciplinary power’ (see Foucault,

1991).<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the term ‘biopower’ is generally used as a substitute for biopolitics, despite the distinction Foucault draws between these forms of power in the *Will to Knowledge*. Let us then, for the moment, accept the term ‘biopower’ as a synonym for biopolitics. We are able to find its occurrence in a number of essays, although its full implications are rarely developed in any great detail. More often than not, it is referred to only very fleetingly as a conceptual given without its consequences being drawn out in any way (see Clegg, 1998: 31-2, 37; Starkey and McKinlay, 1998: 235; Munro, 2000: 685-6, 692-3; Starkey and Hatchuel, 2002: 646). Even Burrell, whose 1988 article the benchmark for positioning Foucault within management and organisation theory, speaks at length about disciplinary power but mentions ‘biopower’ only in passing (Burrell, 1998: 19-20).

While Burrell provides an accurate though rather limited analysis of ‘biopower’ – in sum, it concerns the regulation, normalisation and control of populations (Burrell, 1998: 19) – Findlay and Newton serve by contrast to confuse rather than to clarify this concept and its implications for management and organisation theory. Indeed, they manage to somehow mistake Foucault’s description of *resistance to biopower* – the demand for “[t]he ‘right’ to life, to one’s body, to health, to happiness, to the satisfaction of needs...the ‘right’ to rediscover what one is and all that one can be” (Foucault, 1998: 145) – for a description of *techniques of biopower*, which allows them to reach the astonishing conclusion that such comments could have been written by such human relations luminaries as McGregor (‘higher order’ need satisfaction) or Maslow (‘self-actualisation’) (Findlay and Newton, 1998: 216). Far from being expressed by discourses such as psychoanalysis, psychiatry and education – as Findlay and Newton here suggest – it takes only a cursory reading of the cited passage in the *Will to Knowledge* to establish that Foucault considers these demands to be articulated by isomorphic struggles *against* the new procedures of power that take life, rather than law, as a political object. As Foucault puts it, these struggles took the political object of life and “turned [it] back against the system that was bent on controlling it” (Foucault, 1998: 145).

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<sup>5</sup> There is certainly an irony to be noted here: much of the critical accounting literature from a ‘Foucauldian’ perspective, for example, has focused primarily on disciplinary modes of power, rather than exploring the techniques of calculation that are presupposed by biopolitical regulation (Armstrong, 1994: 25-41; Hopper and Macintosh, 1998: 126-149; Hoskin and Macve, 1994: 67-71, 90-2; Roberts, 1996: 44-7).

In any case, even without Findlay and Newton's faux pas, and leaving aside the evident lack of distinction drawn between 'biopower' and 'biopolitics' in much of the management and organisation literature, we can see that the concept of biopolitics is, if you like, a work-in-progress; unlike those by-now familiar themes of 'power/knowledge', 'panopticism' and 'discipline', which have been tirelessly deployed within management and organisation theory (see McKinlay and Starkey, 1998; Carter, McKinlay and Rowlinson, 2002; Jones, 2002), biopolitics is a concept that is still very much in its intellectual infancy and, for this reason, available to us for strategic use.

Let us now turn to the conceptual and chronological reworking of biopolitics, focusing in particular on the role that measurement and quantification play in its operation.

## **Political Arithmetic**

Foucault's analysis of biopolitics begins in the second half of the eighteenth century (Foucault, 2003a: 242). There is certainly a shift in emphasis in the discourse of political arithmetic from the middle of the eighteenth century, no doubt linked to the demise of centralised monarchies, the reformulation of the role of the state and the emergence of 'citizens' in the place of 'subjects' (see Buck, 1982); but what we must examine is the precise functioning of statements in the order of discourse. We do not have time to conduct such a project here, but I do want to point to certain directions it might take. In particular, I would like to suggest that, despite the fact that Foucault locates biopolitics at the cusp of our modernity, we cannot commence serious study into the birth of 'population' unless we take into account the work of the English political arithmeticians starting in the mid-seventeenth century and extending into the eighteenth century (see Rusnock, 1999). We might begin, then, with John Graunt (1620-1674), William Petty (1623-1687), Gregory King (1648-1712) and Charles Davenant (1656-1714) before moving on to, among others, Quesnay, Moheau and Süssmilch. It is only through an engagement with the demographic science of political

arithmetic, beginning in the mid-1600s, that we will be able to determine precisely what modifications the concept of population undergoes over the course of three centuries.

Charles Davenant described political arithmetic as “the art of reasoning by figures, upon things relating to government...The foundation of this art is to be laid out in some competent knowledge of the numbers of the people” (Davenant, 128: 1967). But what configuration of knowledge, we might ask, permitted this ‘art of reasoning by figures’ on matters relating to government? In other words, what are the *conditions of possibility* for the politics of calculation in the classical age? To answer this question, let us turn for a moment to Foucault’s description of classical thought in the *Order of Things*.

From the mid-seventeenth century, knowledge was not longer organised according to Interpretation; it had entered the age of Order. Knowledge was attained no longer by resemblance, as in the Renaissance, but by the universalisation of comparison, of which there existed two types: measurement and order. The first was of a quantitative nature and permitted an analysis of things according to the arithmetical calculation of *identity and difference*; the second was qualitative in character and analysis was based on the arrangement of things according to *differences in degrees* (Foucault, 2002c: 59). However, because arithmetical values can be laid out in a series, problems of *measurement* (determination of identity and difference by equality and inequality) can always be reduced to problems of *order* (determination of differences in degree, from the simple to the complex, by spatial arrangement in a table) (Foucault, 2002c: 59, 63, 81-2). There is, then, a play between *mathesis* and *taxinomia*, that is, the relation between, on the one hand, empirical representations analysable into quantitative ‘simples natures’ by means of the method of algebra and, on the other, empirical representations analysable into qualitative ‘complex natures’ according to a system of signs (Foucault, 2002c: 80). However, while *taxinomia* is contained within *mathesis* (the general science of measurement and order), though distinguished from it, *mathesis* is one particular instance of *taxinomia* (a qualitative *mathesis*) (Foucault, 2002c: 81). Classical sciences, therefore, attempt to exhaustively order the world by the discovery of units, simple or complex, and their arrangement in a table:

This type of knowledge involves the allotting of a sign to all that our representations can present us with: perceptions, thoughts, desires; these signs must have a value as characters, that is, they must articulate the representation as a whole into distinct subregions, all separated from one another by assignable characteristics; in this way they authorize the establishment of a simultaneous system according to which the representations must express their proximity and their distance, their adjacency and their separateness – and therefore the network, which, outside chronology, makes patent their kinship and reinstates their relations of order within a permanent area. (Foucault, 2002c: 81).

The tables found in the work of English political arithmeticians – such as Graunt's tables of christenings and burials in his 'Observations on the Bills of Mortality' (Graunt, 1964: 407-21) – must therefore be examined in light of this organisation of knowledge in the classical episteme. Indeed, if we are to undertake an archaeology of the demographic sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in order to examine the functioning of biopolitics during this period, then we must certainly pay heed to Foucault's analyses in the *Order of Things*.<sup>6</sup>

At stake here is an entire approach to the question we posed at the beginning of this paper: "What is required in order that humans, groups and organisations can be understood as either the same or different?". If we can answer this question with reference to the play of mathesis and taxinomia in the classical age, then we must consider it according to an entirely different set of epistemological assumptions in the modern period: as Foucault argues in the *Order of Things*, from the nineteenth century until, perhaps, our own time Order disappears and History emerges (Foucault, 2002c: 235-40). Here, political arithmetic gives way to statistics and, accordingly, the concept of population undergoes a significant transformation. The mercantilist imperative to increase the population, to maximise its utility, was displaced by a new sensitivity to the population's productive capacities, its excessive growth, its negative effects, etc. Very broadly, where the political arithmeticians were concerned with the *maximisation* of the population, now what is important for the demographic sciences is the *optimisation* of the population (see Porter, 1986: 19-23; Rusnock, 1995: 17-9, 23-7). No doubt the 1801 census in Britain was just one of many new techniques that enabled this new political object of population to be articulated. More generally, we

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<sup>6</sup> In 'The War of the Races and the Constitution of the State', Elden also proposes to read the section on mathesis and taxinomia from the *Order of Things* alongside the description of biopolitics in "*Society Must Be Defended*", although he draws somewhat different conclusions (Elden, 2002: 125-51).

can see the development of what Foucault calls the ‘normalising society’ (Foucault, 1998: 144): as Porter tells us, the history of statistics during the nineteenth century is a history of the normal or Gaussian distribution (Porter, 1986: 6).

It is at this point that biopolitics becomes properly ‘racist’, as Foucault describes it, ‘making live’ at the same time as ‘letting die’ by means of separating one population from another. We are now able to return to the biopolitics of the Third Reich, but also perhaps to identify the biopolitics of the Immigration Removal Centre in the UK. In this way, we may approach once again the question we posed at the beginning of this paper, concerning how, precisely, humans, groups and organisations are understood as either the same or different.

An archaeology of the demographic sciences, to repeat, must begin by examining the concept of population in the classical age and then trace its modifications in the modern period. We will then be able to determine the precise functioning of biopolitics from the seventeenth century until our own age. In this paper, we have at least recognised this task to rework biopolitics, in chronological and conceptual terms, and the need to link it to an entire field of discursive and non-discursive practice.

## **Conclusion**

The leading column in *The Times* in February this year – entitled ‘Death and Numbers’ – commemorated the macabre landmark of the death of a British troop in Iraq that brought the total killed to one hundred. The leader noted that while there may well be a certain symbolism inevitably attached to such statistics, “[d]eath is not simply a matter of numbers” (*The Times*, 2006). The very fact that this comment needs to be made demonstrates perhaps some of the inextricability that has, since the seventeenth century onwards, come to develop between number and death.

As we have seen, however, the politics of calculation does not simply involve murder and genocide; it is also concerned with the lowering of the mortality rate, the increase of life expectancy, the stimulation of the birth rate, etc. But the optimising task of

‘making live’ – achieved in part by such quantitative mechanisms as forecasts, estimates and, above all, statistics – must be accompanied by the correlative effect of ‘letting die’ with the entrance of ‘racism’ into political technologies.

But alongside these numbers of life and death, there are also ‘missing numbers’, numbers that have not been factored into the statistical continuum that measures and administers our lives. We’ve already mentioned General Tommy Franks’ remark that the US military ‘doesn’t do’ body-counts, but there are other examples: while the recent admission from a chief immigration official that he hasn’t ‘the faintest idea’ about the number of immigrants currently living unlawfully within the UK provoked a great deal of political controversy (see *The Guardian*, 2006), the absence of exhaustive statistics relating to the total number of detainees held in Immigration Removal Centres has not received quite so much coverage. In 2003, the UK Parliament’s Home Affairs Committee on Asylum Removals reported that a “clear picture of the current use of detention, and the reasons why individuals are detained, is not available at the moment because of the lack of relevant statistics” (cited in Amnesty International, 2005). The number of men, women and children in Immigration Removal Centres, and the length of their detention, is therefore systematically unrecorded. The politics of calculation, then, is also one of calculated non-calculation.

In this paper, we have seen that Foucault’s description of biopolitics in the *Will to Know* and “*Society Must Be Defended*” is incredibly suggestive, although we should approach his use of certain concepts – such as population, race, species, etc. – with some caution. I argued that the concept of population in particular must be more clearly defined if we to elaborate on its role as an object of knowledge and power for biopolitics. I also attempted to point to some of the discourses – namely, demographic sciences such as political arithmetic or statistics – that must be examined if we are to determine the conditions of possibility for the appearance and use of the concept of population within a discursive formation. Finally, it was noted that we must account for biopolitics in the classical age, as well as further elaborate on biopolitics in the modern period: we must therefore rework the concept of biopolitics in both chronological and conceptual terms.



These are very broad and tentative outlines for a more comprehensive archaeological analysis. It is, I would suggest, an extremely rich and politically urgent area for research that has manifold implications both for management and organisation theory in general and for its ongoing engagement with Foucault's work in particular.

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**Fiona Candlin**

**Why I can't see ghosts but I can feel them**

Listen carefully. I'm going to tell you a story.

I was twenty-six years old when I went to Keele University to start my PhD. It was a mismatch from the start. I'd been teaching at an art college and arrived in this small, provincial campus university wearing high heeled boots, red lipstick and a leopard-skin coat. This had been perfectly acceptable attire in the studios but I didn't quite blend into my all male department. To make matters worse my PhD also failed to fit the mould because it combined art theory with practice. As well as writing a thesis I was supposed to produce artwork which would be submitted along with the written work, an approach that is now main stream but which was then very new. I was the first person at my university to do a practice-based PhD and one of the first in Britain and in consequence I had to tackle questions about the relationship between art practice and knowledge and what constituted research. How could these objects and images that I was supposed to make be thought of as something equivalent to academic writing?

For my first year there weren't any other postgraduates in the department and all my peers were writing theses on history or chemistry. They and the academic staff were, at best, amused and at worst antagonistic to the idea that I could get a doctorate by making artwork. To be honest I couldn't see why I should get one either, after all they'd spent years in the laboratory or in the archives studying rigorously and what I was doing clearly wasn't proper academic work. So, I was stuck in the middle of nowhere, I felt utterly uncomfortable and isolated in the environs of the university and I simply couldn't see how I was going to paint or photograph my way into a PhD. Before long I was also being bullied by my supervisor. When I told colleagues they simply didn't believe me. How could this well known, well respected man who advocated socialism and feminism in his lectures act in such an appalling manner? It was only two or three years later when he behaved in similar ways to an older, male colleague that my complaints were taken to be anything other than hysterical over-reactions. Not surprisingly my first year was a mess. I simply couldn't work. I didn't

know what to do and the few pieces I attempted were not remotely successful. And then, someone told me a story.

My office was located in Keele Hall, a grand nineteenth century country house set in the middle of formal gardens and woods. There had been other houses on the same site and parts of the older buildings were incorporated into the new. One night, after another day's futile labour, Barbara Johnson, one of the cleaners, stopped to talk. She told me how, sometimes, in the early morning there was an icy spot at the foot of the grand staircase and that she knew that this cold was the presence of the dead Lady Sneyd. Lady Sneyd's ghost walked down this staircase, across the hall and out, past my office, over the gardens. Some had seen her, a young woman, dressed in grey, with no hands. When she lived the Lady Sneyd had long, thick, beautiful hair of which she had been very proud and which she had brushed repeatedly. Her husband had objected to this, she was of high rank and they had body servants to perform such tasks. But she persisted and eventually, in order to stop her behaving in this demeaning way, he cut off her hands. I later repeated the story to the university photographer, Terry Bolam, who told me it was wrong in a crucial detail. Her maidservant had been the one to repeatedly brush her hair and her husband had given her a choice. She could either keep her hands or her maid and she chose the maid.

Traditionally, ghosts continue to appear as long as the initial injustice remains unresolved and in doing so they demand that both the legacies of the past and the image of the future (because ghosts can always come *back*) are confronted. A spectral appearance involves a 'politics of memory, of inheritance and of generations'.<sup>1</sup> Given the intricate connections between women's hair and their sexuality I read the story of Lady Sneyd in terms of the repression of female experience, of women's pleasure in their own bodies and each others bodies and more drastically as the limitation of any female action and choice. For me, this ghost was still walking, not just around my office but through all the rooms of academia. Back in 1994, it wasn't unusual to be the only woman in an academic department, women students might be in a majority but the numbers became increasingly skewed in men's favour thereafter. Less than 4% of British professors were women and in most universities the senior positions of vice chancellor, bursar, registrar and librarian remained male dominated.<sup>2</sup> Women had comparatively little and sometimes no say in decisions about the running of the university. Perhaps even more fundamentally, what the university recognised and

validated as knowledge had historically eliminated women, their bodies and their experience as non-objective and irrational. This and other founding exclusions have largely stripped academia of sexuality, physical warmth, storytelling and rich, unscholarly experience. Academia is itself ghostly, it lives a curious half-life.

The story of Lady Sneyd's ghost was told in the corridors rather than the classrooms, by cleaners and technicians rather than academics. The story operated outside of academic channels but was a traumatic response to a continued wrong that remained unresolved by the university. The ghost repeatedly circled the university but her very existence fell outside the parameters of what academia could acknowledge. Her presence told a history of the university but she spoke in a language unrecognizable by the institution.

I decided to make her a memorial. The artwork consisted of three parts. At the top of the stairs, the site of the haunting, I hung a photograph of a ghostly woman in an evening dress in an alcove usually reserved for family portraits.



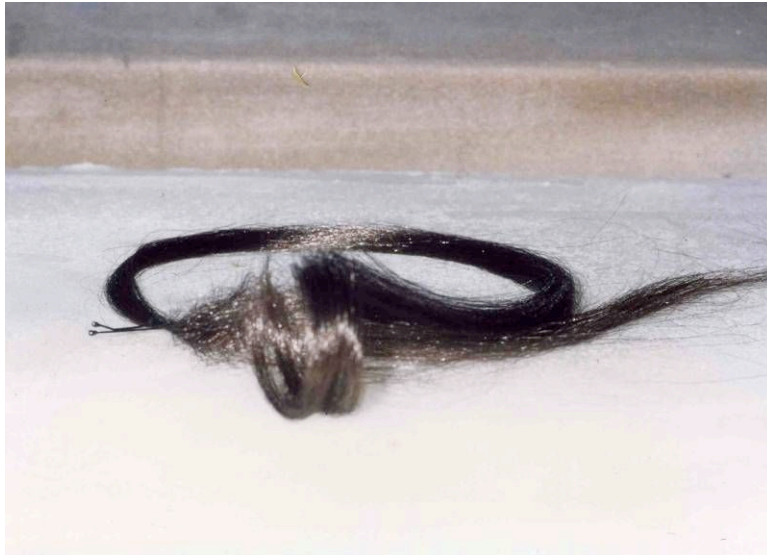




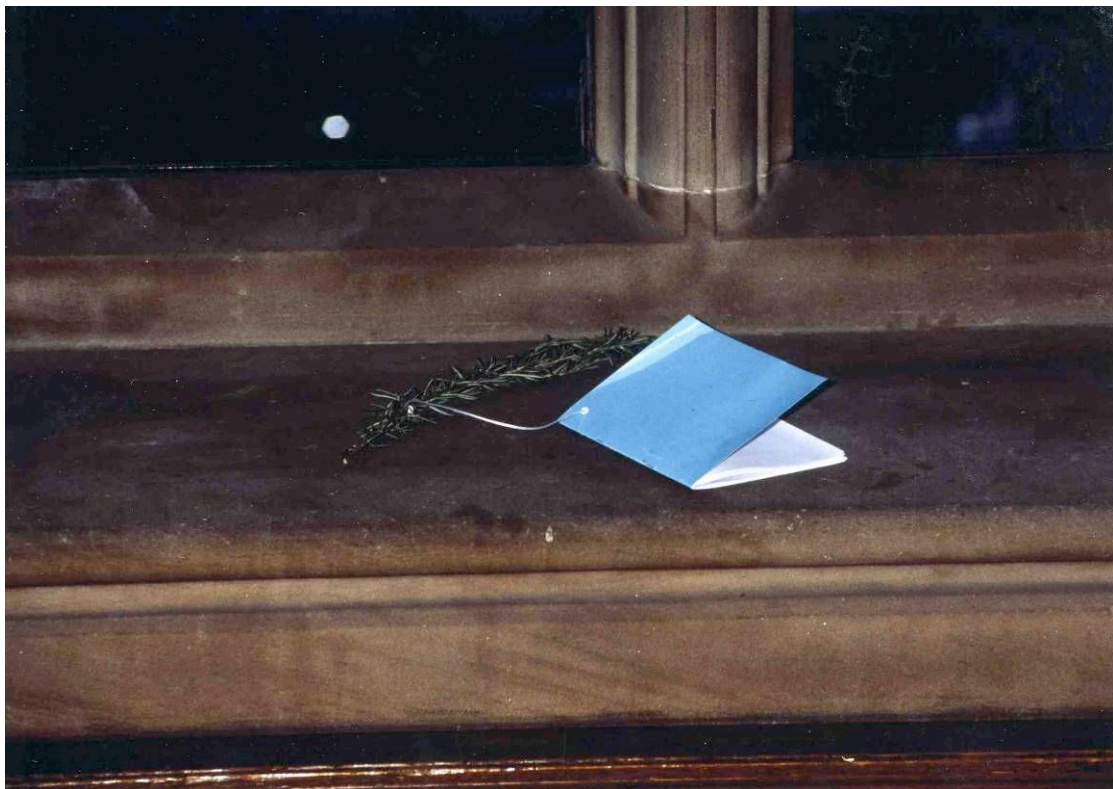
Opposite were two other portraits, one depicting a woman with a dog on her lap while the second, *Girl in A Blue Dress*, shows a small girl playing cat's cradle.<sup>3</sup> I made my photograph to the same dimensions as the family portraits and these portraits became involved in the installation, functioning as echoes of other women connected to the hall. At the turn of the stairs, I placed a wax sculpture made to resemble a memorial stone.







On the top lay a cast of two arms cut off at the wrists and a wreath of hair. Underneath was a label giving the title of the work, *Still*, but set out in the style of a tombstone engraving. I wrote myself into the piece by casting from my own arms and by standing in for Lady Sneyd in the photograph. The third element was a small book similar to the cheap guidebooks you can find in local churches.

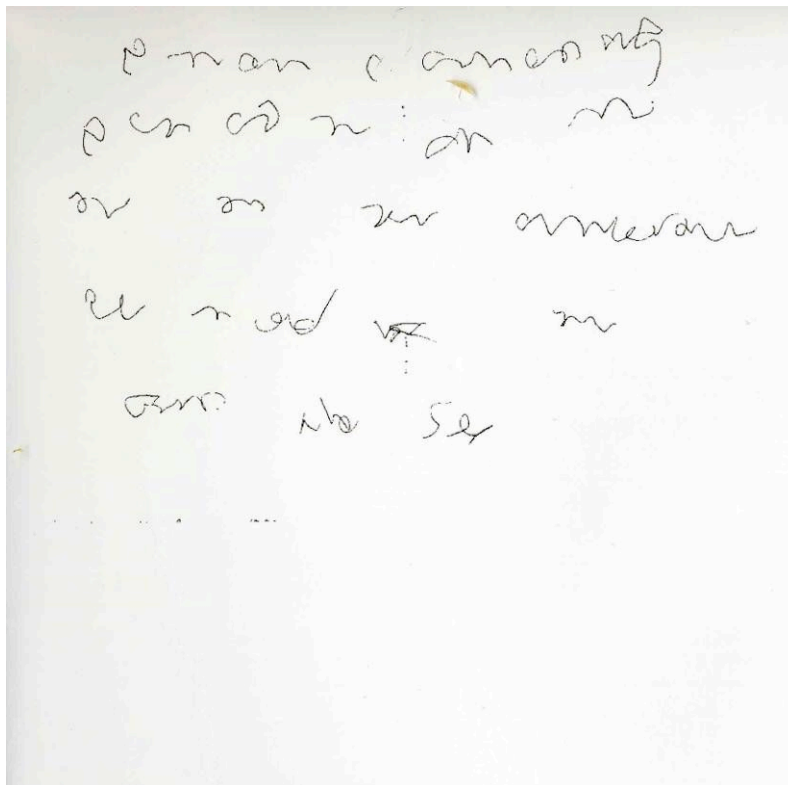


It was tied to a large branch of rosemary, the herb of remembrance which smelled strongly and was in part a reference to the way in which ghosts sometimes make their presence felt through smell, of roses, lilies or of rotting flesh. The guidebook

contained three stories, the two versions of the ghost story and a story of how, working in Keele Hall, I had lost the use of my hands.

The piece as a whole was intended to hover on the boundaries of truth, the stories may or may not be fictitious, the photograph emulated the fake spirit photographs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century and the lock of hair was synthetic. It was also supposed to be ephemeral. Arguably, memorials function to enable us, the living, to forget the dead; they locate grief or memory in a particular place in order to separate it out from the rest of our lives. The monument can in effect carry the weight or the work of remembering.<sup>4</sup> If a permanent tribute to Lady Sneyd would define and close the story, a temporary one using wax, cheap guidebooks and unframed photographs rather than stone or bronze, would return the telling of the story from the artwork to the people who worked in Keele Hall and beyond.

While I was making the piece I didn't know if I believed in ghosts but I desperately wanted to see her. In retrospect, it seemed like sighting the ghost would be both a validation of my artwork and an acknowledgement of my own experience. I had hoped that my art practice might be sufficiently unacademic to allow for some kind of recognition, that unlike all the scholars and experts my discomfort and my femaleness left me on the edges of the university and that like the cleaning and technical staff I would be able to see her. I never did, so I decided I would have her speak through other means and included in the guidebook are three pieces of faked automatic writing: supposedly the Grey Lady's thoughts channelled through me.



It was a way of making the invisible visible and of articulating what I didn't know or have access to but at the same time I'd made the ghost speak with my own voice. I'd never really managed to comprehend the spectral other. Despite my theory-practice PhD it seemed that I was still too much of a scholar and an expert to see the ghost.

I now realise that I was both right and wrong. In making the memorial I had laid a troubled ghost to rest but it wasn't Lady Sneyd. I'd managed to make an artwork that marked forms of non-academic knowledge and more importantly I'd made something I was proud of. I had regained my hands. At the same time, in making it and waiting to see the ghost, I was being a scholar. I was like a ghost-hunter with a tape-recorder and a trip-wire for the camera. I wanted a sighting, I was looking for empirical proof when the whole point of ghosts is that they are not subject to evidence. Ghosts are indeterminate manifestations; they can be the smell of roses in a room, a cold patch in the corridor, a breeze when the doors are closed, a smear of light in an old photograph.

I didn't know how to recognise what the hairs on the back of my neck were telling me, I couldn't read my own waiting. I didn't make it up that my hands were cut off, they were, I couldn't act. Every time I felt a sense of foreboding as I walked into the hall, across the campus, into my supervisor's office, I felt the ghost. When I sat on my

studio floor and let my hand trail across the paper I wasn't mimicking automatic writing, it was automatic writing. I wanted to see outside rationalism but I was too trained to realise I could, that I already did. Being a scholar didn't exempt me from that experience, it's just I didn't realise what my own experience was. Other academics had: once the piece was exhibited they sidled up to me in corridors and told me about the sounds of children playing in empty rooms, of scratching, of being knocked from their chairs by an invisible force. It wasn't that reason and feeling were always divorced, it was just rare for anyone to admit to it.

Reading and analysing the university, or any other organisation, usually takes the form of sociological analysis or statistics: that the pay differential has increased from 16% to 18%; that only 13% of tenure track positions went to women. We also need a spectral, emotional, sensory account of the organisation. We need to read the prickle of skin, the unaccounted noise, the sense of unease. These are not just empty responses they are ways of knowing an institution, of understanding a political situation. These reactions are a bodily form of ethics, of protest, resistance or acceptance. We need to understand that our expertise does not preclude our ability to feel but may rely upon it. We need to learn the patterns of a haunting, to recognise that we can speak with the voices of dead women and we need to know when to bow to the astute sensitivities of cleaners and technicians.

Still, one question remains: does the ghost continue to walk? Well I could discuss the increasing numbers of women staff but point out that we are disproportionately represented in the lower status posts and on short-term contracts.<sup>5</sup> I could mention the effect of the Research Assessment Exercise on women, how we are overburdened with pastoral care and committees and I could point to the levels of childlessness among academic women of my age and older, or to the fact that even now we choose between families and careers. We could talk about how feminism has become rather passé, now that everyone accepts that women are equal. But I could also, simply say that I feel her. When the chills run, when the anxiety is high, that's her and she's talking to me. I listen. She says, I'm still here.

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<sup>1</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Spectres of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York and London: Routledge, 1994). p xix.

<sup>2</sup> Harriet Swain, "Females Fail in Power Game," *Times Higher Educational Supplement*, April 25, 1997 1997. See also Linda McDowell, "Sex and Power in Academia," *Area 2*, no. 4 (1990).

<sup>3</sup> The correct title or date of the painting showing a woman holding a dog is not known although the artist is thought to be Amy B. Atkinson. *Girl in a Blue Dress* is by H. Holfield but, again there is no recorded date. Judging from the clothes in the paintings I would estimate their dates at approximately 1910 and 1880 respectively. *Girl in a Blue Dress* has since been stolen.

<sup>4</sup> For a further discussion of this point see James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory, Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993).

<sup>5</sup> In 2001-2 women doctoral students in America outnumbered men for the first time but they remain in small numbers at the top research institutions. In the same year only 4 out of 32 tenured positions at Harvard went to women and the numbers have been falling since. The pay gap is bigger now than ten years ago. Robin Wilson, *Women in Higher Education* (2004 [cited 16th May 2006]; available from <http://chronicle.com/free/v51/i15/15a00801.htm>). In the UK the average earnings of female academic staff were around 16-20% less than their male colleagues between 1993-2002. Latest figures reveal that the pay gap has worsened by 2% over the past two years with women now earning 18% less than men. Natalie Fenton, *Discrimination of Female Academics* (2004 [cited 15th May 2006]; available from <http://education.guardian.co.uk/egweekly/story/0,5500,926309,00.html>). The current emphasis on research profiles is also shown to have a detrimental impact on female academics, see for example Polly Curtis, *Reforms Hit Women* (2003 [cited 15th May 2006]; available from <http://education.guardian.co.uk/gendergap/story/0,7348,954481,00.html>).

## **The Woman in Grey: A semiotic ethnography of gender, abjection and work**

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### **Abstract**

Inspired by a video installation called *Grey Area* by video artist Sofia Hulten, this paper is based on a study of women's lived, embodied experiences of gender and abjection in the workplace. In *Grey Area*, the artist performs in a grey suit which she seemingly uses as camouflage as she hides in various places in an office – behind a plant, beneath a desk and even rolled up in a carpet. Unsuccessful in every effort to become invisible, she eventually gets into a bin liner and throws herself away. The effect is comical, but also deeply disturbing because of what it seemingly represents about how women feel about themselves (and about each other) in the workplace.

Adopting a broadly semiotic, ethnographic approach, we used stills from *Grey Area* as the basis for a series of group discussions in which women were asked to reflect on the images contained in the video, and on their own lived experiences of being a woman at work. Building on research carried out by O'Neill et al (2002: 74), the incorporation of *Grey Area* into the methodology was intended to 'move' respondents; that is, to 'juxtapose feeling and emotion in dialectical tension with constructive rationality', and to develop a semiotic dimension to what they describe as 'ethno-mimesis', an approach to research that aims to elucidate non-conceptual aspects of lived experience.



## **The 24<sup>th</sup> Standing Conference on Organisational Symbolism**

*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Organizations and Demons*

12-15 July 2006, Nijmegen, The Netherlands

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### **What to Do With the ‘Temps Perdu’?**

#### **Geometric Chronophotography and the Thin-Slicing of the Unconscious**

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Between the conception  
And the creation  
Between the emotion  
And the response  
Falls the Shadow

From ‘The Hollow Men’  
T.S. Eliot, 1925.

### **The First Law of Thermodynamics and the Search for Lost Time**

In his best-selling book, *Blink*, Malcolm Gladwell (2006) invites us to consider the power of the unconscious in our decision-making. He argues that we often make crucial unconscious inferences in the first two seconds of our interactions with people and objects. From Ambady and Rosenthal (1993), he borrowed the term “thin-slicing” to designate this activity. This paper you are now reading is also about “thin-slicing” but the story unfolds within a considerably thicker slice of time, and the slice in question, at half a second, is significantly thinner than Ambady and Rosenthal’s original slice of half a minute or the two second ‘blink’. Gladwell’s book concerns itself with how the efficiency of human decision-making might be improved by an awareness of the power of the brief interjection of the unconscious in our day-to-day thinking. This paper concerns itself with the role of embodied unconsciousness in human behaviour, with an emphasis on the efforts of scientists and managers to improve the efficiency of the ways in which goods are produced and consumed in the modern world through the exploitation of that thin slice of time (T.S. Eliot’s *Shadow*) residing between sensation and consciousness. This paper explores how some of the socio-economic, ideological and technological developments which began in the nineteenth century have “ushered in...a micro-biopolitics, a new domain carved out of the half-second delay which has become visible and so available to be worked upon through a new series of entities and institutions” (Thrift, 2004: 66). Within this domain, the body was initially perceived as ‘ugly’, and the unconscious as ‘bad’, until brought to conscious awareness and regimented through the application of rational psychophysical technique rendering them fit-for-purpose (and therefore ‘good’).

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz was probably the first modern philosopher to identify the 'blink'. In the posthumous publication in 1765 of his *New Essays on Human Understanding*, he described the mind as a marriage of conscious and unconscious parts, and suggested that behaviour could be influenced by what he called *minute perception* - that is, perception occurring outside of conscious awareness. However, this idea was not taken seriously by philosophers or scientists for nearly 100 years, at which time the scientific quest to understand the phenomenon began in earnest. This quest to thin-slice time was propelled into Western cultural consciousness following a meeting in Paris between a German, a Frenchman and an Englishman - Hermann von Helmholtz, Etienne Jules Marey, and Eadward Muybridge - on the evening of September 26<sup>th</sup> 1881. Despite meeting 125 years before the publication of *Blink*, these three men would have agreed wholeheartedly with Gladwell's contention that "[e]very moment - every blink - is composed of a series of discrete moving parts, and every one of those parts offers an opportunity for intervention, for reform and for correction" (2006: 241). The meeting in Paris was arranged to debate precisely this issue.

But our story begins in 1847 in the laboratory of the celebrated German physicist and physiologist, Hermann von Helmholtz. It was here that Helmholtz elaborated the universal law of the conservation of energy - the law we now refer to as the first law of thermodynamics - which argued that the forces of nature are forms of a single, universal energy that can neither be created nor destroyed. In his public lectures and writings Helmholtz made it clear that all manifestations of nature obeyed this law. Echoing the mechanistic philosopher La Mettrie, he regarded the human body as itself an engine or motor.

"The idea of work for machines, or natural processes, is taken from comparison with the working power of man; and we can therefore best illustrate from human labour the most important features of the question with which we are concerned... Now, the external work of man is of the most varied kind as regards the force or ease, the form and rapidity, of the motions used on it, and the kind of work produced. But both the arm of the blacksmith who delivers his powerful blows with the heavy hammer, and that of the violinist who produces the most delicate variations in sound, and the hand of the lace-maker who works with threads so fine that they are on the verge of the invisible, all these acquire the force which moves them in the same manner and by the same organs, namely, the muscles of the arms. An arm the muscles of which are lamed is incapable of doing any work; the moving force of the muscle must be at work in it, and these must obey the nerves, which bring to them orders from the brain. That member is then capable of the greatest variety of motions; it can compel the most varied instruments to execute the most diverse tasks...Just so it is with machines" (Helmholtz, 1873: 64).

Three aspects of human labour power troubled Helmholtz. One was the fact that muscles suffer from fatigue. The second was the time lag between an 'order' being received by the nerves and the execution of that order by the muscles. This phenomenon, which modern day physiologists explain in terms of 'axonal conduction velocity', Helmholtz (1850/1948) called, more simply, an element of 'lost time'. The third contributory factor

to the inefficiency of the body (the second element of lost time) Helmholtz discovered when studying reaction time - the time it takes a subject to respond to a consciously perceived stimulus – which he found to be far slower than even the combined conduction times he had recorded for sensory and motor activities. Helmholtz argued that a great deal of brain processing must occur unconsciously before any conscious perception of an object. He therefore concluded that much of what goes on in the brain is not represented in consciousness, but that the perception of objects depends upon "unconscious inferences" made by the perceiver. If the body's lost time could be brought to conscious awareness, measured, and analysed, Helmholtz believed that efficiency could be enhanced by the appropriate intervention, reform and correction.

It was these perceived inefficiencies of the human motor that heralded the search for a more efficient conservation and use of energy - a search which, as Rabinbach (1990) argues, was to exert a profound influence on Western political and socio-economic ideologies in the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond. Rabinbach deploys the rather inelegant neologism of 'social Helmholtzianism' to describe this "program of social modernity that conceived of the working body as a system of economies of force and as the focal point for the new techniques that could eliminate social conflict whilst ensuring productivity" (*ibid.* 120-1).

Unsurprisingly, the military were not slow to catch on to the potential benefits of such an ideology. For example, in the aftermath of France's defeat in the 1870-1 Franco-Prussian war, the work of the French physiologist Etienne Jules Marey was sponsored by the French Ministry of War. The Minister of War held the view that the loss of the war was due, at least in part, to the inefficient use of the energy contained in the bodies of French soldiers and horses. Energy was latent within all members of society and the Ministry was instructed to rebuild its physically and mentally demoralized population. They believed that physiologists such as Marey should be at the centre of government-supported activity to help science bring the forces of nature and society under the control of the State. It is perhaps ironic that Marey's work should have been inspired by the pioneering work of Helmholtz, who was a recipient of the Iron Cross in 1871 for his contribution to the Prussian war effort.

Before the war, Marey had been studying and researching muscular forces, as well as working on physical education and gymnastics. He regarded Helmholtz's work on thermodynamics as "the most remarkable theory of modern times" and set himself the goal of describing the economy of motion and to establish the laws of motion of the body. For Marey, Helmholtz's 'lost time' was the basic component of this economy and he hoped that the graphical method favoured by both men would enable the direct measurement of physiological time." All movement is the product of two factors: time and space; to know the movement of a body is to know the series of positions which it occupies in space during a series of successive instants" (Marey, 1878a: xi). The Frenchman distrusted any science based on unaided visual perception and was particularly hostile to a physiology based on vivisection. His graphical method enabled lost time to be recorded and corrected through "the study *in situ* of living instruments". According to Marey, the human sensorium was incapable of registering the fine movements of organic systems and so he argued that his mechanically produced graphic

maps of the body possessed an objectivity that unaided human perceptions did, indeed could, not.

His early work involved the use of various graphical inscription devices to capture bodily movement directly. For example, he developed the sphymograph which measured the displacement of an artery wall at the pulse point of a wrist of a human body. A lever was attached at one end of the pulse point and the other end at a stylus. The stylus was brought into contact with a strip of smoke-blackened paper moved by a clockwork mechanism. The resulting graph measured the ebb and flow of arterial blood. Thus, the sphymograph, by measuring features of the pulse, translated the functions of the heart into a graphic language. In 1871, Marey extended this graphical method to animal locomotion and developed pneumatic techniques for transmitting information about changes in the position and speed of a horse's hooves. This information was recorded on a blackened cylinder strapped to the horse rider's back, and the results were graphically displayed as a kind of musical notation indicating both time and space (see figure one). He published his findings in the book *La Machine Animale* the following year.

Meanwhile, in California, far from the horrors of the Franco-Prussian war, the president of the US Central Pacific Railroad – Leland Stanford – was also developing an interest in horses. On the advice of his doctor, Stanford, a former governor of the state of California, withdrew from active involvement in his railway business to pursue the systematic acquisition, breeding, training, and racing of horses. In June 1870, he purchased a six year old gelding called Occident and set himself the challenge of making it the fastest race horse in the US. Along with Mark Hopkins, treasurer of Central Pacific Railroad, he began intensive research into equine anatomy and animal locomotion. The two men applied their findings rigorously and, within two years, Occident had earned a national reputation for its endurance and speed on the race-track.

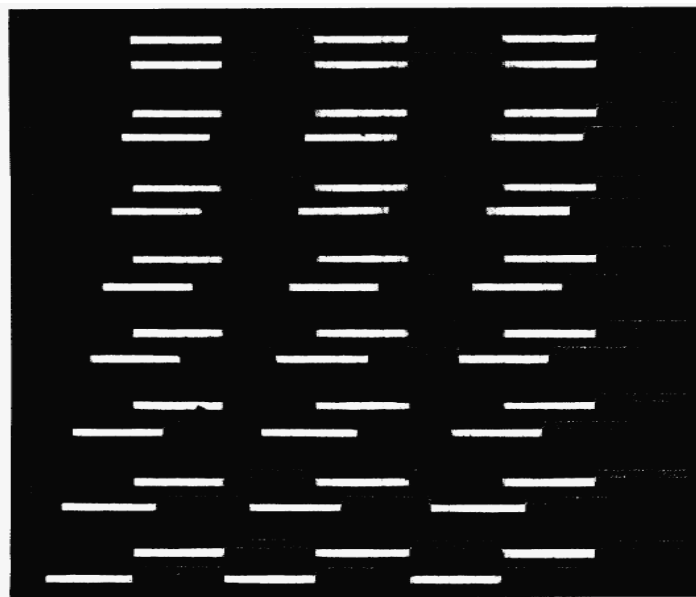


FIGURE ONE: Marey's notation representing a horse's gait (1872)

Not one to rest on his laurels, Stanford was determined to increase the efficiency of his entire stable of racehorses. Crucial to such an endeavour was solving the problem of whether a speeding horse propelled itself by its hind quarters or by pulling itself by its fore quarters. Initially, he attempted to measure the depth of the impression left by a horse's hooves on a smoothed sandy track, but results were difficult to decipher. But then, in April 1872, his studies were given fresh impetus by his well-publicised involvement in a controversy which had been captivating horse racing enthusiasts in the US for some time: was there a moment when all four feet of a racehorse were off the ground? Marey's graphical notations of horse locomotion, published just months earlier, certainly suggested to Stanford that this was the case.<sup>1</sup> However, the results were inconclusive when applied to a horse moving at race track speed, and Stanford resolved to use photography to provide the data necessary to settle the controversy.

So it was in 1872 that the celebrated landscape photographer Eadward Muybridge was commissioned to take the necessary photographs of Occident at Stanford's ranch in Sacramento. At first, Muybridge had tried to expose photograph film manually, by snatching the cap off the camera lens as the horse streaked past. After two days of trying, the best photograph he could obtain was little more than a blurred shadow. On the third day, he rigged up a crude shutter made of two slats, tripped by a string running across a track at chest height. When the horse broke the string, the two slats slid in opposite directions across the front of the camera--and for five-hundredths of a second, a gap opened that was sufficient to expose the film. This ingenious apparatus provided, in the words of the *Alta California* newspaper, "a great triumph as a curiosity in photography -- a horse's picture taken while going 38 feet in a second!" The photograph showed Occident with all four hooves off the ground. As far as Muybridge was concerned "the object of the experiment was accomplished" (Muybridge, 1881: 13). However, not everyone was convinced by the silhouette drawings derived from his series of twelve grainy photographs and it wasn't until 1877 that Muybridge finally took a definitive series of twelve "instantaneous photographs" of Occident (which were duly rewarded with a medal from the jurors of the Twelfth Industrial Exhibition in San Francisco that November). The influence of these photographs (shown in figure two) was destined to spread far wider than the West Coast horse racing fraternity.

Back in France, Marey saw Muybridge's series of photographs of Occident in the journal *La Nature*, and immediately wrote to the editor:

"I am lost in admiration over the instantaneous photographs of Mr Muybridge, which you published in your last number of *La Nature*. Can you put me in correspondence with the author? I want to beg his aid and support to solve certain physiological problems so difficult to solve by other methods; for instance, the questions connected with the flight of birds. I was dreaming of a kind of

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<sup>1</sup> Confirmation of this chain of influence comes from a letter to the editor of the journal *La Nature* in which Muybridge wrote: "Reading Marey's famous work on *La Machine Animale* inspired Governor Stanford's first thoughts on the possibility of solving the problem of locomotion with the help of photography" (Muybridge, 1879: 246).

photographic gun, seizing and portraying the bird in an attitude, or better still, a series of attitudes, displaying the successive different motions of the wing. Cailletet informed me that he had formerly essayed something similar, with encouraging results. It is evident this would be an easy matter for Mr Muybridge to accomplish, and what beautiful zoetropes he could give us, and we could perfectly see the true movements of all imaginable animals. It would be animated zoology.” (Marey, 1878b: 29).

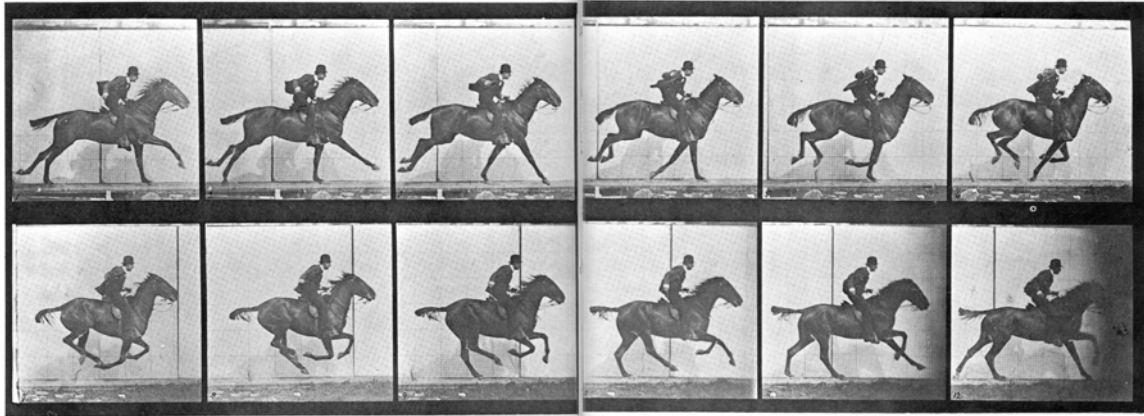


Figure Two: Muybridge’s instantaneous photographs of Occident (1877)

Indeed, within six months the editors of both *The Field* (UK) and *Scientific American* (US) magazines announced they had successfully mounted Muybridge’s pictures in a zoetrope<sup>2</sup>. But it was Muybridge, in September 1879, who was to develop the most sophisticated way of projecting his photographic images onto a screen.

“To this instrument I gave the name of Zoopraxiscope; it is the first apparatus ever used, or constructed, for synthetically demonstrating movements analytically photographed from life, and in its resulting effects is the prototype of all the various instruments which under a variety of names, are used for a similar purpose at the present day.” (Muybridge, 1881: 14).

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<sup>2</sup> A zoetrope is a device that produces an illusion of action from a rapid succession of static pictures. It consists of a cylinder with slits cut vertically in the sides. Beneath the slits, on the inner surface of the cylinder, is a band which has individual images from a set of sequenced drawings or photographs. As the cylinder spins, the user looks through the slits at the pictures on the opposite side of the cylinder's interior. The scanning of the slits keeps the pictures from simply blurring together, so that the user sees a rapid succession of images producing the illusion of motion. It was invented in 1834 by George Horner, who called it a "daedalum" or "daedatelum". Horner's invention was based on a similar device, the phenakistoscope, invented in 1832 by Joseph Plateau. William F. Lincoln promoted Horner's device in America as a "zoetrope".

As Robert Haas (1976: 120) observes, whilst not a completely new invention, the zoopraxiscope remained the only commercially demonstrated motion picture machine for more than a decade, or at least until Thomas Edison mass-produced his Kinetoscope, which was more viewer than a projector. The original projector survives and can be seen in the Library Museum in Muybridge's home town of Kingston-upon-Thames in the UK.

When Marey heard of Muybridge's invention, he could scarcely contain his excitement. Discovering that the Englishman was to embark on a European tour demonstrating his photographs, Marey persuaded him to come to Paris so that he could see the miracle of 'animated zoology' for himself. So it was that on the evening of September 26<sup>th</sup> 1881, Marey threw a dinner party at which Muybridge, along with his zoopraxiscope, was the guest of honour. Hermann von Helmholtz also attended. Marey and Helmholtz were both committed to the use of graphical devices to measure motion, and both shared a frustration with the limitations and inaccuracies of their own chronographic devices. The readout from Helmholtz's kymograph, for example, captured the minute movement of a frog's leg muscles but these could only be read via a microscope and he was obliged to make enlarged free-hand drawings of them. He much preferred the visual clarity of the images produced by the phenakistoscopes and rotating stroboscopic discs used in his studies of visual persistence (i.e. the tendency for the effect of a stimulus to remain visible after its extinction), but the results of these studies relied on 'unscientific' and subjective self-reports. Like Marey, Helmholtz was keen to take the human experimenter/observer out of the experimental loop, and instantaneous photography seemed to offer an elegant technological solution.

The dinner party was remarkable enough to warrant three paragraphs in the French newspaper, *La Globe*. From the report we know that the guests were extremely impressed by the zoopraxiscopic presentation – the apparently moving pictures suggesting a 'défilé diabolique.' Marey, in particular, was delighted that the show concluded with the showing of a series of instantaneous photographs of birds in flight. By all accounts Helmholtz found the demonstrations riveting, but Marey has later to confess some disappointment. The illusion of motion produced by the zoopraxiscope seemed to simply reproduce what the unaided eye could already see (courtesy of the phenomenon of visual persistence), whilst the individual photographs enabled temporal processes to be fixed and analysed to reveal phenomena invisible to the naked eye. This led Marey to a keen interest in the movement between the photographs rather than the illusory motion created by their projection from Muybridge's new machine. The uncaptured instances between the photographs may reveal the secret of Helmholtz's 'lost time', and it was this that Marey wanted to visualise, measure and analyse. He halted his graphical method studies of motion and turned, with Muybridge's guidance, to his own brand of instantaneous photography.

## Geometric Chronophotography and the Regimentation of the Body

Muybridge's photographs were taken by a series of twelve cameras which were successively triggered by wires strung across the path of the moving horse or, more problematically, across the flight path of a bird. But Marey, who had a lifelong interest in aeronautics and the study of flight, felt that the tripping of wires was far too imprecise a measure of time and set about designing a more accurate, and faster, camera. By 1882, he had perfected the photographic gun he had dreamt of four years earlier. This gun was a portable camera with a single circular revolving plate on which consecutive exposures were recorded at precise intervals of time and distance. The resulting images did not produce a series of photographs of the kind Muybridge was now famous for, but were represented as twelve overlapping images on a single photograph. Muybridge had successfully achieved the decomposition of motion in his photographs, but Marey was now perfecting the decomposition of motion into even thinner slices of time. His new venture into what he termed *chronophotography* was to earn him a generous grant from the French Ministry of War. The money from the Ministry (as well as a constant supply of volunteer infantry soldiers) enabled Marey to set up a new laboratory, the Station Physiologique, in Paris. The Station was designed: "to determine the series of actions which are created in human locomotion in its various types, to measure the effort expended at each moment in the different actions of locomotion, in order to seek the most favourable conditions for utilisation of that effort" (Marey, 1902: 34).

But Marey had a problem. Whilst Muybridge continued his instantaneous photography in pursuit of artistic expression by increasing the number of cameras and through the filming of naked and semi-naked human models, Marey felt that his own photographs contained too much information. With the shutter speed set too slow the images were too blurred to measure; if set too fast the photograph contained far too many overlapping images. In 1883, he explained: "in this method of photographic analysis the two elements of movement, time and space, cannot both be estimated in a perfect manner. Knowledge of the positions the body occupies in space presumes that complete and distinct images are possessed; yet to have such images a relatively long temporal interval must be had between two successive photographs. But if the notion of time one desires to bring to perfection, the only way of doing so is to greatly augment the frequency of images, and this forces each of them to be reduced to lines" (cited in Douard, 1995:188). Striving for the simplicity and precision of his graphical method combined with the speed and accuracy of chronophotography, Marey found the solution in what he called *geometric chronophotography* (see figure three):

"A man dressed completely in black, and consequently invisible upon the dead-black background, wears bright points and lines, strips of silver lace attached to his clothes along the axes of his limbs. When the man, so rigged, passes in front of the apparatus, photographs will result that will be accurate diagrams to scale, showing without confusion the posture of upper and lower arms, thighs and lower legs, and feet at each instant, as well as the oscillations of the head and the hips." (Marey, 1902: 323)



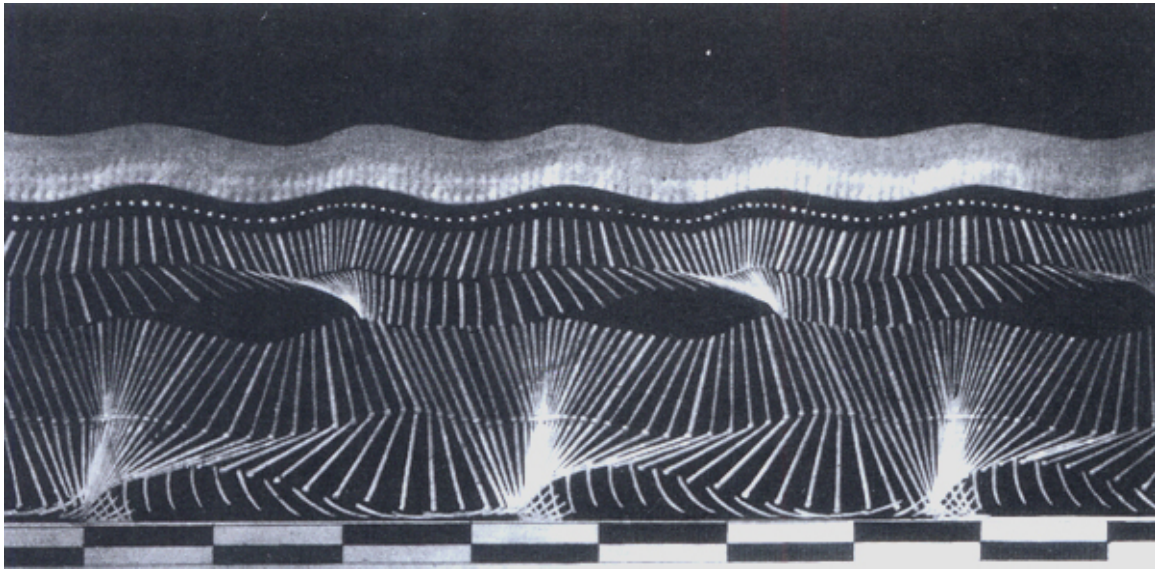


Figure Three: Marey's geometric chronophotograph of a man running

Through geometric chronophotography, Marey was able to decompose time into its 'elements'. He created an empirical geometry to reveal how continuous motion is built up out of a discontinuous series of movements. For Marey, "chronophotography renders visible the normally invisible phases of motion or positions in space the body occupies. The data furnished by chronophotography represent the real phases of movement, which persistence of vision represents as continuous duration: the fast shutter speeds decompose movement that the eye cannot" (Douard, 1995: 195-6). Marey had finally discovered a way to visualise, capture, and measure Helmholtz's lost physiological time. Now all he had to do was to recompose bodily motion so as to reduce or reclaim this time.

Armed with this new graphical language, geometric chronophotographic researchers at the Station Physiologique were able to establish 'objective' rules governing the manoeuvres of soldiers, and the physical exercises of young peoples: in short, to reveal the most efficient use of the muscular energy and effort of the human body. Marey was also mindful of other domains where his methods could be put to use. In his book *Movement* (1875: 139), he opined that "the same method could equally well be applied to the teaching of movements necessary for the execution of various skilled industries. It would show how the stroke of a skillful blacksmith differed from that of a novice. It would be the same in all manual performances and in all kinds of sport."

Marey discovered that even the most highly motor skilled of his photographic subjects were not consciously aware of their own bodily movements. But his geometric 'chronographs' provided an immediate means for measuring and improving everyone's motor skills – you simply had to study the pictures and learn to copy the representation of movement, one 'element' at a time. Marey's chronographs contained information previously hidden from both the observer and the subject. But if lost time could be captured with his pictures, they could also be used to instruct human subjects directly without recourse to the verbal or written language Marey so distrusted as a basis for

scientific knowledge. For Marey, ‘inefficient’ unconscious inferences themselves could be subsumed into conscious, rule-bounded behaviours through the mimetic application of chronographs. In this way, Tom Gunning (2002) argues that chronophotography worked as much to master motion as to portray it, achieving through this mastery the calculation of the body itself, rendering visible its unseen motions, and so making evident its unconscious behaviour. Marey’s friend and colleague at the Collège de France, Henri Bergson, was equally dismayed at the way chronophotography reduced time to calculable space and saw Marey’s work as contributing to the subordination of human experience to an objective and external measure (Bergson, 1911).<sup>3</sup>

Let us now return briefly to Gladwell’s ‘blink’. The very notion of a thin slice of time owes much to the work of nineteenth-century physiologists such as Helmholtz and Marey. But they showed that the ‘blink’ is not an action or property of the human eye, for the phenomenon of visual persistence reveals that what the eye ‘sees’ when the eyelid is closed is merely an after-image of what was ‘seen’ when the eyelids were open. The ‘blink’ is more the property of the opening and closing shutter of the high-speed camera. Of course, as Alan Sakula (1988) points out, “the photograph, as it stands alone presents merely the *possibility* of meaning” (p 91) and so interpreting photographs requires going outside the photographs themselves to ask where and how they were used, and how the people who used them assigned them meaning. Although the technical prowess of Marey and Muybridge heralded the birth of cinematography as we now know it (and both men had met Thomas Edison in the late 1880s to discuss possible collaborative projects), the meaning of the thin slices of photographic time they captured was inextricably bound up with the development of social Helmholtzianism.

Indeed, the chronophotographs of industrial hammerers taken by Marey’s student Charles Fremont at the Station Physiologique in 1895 bear a striking resemblance to those taken twenty years later by Frank and Lillian Gilbreth for their motion studies in the US. The Gilbreths used a ‘cyclograph’ which comprised a series of light bulbs attached to a black suit worn over a workers body filmed in semi-darkness by a cine camera. The resulting ‘micromotion’ pictures were then used to train workers in the ‘one best way’ of working. Somewhat begrudgingly, Frank Gilbreth (1914) was to confess: “Marey is the man whom I wish had not been born. He got a cyclegraph. He set up a revolving disk with a hole in it before a camera, and he photographed this, and got a chrono-cyclegraph. We had to design a clock in order to photograph time in order to get a clock that would not jump. Marey’s scheme was impractical, but he did the job, and he did it first.”

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<sup>3</sup> Despite this critique of chronophotography, Henri Bergson was not adverse to using Marey’s graphical methods to visualise and measure human behaviour. The two men were members of a Collège de France study group which was set up to examine psychic phenomena. Marey and Bergson conducted ‘rigorous experiments’ in which a number of well-known Parisian mediums were fitted with one of Marey’s sphymographs as they conducted a séance. In their search for ‘manifestations of forces not yet defined’ the two men were looking for evidence of irregular heart rates and other ‘unusual’ physical manifestations of psychic energy (Bergson, 1972: 510). The sphymograph was later used by the French Ministry of War during the 1914-18 World War to measure the heart rate of front-line gunners on the battlefield. Apparently, when firing artillery, ‘inefficient’ soldiers had significantly faster heart rates than their more accurate compatriots.

Perhaps only within a discourse of social Helmholtzianism does the ‘blink’ become a domain of managerial practice, and one which can provoke Dagognet to see a key role for Marey’s ideas in the rapid proliferation of assembly lines and Taylorist exploitations in the twentieth century. “It could be that he was also pushing toward robotisation. It was less a man-machine or even a human machine that Marey wanted than a machine capable of replacing man; who was considered a machine of low productivity. It was enough to record and calculate the results of this machine to replace it with something better” (Dagognet, 1992: 170). It is undeniable that Marey favoured the use of inscription technologies in his search for greater bodily efficiency. “When the eye cease to see, the ear to hear, and the sense of touch or feel, or when our senses deceive us”, he wrote, “these instruments are like a new sense of an astonishing precision” (1878a: 108). Of course, crucial to the successful deployment of geometric chronophonographical instruments was the denial of the importance of both bodily experience and the body itself. Marey’s two dimensional geometric chronographs showed only “what was strictly necessary” – by which he meant only those elements which could be presented on a graph. Yet, through the medium of photography, Marey managed to persuade a wide audience that motion naturally had the structure of a graph. This was possible because, as many researchers have noted, photography carried considerable evidentiary power in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (e.g. Sontag, 1978; Stange, 1989; Banta and Hinsley, 1986; Barthes, 1981).<sup>4</sup>

“Photography achieved compelling stature through its ability to preserve a specific moment in time, an ability made even more believable by the contemporary iconic status of mechanical progress. Photographs, it was then argued (and is still often argued), recorded reality, and looking at a photograph told a viewer what things were really like at the moment of its production. Studying them offered evidence of the natural order of things not visible to the unassisted eye” (Lindstrom, 2000: 734).

In Marey’s case, the analysis and reproduction of the nervous system required the introduction of time as a function into the categories of representation. Most importantly, Braun (1994) argues, when inscription apparatuses begin to penetrate the time of the nervous system, the body loses its thickness and contours. In order to remove the “imprint of flesh and skin so as to reveal the moving parts of the animate machine -- the joints, levers, and fulcrums, the rods, and pistons of the human body -- he Marey concocted a moving skeleton, denuding the body of its flesh and volume” (Braun, *ibid*: 81). In Braun’s view, the study of the body in motion had become the study of the decomposition of moving corpses. Such studies, premised on the notion that the body will never be ‘efficient’ until it becomes consciously aware of its limitations, continue to the present day in ergonomic and human factors engineering laboratories throughout the world.

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<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Reyner Banham (1986: 18) argues that early twentieth century European modernist architecture “must be the first architectural movement in the history of art based almost exclusively on photographic evidence”.

## **Psychophysics and the Regimentation of the Mind**

But if the body is in need of correction, what of the unconscious mind? What of unconscious inference, the second element of Helmholtz's lost time? Muybridge and Marey had little interest in mental processes and effectively evacuated the mind from the body. However, psychologists were keenly interested in the relationship between mind and body, and the introduction of Helmholtz's first law of thermodynamics into psychology by Gustav Fechner in 1860 heralded the birth of psychophysics as a discipline combining psychological and physiological research on the human body with physics. Psychophysics concerned itself with uncovering the physiological and psychological rules that govern mental activity and sensory perception. In short, Fechner and colleagues were searching for the physiological mechanism uniting the unconscious body and the conscious mind. Fechner was aided on this search by Helmholtz and his doctoral student, Wilhelm Wundt, who shared a fascination with the concept of unconscious inference. In their experiments on animals, Helmholtz and Wundt were able to thin-slice lost physiological time to 30 milliseconds, but did this instant of time have any psychological significance? The men were convinced that "the will, the senses, the associations and apperception all rigorously follow the principles of energy conservation" (Wundt, 1914: 900). Moreover, Fechner showed that mental events could not only be measured, but measured in terms of their relationship to real, physical events.

Fechner's psychophysical research on, and deep interest in, the unconscious may well have passed quietly into obscurity were it not for the profound influence it had on a young neurology student attending his lectures at Leipzig University during the 1873-4 academic year. The student's name was Sigismund Schlomo Freud (a name he changed to Sigmund Freud four years later). Freud was later to apply Helmholtz's first law of thermodynamics to psychological phenomenon as he was convinced that it was emotional rather than muscular energy that held the key to understanding human behaviour. Like Charles Darwin, Freud perceived emotion as a form of physical energy which obeyed physical laws, and like Wundt, he regarded conscious ideas as representations of physical forces.

In 1885, Freud moved to Paris to study with the neurologist Jean-Martin Charcot. Freud was immensely impressed by Charcot's work on traumatic hysteria and from it he developed the idea that one of the principal forms of neurosis came about when a traumatic experience led to the formation of unconscious symptoms. Freud based his theory of psychodynamics on the recognition that memories repressed in the unconscious create increasing tension, and that this was relieved with dischargelike phenomena when the unconscious was made conscious. Hence, 'psychic energy' can neither be created nor destroyed, both can only be converted from one form to another. He suggested that negative energy or anxiety from our childhood conflicts could not be destroyed, just as the first law of thermodynamics would have it, but is pushed, or repressed, out of conscious awareness. The unconscious (or id) functions to contain such repressed wishes, and a (conscious) ego serves to guide and direct the expenditure of energy. Our instincts, contained in the id, simply represent internal energy the ego must somehow channel and relieve to restore 'psychic constancy' or 'neuronic inertia'.

In his 1895 *Project for a Scientific Psychology*, Freud argued that the neuronal system held the key to understanding human behaviour and cognition. Neurons build up energy which must be discharged when it goes beyond a tolerable level; pain is the eruption of too much energy, whilst pleasure is the release of energy. Freud believed that we all strive to keep energy at a minimum and thus our ultimate goal is achieving pleasure and avoiding pain. When wishes that could lead to pain emerge, however, our unconscious defence mechanisms repress them. This unreleased energy is then often displaced through substitute wishes or it seeps out into our dreams. Failure to release this energy could lead to the development of neuroses and mental instability.

So, for Freud, the unconscious was far more than some kind of momentary mediator of perception which serves to reduce the efficiencies of the body. It was a crucial component in all our behaviour, full of wishes, desires and needs having a biological and intra-psychological origin, which obey established physical laws. But it could not be measured on a graph or photographed<sup>5</sup>. Freud's psychotherapeutic techniques were developed to reveal this unreleased energy and facilitate its release into conscious awareness through lengthy consultation with a qualified psychiatrist.

### **The Engineering of Consent and the Management of the Unconscious**

Freud's work, of course, is most commonly associated with mental illness and the 'talking cure', and, for the best part of half a century, psychologists stayed well clear of his ideas when studying 'normal' behaviour. Indeed, it wasn't until the late 1950s that the term 'unconscious' appeared in mainstream US psychology texts (Greenwald, 1992), and even then it was primarily the focus of fierce criticism from empirical psychologists who could not 'see' or measure it. But Freud had propelled the notion of the unconscious into popular consciousness and, in the US in the 1920s, two strands of applied psychodynamic psychology emerged which were to revolutionise the way the thin slice of the unconscious inference came to be understood and applied to business management practices. These two strands became known as *human relations* and *public relations*.

Towards the end of the 1920s, the famous Hawthorne experiments began at the Western Electric Company in Chicago. Although early research in the company focused on psycho-physiological and ergonomic aspects of work (e.g. the effect of changes in illumination on productivity), once the Australian psychologist Elton Mayo became involved, the studies soon changed tack to concentrate on channeling the unconscious, emotional energy of manual workers towards higher productivity.<sup>6</sup> With explicit

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<sup>5</sup> Charcot had made extensive use of photographs of his neurotic patients, but Freud felt that this encouraged patients to perform for the camera and hence doubted their usefulness in the diagnosis or treatment of neurosis.

<sup>6</sup> Mayo's initial research interest at Harvard Business School in 1926 was the study of the impact of changed working conditions on the physical and psychological welfare of employees. Utilising Fechner's psychophysical theory, and techniques which resonate strikingly with those developed by Marey in his work with sphygmographs, he aimed to validate a 'pulse index' of blood pressure which correlated with workers' psychological and physical states of fatigue. Full accounts of the range of studies conducted at the Western Electric Company can be found in Landsberger (1968) and Baritz (1965).

reference to Freud (and implicit reference to Helmholtz's first law of thermodynamics), Mayo (1923a) believed that everyone has unconscious thoughts ('unacknowledged reveries') which, if acknowledged, lead to self-awareness, social maturity, and good citizenship. But, when these are not consciously acknowledged, they become 'negative reveries' which can fester into obsession, irrationality, and neurosis (Mayo, 1923b). The solution to such melancholia was counselling, and Mayo instigated an eight-year counselling and interviewing programme with 10,000 workers during the later stages of the Hawthorne studies. The object of this programme was to 'acknowledge' the reveries of the workers by allowing them to express their frustrations to a sympathetic counsellor, thereby reducing inner tension and at the same time mitigating the forces of industrial unrest (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939).

Freud did not believe that the unconscious is restricted to 'primitive processing', or that 'higher order' thought is restricted to the conscious mind. For example, in *The Interpretation of Dreams* he observed, "the most complicated achievements of thought are possible without the assistance of consciousness" (1976: 751). Freud's nephew Edward Bernays worked tirelessly to promote the application of this idea to the practical business of social persuasion and propaganda in the United States. In his hugely influential *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, Bernays (1923) argued that Freud's concept of the unconscious could, and should, be utilised by social elites to "so mold the mind of the masses that they will throw their newly gained strength in the desired direction" (p. 20). Governments and business corporations, he insisted, should "regiment the mind like the military regiments the body" (p. 21). Here Bernays is promoting the idea of regimenting the mind in precisely the same way as Marey and the Gilbreths were seeking to regiment the body. The secret was to by-pass conscious awareness and appeal directly to those unconscious needs and desires his uncle had uncovered in his research.

Both Mayo and Bernays regarded the unconscious thought processes of the individual as an obstacle to the betterment of democratic society. Edward Bernays' regimentation of the mind is accomplished by what he termed the *engineering of consent*. This is achieved through taking advantage of the unconscious mind's tendency to self-deception and of falling prey to the seductive power of a strong leader. Mayo held a similar view, although he was more worried that industrial unrest was primarily caused by the seductive power that strong trade union leaders held over workers suffering from negative revery (Gillespie, 1991). If all managers developed counselling skills to dissipate this unconscious energy, Mayo insisted, conscious reason would be restored, union leaders would lose their power, and industrial unrest would be confined to the dustbin of history.

For many years, knowledge of the work of Mayo and Bernays was restricted to a fairly select band of academics and politicians. But, in the US, public awareness of the role of the unconscious in decision-making and behaviour was aroused by the publication in 1957 of Vance Packard's book, *The Hidden Persuaders*. In this best-selling book, Packard described many of the new motivational research marketing techniques (many of them pioneered by Bernays) being employed to sell products to the American consumer. That same year, a market researcher called James Vicary coined the term "subliminal advertising" to describe how consumer behaviour could be shaped by images flashed up

on a cinema or television screen so quickly that they fell far below the viewer's threshold of conscious awareness. Vicary conducted an experiment at a drive-in cinema in Fort Lee, New Jersey to prove his point. He placed a tachistoscope in the cinema's projection booth, and throughout the playing of the film *Picnic*, he flashed a couple of different messages on the screen every five seconds. The messages were each displayed for only 1/300th of a second at a time. The result of displaying the imperceptible suggestions -- "Drink Coca-Cola" and "Hungry? Eat Popcorn" - was an 18% increase in Coca-Cola sales, and a 58% surge in the sale of popcorn to the audience. Whilst Marey had analysed the gaps in between his photographic images in order to bring to conscious awareness the lost time the eye could not see, Vicary placed a message in these gaps which the eye could see, but the conscious mind could not.

The public outcry fuelled by Packard's book and Vicary's experiment was such that the US Federal Communications Commission came under intense pressure to ban subliminal advertising from radio and television. A ban was finally instigated on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1974 following an announcement by the FCC that subliminal techniques, "whether effective or not," were "contrary to the public interest," and that any broadcasting station employing them risked losing their licence. Although Vicary admitted in 1960 that he had falsified his research results in order to publicise his marketing business, the idea that corporations or governments might be controlling the unconscious minds of consumers and citizens resonated strongly with the Cold War paranoia of the time.

Within academia, the consequent rise of what Pratkanis (1992) has called the 'cargo-cult science of subliminal persuasion' served to put Helmholtz's 'lost time' firmly back on the experimental research agenda. Then, in 1979, the neuroscientist Benjamin Libet announced the results of his experimental study of unconscious inferences. His results rocked the scientific and philosophical academies to the core (see Jahanshahi and Hallett, 2003). Libet based his study on the earlier psychophysiological work of Kornhuber and Deeke (1965). Kornhuber and Deeke asked volunteers to move their right index finger. They then measured this voluntary movement with a strain gauge whilst simultaneously recording the electrical activity of the brain by means of an electrode on the skull. They discovered that each movement was preceded by a brief upsurge of electrical activity in the brain. They called this the "readiness potential" and found that it occurred approximately one second before the voluntary movement. Libet followed up this study with an experiment in which he asked volunteers to lift a finger whenever they felt the urge to do so. He placed an electrode on a volunteer's skull and confirmed a readiness potential about one second before the person lifted his or her finger. He then compared the time it took for the person to will the movement with the time of the readiness potential. To his amazement, Libet found that the readiness potential appeared not after, but 200 milliseconds before his subjects felt the urge to move their finger. Thus, by observing the electrical activity of the brain on a graphical device (an electroencephalograph, or EEG), Libet was able to predict what his subjects would do before they were consciously aware of having decided to act.

Now, whilst many commentators have questioned the conclusions Libet drew from this and subsequent experiments (specifically regarding the status of free will), they are in

general agreement that “voluntary acts are nonconsciously initiated” (Gomes, 1998: 591). More specifically, there is approximately a half-second delay between a bodily action and becoming consciously aware of that action, between setting an act in motion and our decision to do so. What an opportunity for mnemotechnical management through insinuating a product or instruction in this tiny gap between the unconscious and conscious awareness! After all, as Nietzsche (1990: 112) has argued, “a mere disciplining of thoughts and feelings is virtually nothing, one first has to convince the body. In two or three generations everything is already internalised. It is decisive for the future of nations and of mankind that one should inaugurate culture in the right place – not in the soul. The right place is the body, demeanour, diet, physiology: the rest follows” .

### **Conclusion: Towards Neuro-Scientific Management?**

From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century on, new forms of calculation in sensory registers developed which were not previously regarded as ‘political’. This paper has outlined three technical developments which were fundamental to the growth of what Thrift (2004) terms ‘micro biopolitics’. First, the development of graphical devices and instruments enabled the small spaces of the body to become visible and measurable. Second, the development of chronophotography enabled the smallest and fastest of bodily movements to be seen, recorded, and manipulated. Third, the development of the technical means to manage knowledge of unconscious actions (e.g. via time and motion study, counselling, and advertising) has enabled the reterritorialisation of behavioural control away from the labouring body to the dictates of mindful management. All three of these developments need to be seen in the context of a discourse of the labouring body epitomised by ‘social Helmholtzianism’ which renders the embodied unconscious amenable to correction.

More than 100 years after the meeting in Paris between Helmholtz, Marey, and Muybridge, after the birth of psychophysics, and after Freud’s initial conceptualisation of the unconscious; mainstream cognitive psychology has finally woken up to the fact, long-accepted and exploited by business and political elites (and behavioural psychologists), that the embodied unconscious plays a key role in shaping human behaviour. But is this awakening good, bad or ugly? Just as Marey’s chronophotography reduced the body to a basic motor and skeletal line drawing, the deeper workings of our unconscious sensorium are now being reduced to graphical and photographic images by cognitive scientists armed with ever sophisticated technologies of representation and measurement. Indeed, there is already evidence that businesses are eager to exploit more fully the unconscious influences of sound (Corbett, 2003a, 2003b) and smell (Corbett, 2006) on employee and consumer behaviour. Are we soon to see the rise of a new neuro-scientific management, able and willing to exploit the micro biopolitics of organisational behaviour? It is these issues that the conference presentation will seek to address.



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Chris Erskine

**Principalities and Powers in Ecclesiastical Organization:  
Anarchy versus Demons and Devils**

Would to God your horizon may broaden every day!  
The people who bind themselves to systems are those who  
are unable to encompass the whole truth and try to catch it by the  
tail; a system is like the tail of truth, but truth is like a lizard; it leaves  
its tail in your fingers and runs away.

Ivan Turgenev

Traditions are born by the power of an initial thrust that hurls  
acts and ideas across the centuries.

Chaim Potok

**Abstract**

The word church is derived from the Greek term *ekklesia*<sup>1</sup>, meaning gathering, and was employed to describe the early network of Jesus' disciples. Starting with a brief historical analysis of this first century social movement. The paper investigates how the contemporary '*Ecclesia Anglicana*' (the church in England) manifestation of this historical organisation/network has become inhabited by bureaucratic, dysfunctional, intolerant and irrelevant demons and devils. Space is then given to emerging movements of anarchy which are attempting to 'cast out these dark forces' and reclaim the church's more organic roots. Current organisational theory is employed to chart potential ways ahead for these movements and avoid the defaults of hierarchical managerialism. In conclusion, attention turns to the issues identified and their relevance for wider organisational forms. Particular focus is given to anarchic praxis and its possible implications within academic organizational field(s).

**Introduction**

The historical view of *ekklesia* presented within the New Testament writings suggests a fluid and fragile organizational form, built upon strong relational networks. Following a brief analysis of this embryonic movement, its views of leadership and impact on the wider culture, this paper separates into three areas.

First, *identifying the demons and devils* examines the reproduction of sectarian principalities, powers and generational strongholds within denominational structures. Attention is specifically given to the distribution of resources; the codification of rules and roles; and the culture of competition and duplication perpetuated through hierarchies and heroes within ecclesiastical systems. This control and influence is seen to be administered through the various mechanisms of the Theo-management<sup>2</sup>, that is to say, the structures, symbols, traditions, functions and roles positioned between people and God.

Secondly, *retelling the narrative – anarchy regained* reflects upon the way in which emerging stories are being used to challenge, subvert and transform this sectarian landscape. Paul Bate (2002) suggests personal narratives can develop new communal narratives. Building the awareness and understanding of individuals can help them to find a place within the journey towards

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1 Ekklesia: from ek, 'out of' and klesis, 'a calling', was used among Greeks of a body of citizens 'gathered' to discuss affairs of state.

2 Theo-management also suggests a theology of managerialism, which underpins the dominant logic of all centralist hierarchical systems.

organisational change. This ontogeny is shown to create alternative anarchic perspectives and identify overlapping values, aims and purposes that build community practice and cohesion.

Thirdly, *reconfiguring the landscape* explores the potential of utopian organisational theory to release mobilising narratives that wrestle:

'not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places' (Letter to Ephesians).

These collective stories are shown to translate joint commitments into joint action, enabling people to move forward and subvert the hegemonic church terrain. Latent powers of hierarchy that may heed such developments are also considered, and countered, via Fournier's (2005) work concerning the necessity to cultivate outrage, challenge inevitability and create alternative networked futures.

In conclusion, thought is given to whether the lessons learnt and issues raised in this study have any relevance for wider organizational fields. Particular attention is given to anarchic praxis and its possible implications within contemporary academia. However, before the start of this inquiry, there is a need to address three points.

Firstly, Martin Parker (2002) comments that via the process of writing and reading we need to acknowledge 'existing prejudices' through which we filter information. Not only do I accept this 'truth', but cannot help thinking that it is only compounded when engaging in 'God talk' (Fines 2002). The subject matter of this paper is highly charged and riddled with potential danger. A particular sticking point could be the use of scripture as evidence without questioning its historical validity. Unfortunately without this document becoming an entirely different collection of thoughts, such concerns must be placed to one side. The historical data used will simply be taken at 'face value'. All that can be offered to the reader is a request to withhold judgment (or at least condemnation) until the end of this paper. This submission does not intend to convert, but rather draw attention to and expose organizational thoughts via ecclesiastical structures.

Secondly, I am a 'stranger in a strange land' (Bishop 2000). Mine is the world of pavements, pubs, inner-city estates and Christian anarchism. The rich, hidden and fragile sphere(s) of grassroots stories and community development. I say this not to 'warrant my voice' (Shotter 1996), but to acknowledge my struggle in bringing synopsis to ideas. I find the academic tradition of writing, a fairly alienating experience, particularly the 'medieval practice of needing to endlessly quote the authority of acknowledged "masters" before dar[ing] to state an opinion' (Reedy 2005).

Finally, the brief 'historical' view found below is not a comprehensive analysis of church in the first century. It is a consideration of specific themes that will be of use for my analysis of the contemporary church in England and wider organizational analysis. This undoubtedly leaves me in a vulnerable place and under the accusation of being too simplistic. I try to address this as the paper goes on, but recognize that for some it goes nowhere near far enough. Once again, to address this in more detail would force the creation of an entirely different paper. That will be left for another day.

### **A 'historical' view of *ekklesia*.**

'Did the historical, pre-Easter Jesus will a church? This question is provocative; it is also ambiguous - as ambiguous as the word "church" itself. If by "church" we mean grace, liberation, the irruption of the Spirit.....then Christ willed the church. Indeed there is nothing else in this world he did will. But if by "church" we understand the visible institution, its sacramental organization, its hierarchical ministerial kingdom, its theological self-understanding, then this question takes on a very different look. It becomes a historical

question rather than a [ontological]one.'

(Boff 1986: 47)

This section looks at the 'pre-Easter Jesus' relationship and influence on the first century formations of *ekklesia*; the views of leadership that emerged within this embryonic community; and what happened when it challenged the key cultural symbols and hegemonic powers of its day? These developments are seen as distinct from the subsequent 'visible institution[s].....', 'which have historically developed since these early formations (see next section).

As mentioned, the word church is derived from the Greek term *ekklesia*, meaning gathering. It is often used as an address in New Testament letters to the first communities of Christians, after the departure of Jesus. But what is also evident from the early text is that gatherings took place in Jesus' life within the many places he stayed and visited. These revolved around meals and households; religious sites, times and festivals; desert and wilderness; the places of the 'Other'. At times, they were extremely intimate moments with a handful of friends, whilst others saw the mobilization of hundreds if not thousands. A potential danger in reading about these varied recorded assemblages would be to project a sense of organizational coherence that was not present when they actually took place. This needs to be resisted, as the early *ekklesia* was 'a mode of human organisation rooted in the experience of everyday life' (Ward & Goodwin 1997). It was a fluid, questioning, disruptive demographic of people, exhibiting a strong sense of mystery and excitement. As with all embryonic movements, it was not possible to read it on first sight, for it resembled a:

'strings of more or less connected events, scattered across time and space; [that] cannot be identified with any specific organisation, rather consisting of various levels of formulation, linked in patterns of interaction.'

(Diani & McAdam 2003: 1)

The early church was complex, transient and extremely fragile, it had no backing from the institutional hegemonic powers of Rome or Jerusalem. It was organic and experimental in nature, ebbing and flowing around the activities of Jesus and his closest companions. At times its structural shape was visible, whilst at others it lacked a sense of cohesion. Nonetheless, it may still seem strange to raise questions about the role of leadership within the early *ekklesia*. Surely, it must be obvious to all that Jesus was the 'leader' of this young network. This may be so, however his subversive take on leadership was totally out of kilter with the surrounding cultural norms. Several biblical accounts report upon the confusion caused by Jesus' new views and accompanying ontology even amongst those most close to him. For instance:

'When he [Jesus] was in the house, he asked them [the disciples], "What were you arguing about on the road?" But they kept quiet because on the way they argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first he must be the very last, and the servant of all".'

(Gospel of Matthew)

This text indicates that the accepted wisdom of the day equated greatness and position with power and status. The disciples thought that being close to this new radical prophet would mean personal advancement and prestige. Jesus challenged this common sense mindset and called people into entirely different social relationships. He took exception to the dominant patriarchal and family tribal norms, subverting the traditions of the day, warning the early *ekklesia* to avoid hierarchical organizational patterns.

'Don't set people up as experts over your life, letting them tell you what to do. Save that authority for God; let him tell you what to do. No one else should carry the title of "Father"; you have only one Father, and he's in heaven. And don't let people maneuver you into taking charge of them. There is only one Life-Leader for you and them – Christ.'

(Gospel of Matthew)

Not only was warning brought to people taking positions of power but also those being delegated such roles. This is confirmed in a couple of gospel accounts where the crowds tried to make Jesus their king and he removed himself from them (i.e. John 6:15). All forms of stratified leadership were refuted, in fact such thinking was aligned with the occupying colonial powers of Rome:

'the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave – just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' (Gospel of Mark)

The 'servant attitude' was used to sabotage any emerging chain-of-command leadership style and structures within the *ekklesia*. This should not be seen as a sign of subservience, but rather acts of non-participation within organizational forms that set people above and apart from one another. These warnings brought exclusion to such ideas, releasing a praxis where all relationships needed to work from an entirely different organizational matrix. Yet later accounts reveal how this whole subject area was still creating problems within the 'post-Jesus' *ekklesia*. Paul of Tarsus writes to the early church in Corinth:

'Chloe's household informs me that there are quarrels among you. What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another "I follow Apollos"; another "I follow Cephas"; and still another "I follow Christ".'

People had not fully adopted the radical nature of Jesus' teaching and life, the wider cultural norms of position and leadership still influenced the church. Yet the important thing to note is that the stance against being or following a 'name' was still being resisted. The formation of fractions and sects within the *ekklesia* were perpetually being subverted. However, the same early writings do suggest that different roles were developing within the early gatherings. When writing to those in Ephesus, Paul stated:

'It was he [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers to prepare God's people for works of service so the the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity.'

Different people at various times and places took on particular tasks and functions. Nonetheless this must be looked at via what has already been said. These roles were never intended to develop hierarchical structure; on the contrary, they were embedded in the emerging relational networks to help people prepare and respond to the radical founding teachings. The view of leadership within the early network could not be one through which people were intended to make 'a name for themselves' or gain position to 'lord over' people. Leadership (if that is the right word?) was to be found amongst, not above, this embryonic movement. Not only was it multi-faceted, it was also very changeable from gathering situation to situation. Anything else would have jarred against the warnings and teaching of Jesus. This suggests that people heard, saw and touched upon an endeavor resembling that which Ann Ripin (2005: 174) evokes in the term *essamplaire*:

'a pedagogy in which students..work in a community of scholars and practitioners to pass on and share their knowledge, ideas and techniques, but which they make their own through the work of their own hands and potentially go on and make something beautiful or useful in the world.'

The ontogeny of this unfledged movement, with its subversive heterogeneous gatherings, grassroots stories and 'anti-hero' culture, was bound to impact the wider cultural landscape. Even though the

initial mobilization around the life of Jesus operated 'side by side and in spite of the dominant authoritarian trend' of his society (Ward 2002), in time it raised suspicion and interest from the centers of hegemonic powers. Over a period of three years and a number of different skirmishes, themes started to emerge within the *ekklesia* that challenged the very fabric of first century Palestine. N.T. Wright (1999: 442) notes that such 'readjustment of worldview-symbols' would have been 'seen as traitorous and involved the perpetrator with conflict and those who had alternative agendas'. At the heart of Jesus' freshly-conceived symbolic universe we find Jesus himself, his own work, his own presence, his own teaching, it cannot be underestimated just how much of a disturbance this began to cause within the dominant systems and power holders. It created 'a clash of visions, incarnated in a clash of symbols' (Wright *ibid*).

Jesus' tactic in many places was to employ a form of *bricolage*, 'juxtaposing apparently incompatible realities' (McKay 1996), similar to that now iconic punk act of putting of a safety pin through the Queen's nose, but far more radical and subversive. This resulted in the distinctive

'appropriation of familiar things and places [encouraging new] symbols, images and meanings. People [were relating] collectively through places and things of shared culture, and [emerged] from that activity [by reshaping] the landscape. This was not done in a vacuum, but drawn selectively from the wider world and the constraints it imposes'.

(Crouch & Ward 1997: 33)

A manifesto was being lived out that communicated a call of resistance and defiance towards the principalities and powers. All that the religious order and wider empire stood for was now being 'appropriated' and made available through Jesus. This was not a series of religious rallies, but rather an organic network which subverted hegemonic systems. Security and control were held with Rome, whilst identity and faith were located in the temple system of Jerusalem. The temple controlled or influenced the Theo-management structures, symbols, traditions, functions and roles positioned between people and God throughout the land. Jesus challenged these joint imperialistic powers via multi-formed gatherings that happened at any moment of time and in any particular place. Working to the organizational principle of 'where people thought it was, wherever inter-subjective community recognition located it at a particular time' (Parker 2002). The early *ekklesia* did not play by the rules, the fixed cultural institutions and traditions with their mediating influences were sidelined by the inauguration of a radical new ontology. The relationship between people and God was no longer being brokered and domesticated through Theo-management. Instead a new relational matrix was forming:

'I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.....no longer will a man teach his neighbour, or a man his brother, saying "Know the Lord" because they will know me from the least of them to the greatest.'

(Letter to the Hebrews)

The temple, the law, the land, the community and all that they symbolized were being reconfigured. In short, this new social movement sought the end of all mechanisms of Theo-management. The charges laid against these 'God-constructs' were that they had mixed up genuine faith with national and institutional identity and this confusion had cultivated corruption, misrepresentation and oppression. The vested interests embedded within the dominant systems and leaders had distorted the use of power and relationships. All roads had led to Rome or Jerusalem, but not any more; Jesus brought a prophetic disturbance that shook the whole regime. This was not some 'pie in the sky when you die' agenda, but an active reconstruction of reality in the here and now, displaying what Valerie Fournier (2002: 192) identifies as:

'utopianism rather than utopia to emphasize movement over static visions of a better order'..... it's about journey rather than destinations. It's about opening up visions of



alternatives, rather than closing down on a vision of a better future. It's about what moves us to hope for and cultivate, alternative possibilities.'

The utopianism of the early *ekklesia* opened new spaces for alternative possibilities across the whole cultural landscape. This was a non-violent grassroots movement, which carried its message through the dynamics of its relationships. By allowing no hierarchy to form, it was accessible to all and it generated fear and anger in those who had the most to lose. The very fact that Jesus spoke in parables disoriented listeners and nullified any attempts to close down his unfolding politics of possibility. Slowly but surely this movement was reconstituting the organizational fundamentals of its society through hope, healing and spontaneous ordering.

To summarize, this was a network of gatherings that was embedded in the 'everyday experiences of life', where leadership was bottom-up and enabling and which proved to be a threat to the establishment of its time. This was a utopianism rather than some fixed mediated 'other-worldly' myth of utopia. This was a particular type of collective formation, characterized by identity and solidarity, that broke the limits of compatibility within a given system of its day (Melucci 1996). Gone was the temple and its taxes, the separate priesthood, cleansing laws, the divisions of gender, ethnicity, class. This was the inauguration of a culture of reconciliation focusing on the 'bread needed for today and not the worries of tomorrow' (Gospel of Mathew).

### **Identifying the demons and devils**

Attention now moves to the modern day manifestation of this ancient faith within England: *Ecclesia Anglicana*. I have chosen this geography because it is where I spend most of my time living and working, and also where many demonic sectarian structures have been developed and exported across the globe. *Ecclesia Anglicana* splits into three broad clusters, the Roman Catholic denomination, birthed by a somewhat dubious conversion of Emperor Constantine in the third century; the established Anglican denomination, built upon Henry VIII royal *coup d'etat*; and the non-conformist denominations (Baptist, Pentecostals, Charismatics etc.) which have formed and divided since the falling out of the earlier Reformation. This paper argues that each of these developments have been built upon the premise of being a positive justification, or counter-justification, aimed at reforming the doctrinal and pastoral abuses found in the Others. Thus, each new schism presents itself as a replacement to seemingly legalistic and mechanistic practices found within the existing organizations, offering itself as a realignment to the core values of Christianity, whilst also holding some form of anti-corruption agenda. Nonetheless, things are not always as they seem. Despite honorable intentions, there are gaps to be found between the rhetoric and reality.

A good starting point in understanding these discrepancies is with one of the most famous examples – Henry VIII's royal *coup d'etat*. Colin Buchanan (2003: 153) Bishop of Woolwich writes:

'If you want to understand the Reformation in two or three lines, then you need to visualize yourself running a West African developing nation, where, as you look around, you find that a major transnational, say, the Coco-Cola Company, is in fact in a prime position in your land. It is siphoning profits to New York and it has thousands of servants among your citizens, each of whom owes a higher allegiance to New York than to your (and their) country.. Well, as the leader of a self-respecting West African nation you take one obvious step – you expropriate. That was Henry VIII's part in the Reformation'.

This anecdote contains key attributes which reverberate into the construction of every ecclesiastical system. It is therefore an example that helps to identify the demons and devils that inhabit *Ecclesia Anglicana*. The first point is that genuine faith is used, yet again, as a cloak for the development of institutional and national interests. This normally arises from:

'two fundamental conditions: the heterogeneity of the social base...and the rigidity of the ideological apparatus. These two conditions are....fundamental factors in the development of schism[resulting in the] parting of ways from the "mother organisation"...creating a new one, formed usually in opposition to, and to compete with the original organisation.'

(Melucci 1996: 322)

In the case of Henry VIII, it was the nationalist card which played a heavy role, whereas other splits may have relied more on class, regional differences, dysfunctional structures etc. Such cornerstones of separation are normally followed by the construction, or adoption, of a management system that quickly establishes demonic principalities and powers of hierarchy and hero-worship. One head is replaced by another, leading to the instigation of an alternative caste of Theo-Managers who govern the vested interest of the new sect.

It would not be fair to say that all 'early pioneers' who broke with the ecclesiastical tradition of their day were of the same dubious character to Henry VIII or so keen for positions of headship. Radical religious movements such as the Anabaptists, Ranters, Quakers, Diggers etc. challenged many of the issues raised in this paper. In that sense, this paper is part of a long lineage that recognizes that resistance is produced at the point of power, and always has been. Similarly, each fresh plethora of reform have carried new ceremonial practices that set them apart from the existing systems. But the point is that if such movements have not been eradicated by more powerful religious or state systems, normally within a generation of their inception, develop sectarian institutional and national apparatus. Unable to conceive of anything different, culturally reproducing a sense of closure about the way they organize and their organizational type (Fournier *ibid*). In other words, they become occupied by the same demonic principalities and powers.

Following the establishment of a schism, the devils of competition and duplication are released through the growing need within the new sect to strengthen its identity. Strongholds of separation manifest through the commodifying of all 'God talk'; the accumulation of buildings; the formulation of official membership which is all overseen by Theo-managers. Thus, any subsequent acts of innovation and creativity are locked within the boundaries of the institutional framework. The disaster is only made worse by the fact that the structures in question, are seen as being ordained by God, backed with the future utopia of Heaven. Key to all this is the centralization of 'God-money' normally implemented via two core mechanisms, the use of scripture (doctrines of tithing, stewardship, sacrifice etc.) and the enforcement by the caste of Theo-managers. The establishment of traditions that allow the 'God-money' of sect members to be distributed by a trusted elite, paves the way for all other rules and roles within these organizations. From this place, all that is supported, encouraged and released is filtered through the vested interests of the particular denominational structure. The 'dice' become extremely loaded, dissenting voices can be managed and silenced through lack of opportunities, reintegration mechanisms, 'voluntary' flight to local competition, or institutional violence. What results is a structural culture(s) where:

'people [become] dependent on having their knowledge produced for them. It leads to a paralysis of the moral and political imagination. This cognitive disorder rests on the illusion that the knowledge of the individual...is of less value than the knowledge of...[the denomination]. The former is the opinion of individuals. It is merely subjective and is excluded from [developments]. The latter is 'objective' – defined by [the traditions] and promulgated by expert ['Theo-cast']. This objective knowledge is viewed as a commodity which can be refined, constantly improved, accumulated and fed into a process, now called 'decision making'. The new mythology of governance by the manipulation of knowledge-stock inevitably erodes reliance on government by people...People cease to trust their own judgment and then want to be told what they know. Over-confidence in 'better decision-making' first hampers people's ability to decide for themselves and then undermines their

belief that they can decide.

(Illich quoted in Ward 1996:20)

The 'priest-laity' split within sects are seen as inevitable and common sense, but this erodes spontaneous ordering and devalues any non-conforming knowledge and experience. In-turn this creates space to establish a secular-sacred division in which all the important 'God action' gets franchised and located to the ecclesiastical systems. Authority and attention become fixed on the partisan constructs and people's day to day lives become marginalized. Particular gifts and activities are co-opted into the structures, whilst others get 'airbrushed' from the picture. Systems develop a league table of gatherings – Sunday mornings; Home Groups and mid-week meetings, Men's (sic.) breakfasts; 'family time'; 'church holidays'. Squeezed around all of these are the less important gatherings of work, leisure, relating to those outside of the 'flock' (except when trying to convert them) and so on. However, these rigid organizations are currently under great pressure, major cracks are appearing in denominational canvas's and restoration is not an option to a growing number of people.

### **Retelling the narrative – anarchy regained**

'What is taking place is not merely the continued decline of organized Christianity, but the death of the very culture that formerly conferred Christian identity upon the British people as a whole. If a core identity survives for Britons, it is certainly no longer Christian. The culture of Christianity has gone in the Britain of the new millennium.' Brown (2001: 2)

Stuart Murray-Williams (2004) states that this 'post-Christendom' transition will be marked by:

- *From the centre to margins*: in Christendom the Christian story and the churches were central, but in post-Christendom these are marginal.
- *From majority to minority*: in Christendom Christians comprised the (often overwhelming) majority, but in post-Christendom they are a minority.
- *From settlers to sojourners*: in Christendom Christians felt at home in a culture shaped by their story, but in post-Christendom they are aliens, exiles and pilgrims in a culture where they no longer feel at home.
- *From privilege to plurality*: in Christendom Christians enjoyed many privileges, but in post-Christendom they are one community among many in a plural society.
- *From control to witness*: in Christendom churches could exert control over society, but in post-Christendom they exercise influence only through witnessing to their story and its implications.
- *From institution to movement*: in Christendom churches operated mainly in institutional mode, but in post-Christendom they must become again a movement.

Such commentaries signal the demise of *Ecclesia Anglicana*'s social and cultural influence. Despite the internal hierarchical strongholds still holding sway, this wider institutional decline is creating room for many counter-stories. Spaces are opening up for alternative 'tellings' of the 'Jesus narrative'. An increasing number of people are leaving institutional religion for a new reason. They are not leaving because they have lost their faith, they are leaving to preserve their faith (Hjalmarsen 2004; Murray-Williams 2004). Many who for years have dwelt in isolated spaces, are now engaging in a struggle for recognition and the vehicle that they are using is their own lives.

'Personal narratives can develop new communal narratives. Building the awareness and understanding of individuals can help them to find a place within the journey towards organizational change. This helps to develop alternative perspectives and acknowledge overlapping values, aims and purposes that build community practice.' (Paul Bate 2004: 25)

Without the endorsement of the denominational landscape, living stories of irregular futures are springing up in varied unorthodox places. This document is not interested in specific case studies, but more an analysis of the cultural and social shift(s) taking place. The argument emerging is that organic *ekklesia*, which organize themselves without the authority of man, are always in existence, like seeds beneath the snow, buried under the weight of Theo-management, denominational principalities and powers, generational strongholds and their suicidal loyalties, differences and historical separatism(s) (Ignazio Silone:1943 – free reworking). These seeds cannot be contained within the boundaries of formal bureaucracies. Instead, they link only to the extent that they are sharing in journeys that are enabling two or more actors to recognize their interdependence and potential (Diani 2003).

At first glance these fresh expressions could be seen as the next wave of sectarianism within the denominational landscape. Undoubtedly (see next section) there are defaults that could cause the production of fresh structural schisms. But these stories are developing anti-bodies to resist historical defaults and avoid the demonic powers discussed earlier. Five particular characteristics are worth pointing out:

- A hermeneutic of suspicion towards hierarchical structures
- A commitment to local networks over denominational loyalties
- A rejection of platform, personality and programmed ecclesiology
- A deep regret and rejection of *Ecclesia Anglicana's* alignment with state colonial powers
- A pursuit of stories that are earthed in individual heart and life spheres

These markers are not an ingredient list guaranteed to be found within each narrative, they represent sketched lines, announcements of change, formations of a new idiom, a cacophony of lifestyles. Institutionally powerless and fragile in terms of firm identities, yet while people detox their mindsets from *Ecclesia Anglicana*, utopianism is being honed. That is to say, rejection and removal of hierarchical principalities and powers is leaving spaces for people to reposition themselves in spheres such as family, work, leisure. This is causing rigorous reappraisals of faith and also deepening connections with issues such as the environment, social justice, politics, economics etc. People are reclaiming their lives, stories of resistance, liberation and grace are starting to breakout from under the 'snow'. Awareness and understanding is producing contemporary perspectives, connecting values, aims and purposes. What's more, these 'acts of rebellion' are finding strong endorsement from a re-reading of the projective-narrative contained in early Christian writings. Projective-narratives help stimulate dialogue for an individual's life, they assist in shaping autobiographies, 'prescribing not static roles but dynamic shapes of our lives' (Tololyan 1989). In rejecting the mediating powers within denominational systems, people are going straight to the source, as they would see it. These are not simply acts of worship, but a grappling with Jesus' ontology which also resisted the devices and hegemony of Theo-management.

For many, being cut off from the demonic powers inhabiting *Ecclesia Anglicana* has sharpened a hermeneutic of suspicion towards all man-made hierarchies. People are not only taking a fresh look at the historical 'roads we have failed to take' (Ward 1973), they are redirecting their own faith journeys into new anarchic alternatives. New dreams and visions are being birthed through personal and communal narratives. This is creating contexts in which:

'No matter the story, no matter the ending, truth is in the narrative. All story is valid, all

story – both individual and group – can add to the collective of the community. When we see life as simply a collection of stories, we start to understand....our humanity. The narrative allows for creative, adaptable, nonlinear thinking with group input and an interactivity based on transparency and a living worldview.' (Hjalmarson 2004: 6)

This battle against institutionalization is continual, taking place where power will always err towards centralization and radicals will always need to question it. In that sense it is a story without an end point. The cultural and social shifts being considered embody the pursuit of utopianism. However, this struggle is not only being engaged 'by exposing the normal as outrageous, nothing less than an act of collective suicidal insanity.....establishing a sense of estrangement on making the "normal", the currently possible looks strange, absurd, grotesque'.(Fournier: *ibid*) More important is the creativity and innovation that is exploding in and through these personal and collective stories. The ability to identify what is wrong is a fairly 'cheap gift' when placed alongside the greater challenge to create alternatives, without being co-opted, corrupted or compromised.

The linkages of these tales are not only driven by anger against denominationalism, rather shapes are emerging through the individuality, commonality and celebration of the journey. The impact of such devolution will remain hidden for some time to come. It is in fact impossible to know *a priori* whether or not certain forms of action will impact the system. But, as it has been recognized in countless other social movements, the operation of one's analytical frame alone is purposeful (Melucci 2003). For many people, participation in these uncharted waters is what it is all about; self-managing journeys of faith, without the old security produced by Theo-management, creating networks:

'of elements connecting through one another rather than to each other through a centre [characterized] by their scope, complexity..flexibility' [in which] 'nuclei of leadership emerge and shift' [with] 'the infrastructure powerful enough for the system to hold itself together...without a central facilitator or supporter.' (Schon quoted in Ward 1973: 52)

Progress within these stories is not simply evaluated by change to structures and systems. These post-denominational tales are announcing, through their ontology, that change can take place - there is life outside! People are not trying to build new systems with new centers of command and control. On the contrary, these stories are:

'..disproving the inevitability of the processes of bureaucratization' showing that 'it is not an inevitable and a irreversible outcome; and above all it does not necessarily accompany the radical [original] aims of the organisation.' (Melucci *ibid*: 325)

It is important to understand that this is not working on the logic of creating a 'critical mass', that will ultimately overthrow the current structures. Rather these stories are more akin to 'critical yeast', wriggling their way throughout all aspects of life without any centre of control. If change will take place it is going to take happen through micro-stories not a revolutionary moment in time. Anarchic 'sight lines and language paths' (Thwaites 2002) are opening up through waves of self-management in overlapping interests. These stories must be understood in their own terms, namely, they are what they are, their practices are their self definition (Castells 2001). The identity politic of these emerging *ekklesia* is focused and earthed in localities.

'[People have] toned down the ambition to "change the world" to change their lives. Out of hope some have dared to believe there are alternatives'. (Fournier *ibid*: 191)

But how are such testimonies to survive and develop? What are the dangers that they face and how

much can contemporary utopian and organizational theory assist in mobilizing these narratives?

### Reconfiguring the landscape

'Mobilization is always a process of transfer of preexisting resources to the benefit of a new objective. During the process, a true 'mutation' takes place...capable of creating new resources. More generally, we could say that historical social movements, because they are situated in space and time in a concrete society, are always at a point of conjunction between past and future, between old solidarities and new conflicts. A movement mobilizes because it has gathered the legacy and the resources of preexisting social structures and has orientated them towards new goals of transformation.'

(Melucci ibid:292)

To begin answering the questions raised at the end of the last section, Melucci's thoughts need closer consideration. In particular the implications of gathering the 'legacy and the resources of the preexisting social structures'. This paper has already established a distinction between the legacy and resources of Jesus and the earliest *ekklesia*; and that of the *Ecclesia Anglicana* with its demonic principalities and powers. The social and cultural nature of post-denominational stories reveal that they are not trying to gain the legacy of the latter. There is a purposeful standing apart from the current hegemonic powers, by these 'other voices which have remained silent for so long', making visible the relationships of ecclesiastical structures which are 'fixed, through [their] history, in rituals, in meticulous procedures that impose rights and obligation' (Foucault 1977). Thus narratives of non-participation are debunking culturally reproduced hierarchies, by tapping into the former legacy of Jesus' life and the early *ekklesia*. The mobilization taking place is:

'not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.'

(Letter to the Ephesians)

That is to say, the struggle is with the demonic legacies, ideas and traditions found throughout the entire ecclesiastical landscape. People are wrestling for identity, with the aim of propagating 'new goals of transformation'. The tactics and processes emerging from these narratives are reflecting Jesus' example in appropriating familiar things and infusing them with new symbols, images and meanings. Rejecting sectarianism and hierarchy is allowing silenced individuals and groups to access public space in which to cultivate and express their voices and memories, undermining the authoritative memory of the dominant culture (Misztal 2003). Defeat of these powers is resulting in anarchic networks devoid of Theo-management, and, more importantly, with the ability to express and self-manage faith journeys.

However, it is not hard to see that this has its potential problems. In particular, history reveals that concern should focus on the possibility of change actually taking place - that these fragile, vulnerable stories may start to have 'success' and influence within their cultural spheres. That the legacy of Jesus will start to be located more within these pavement parables, than the current pulpit systems. This danger becomes manifest in three interlocking organizational defaults.

Firstly, there is a possibility the this freshly found empowerment may lead to a new caste of *gnosis-priests*, or knowledge producers. If people's stories grow, then Illich's professionalizing process talked about earlier could become active. Rather than using experience gained through stories to encourage others on their own journeys, the authenticity and expertise gathered by some could simply develop a new caste of Theo-managers. Developing environments where people don't bother foraging for their own knowledge but live off the stories of others. Such legitimate offers must be radically rejected by all involved. The line between stimulating and encouraging people to engage

in their works of life and developing a permanent social position as keeper(s) of the 'knowledge stock' can be thin, but needs to be continually clarified. There are already signs where this battle is happening. Names such as 'Fresh Expressions' and the 'Emerging Church' are already commodifying grassroots stories and developing crowns for their new 'heirs of innovation'.

Secondly, some of these new *gnosis-priests* may be (already are) co-opted back into the dominant ecclesiastical structures. Being told and believing that they are 'the ones' that can turn things around and really make the difference. The opportunity of being able to pursue a 'radical agenda' with the backing of institutional power is an enticing hook, particularly when such individuals start to acquire the 'cares of the world' (kids, partners, mortgage etc.). Nonetheless, any creative stories will be co-opted and processed through the existing structural vested interests. The devil truly is in the detail! Regardless of the genuine good intentions within such reform agendas, there is little to suggest that a real paradigm shift will occur by adopting these tactics.

Thirdly, and most predictably in the eyes of the 'history tells us so' camp, is that a new denomination will be formed - 'The Church of Emerging Stories' – and with it the 'need' to organize, delegate, communicate and, most importantly, look for leaders. Let this parable illustrate:

'In the not far distant past, the great spirit began to speak to the Indians in the north, in the western coast lands and on the eastern flats. Little bands began to meet in their tepees to rediscover their common life in the great spirit and to make deep fellowship. They held pow wows, spoke wisdom and smoked the pipe of peace. Each group a band of equal brothers freely serving and sharing gifts together. After a while, each band began to recognize a warrior who seemed to have a deeper knowledge of the great spirit, to whom they would listen with respect, go to for advice and look to for organization. They gave him a feather to wear and he was soon known as 'one feather'. After three moons, 'one feather' ceased to hunt and fish. The others brought him gifts. He told them the great spirit's words, how to plan their lives, how to bring up their children. Some Indians found it more difficult to hear the great spirit for themselves, finding it easier to listen to 'one feather'.

'It was not long before a One Feather with a larger band than most, was given a pony by his people and began to travel. He met with other bands and eventually called a meeting of One Feathers. 'We need to get more organized,' he told them, 'the present situation is a woolly mess'. 'Didn't the great spirit himself bring it about?' asked one brave. 'Of course,' replied the pony rider, 'but he has told me that things must change'. So the One Feathers decided, as leaders, that they themselves should have a leader. So it was that pony rider became Little Chief Two Feathers, with an appropriate headdress and a special tepee. He would not have much time to share with the 'no-feathers' now, but would instruct the One Feathers, who would pass his teaching down. Some One Feathers now found it more difficult to hear the great spirit for themselves and found it easier to listen to L.C.T.F.

'Some moons later, Two Feathers, who now had a horse and traveled more widely holding many gatherings for One Feathers, came across others like himself. They met together in solemn conclave and decided that they too must be 'covered'. After some fuss and a lot of pow wow, Big Chief Many Feathers emerged. He was given a many-horsed chariot and a team of Two Feathers to travel the country, giving input and guidance. Some of the Two Feathers now found it more difficult to hear the great spirit for themselves and found it easier to listen to B.C.M.F.

'Meantime, the great spirit began to speak to many no-feathers in the north and in the coast lands and on the eastern flats. Little bands began to gather in their tepees to share their

common life in the great spirit and to enter into deep fellowship'  
(Source unknown)

The question arises: can such organizational snares be avoided whilst mobilization narratives are sustained? Once again, the theory of Valerie Fournier (ibid.) and her ideas of developing 'estrangement and cultural outrage' is of help here. In short, a complete paradigm shift demands total avoidance of all the enticements (wages, positions, fame, respectability, security etc.) offered through the governing structures. It is encouraging to note the hermeneutic of suspicion towards hierarchical structures; a rejection of platform, personality and programmed ecclesiology; and a deep regret and rejection of *Ecclesia Anglicana's* alignment with state colonial powers within many emerging stories. However, these marks of alienation have to be continually stimulated with an attitude of outrage toward the ways of Theo-management. Juxtaposing early Christian writings with the principalities and powers in the current ecclesiastical structures enables the discernment of the bureaucratic, dysfunctional, intolerant and irrelevant demonic powers. A reconfiguration of the current landscape will only be sustained by ongoing estrangement and outrage towards the hegemonic organizations. If there is space given for 'Big Chief Many Feather's to arise, the chances are that that is what will happen. To defeat the powers of vertical organization and relationships requires processes of decision making to remain with narrative producers.

'[Decision making] is surely the end point in...any kind of ethics, since it is the moment where judgments are translated into some kind of practice, some kind of action which impacts upon the world'  
(Parker ibid: 108)

Any removal of decision making from the 'story creators' develops a faceless dimension to the effects of power. The separatist 'logic' of hierarchy normalizes decision making that strengthens the professionalizing cycle, paving the way again for the centralization of resources and the need to build corporate identity. In turn, this results in systems where it is difficult for people to see connections between actions and the impression that the 'system' is unrolling independently and there is nothing to stop it (Fournier: ibid). Estrangement from such processes will require anarchic decision making that ensures ownership is held at a grassroots level. It is from those places that mobilizing narratives can start to translate joint decisions and commitments found within personal and communal narratives, creating:

'the possibility of the construction of memory from the bottom up, as it appreciates a way of remembering and forgetting that starts with the local and the particular and then builds outwards towards a total story.'  
(Misztal 2004: 64)

Story telling must become a central part in the evolving strategies, as it holds huge opportunities for anarchic change and redefinition. Institutional power is replaced with consensual relational power, liberating human ontogeny and the skills and gifts carried within each individual. Opening up spaces for connection, articulation and expression can create environments of temporary liberation from the prevailing truth of the established order; it marks the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privileges, norms and prohibitions (Bakhtin 1968: 109). Transient dwelling places for exchange and encouragement increase the likelihood of mobilization and cultural tipping points. It is within these sites of innovation that memories can counter the entrenched sectarian thinking. In other words telling stories enables alternative moral economies and identities to emerge and grow. Narrative development, networked relationships, commitment to spontaneous ordering and flat-structures, produce a positive counter-balance, alongside the rejection of Theo-management, through which to tackle denominational systems. Renegotiating the official version of *Ecclesia Anglicana*, this is utopianism with its alternative possibilities, continually (re)working the narrative of Jesus. New social movements that have resisted the common sense offered by the principalities and powers of ecclesiastical organizations, being driven by acts of creative anarchy. Leaving previously known



locations for unknown destinations, knowing that failure is ever present but return is not an option.

### **Conclusion: stripping spontaneous ordering of God-talk**

So what relevance does any of this have with organizational theory and the world we are faced with? Many may think that this paper falls into the trap of:

'simply flagging up terms such as self governance, responsibility, small scale community. [But] does not in itself produce the promise of a better or even different future: for these terms can be incorporated into forms of oppressive orders and they have been embraced by all sides of the political spectrum'. (Fournier *ibid*:195)

Or to put it another way, is this not just a case of 'Beelzebub driving out Beelzebub?' The implications of *Ecclesia Anglicana* landscape changing is of no concern to most people and their struggles. Many, judging by multiple indicators, regard the church at best as irrelevant, or at worst part of the problem. Fair enough. As stated at the beginning, we all approach reading and writing with our own 'existing prejudices'. So let's step back and strip out all of this God-talk and see what is left. In essence it is possible here to re-route this paper through a:

'picture of power and struggle that emerges in the anarchist perspective...one of intersecting networks of power rather than hierarchy' (Ward 1973:44)

Removal of the projective-narrative of Jesus, but not a commitment to a world without managerialism and hierarchical power, seems to deliver up an agenda of self-governing, self-reflecting, micro communities against management (Parker 2002). The dominant organizational logic found within the governing structure of, so called, Western democracies is very similar to the principalities and power reviewed in this piece of writing. Faceless hierarchical systems globally managing decision making, power and culture(s). All the same, what are the chances and challenges of removing the current organizational hegemony?

'From one point of view the outlook is bleak: centralized power, whether that of government or super-government, or of private capitalism or the super-capitalism of giant international corporations has never been greater.' (Ward 2003:11)

So exactly where in the midst of such forces will hope and possibility come from? The response would still be the same – personal, communal and mobilizing narratives, spontaneously ordering their future directions. For all of the reasons expressed above, the reconfiguration or removal of dominant organizational discourse lies firmly in the realm of anarchic narratives and contemporary social movements.

'Although the variety of objectives, strategies and actors involved...renders it difficult to identify winning strategies for new collective actors, it can, nevertheless, be said that in recent decades the structure[s] of power in liberal democracies appears to have been transformed in the direction of greater recognition for emerging [social movement] interests' (Della Porta & Diani 1999: 254)

Having said that, there does seem to be real need to challenge some of the organizational thinking within these movements, as little attention is given to the ontology and methodology raised by anarchic philosophical frameworks. Such oversight seems to hold many of the same sectarian problems raised above. A classic example of this is the view of leadership within social movement theory. Even Alberto Melucci (*ibid*:332), with all of his attention given to the submerged and latent power in social movements has this to say:

'Processes of mobilization and the organizational structure of a movement are fueled by the action of the movement's leaders. It is the leadership which promotes the pursuit of goals, develops strategies and tactics for action, and formulates an ideology. The penetration of the movement in the society, the loyalty and involvement of its members, and the consensus of different social groups all depend upon leaders' actions'

Acceptance or rejection of this logic and legacy will still determine which principalities and powers inhabit relationships and organizations. Narratives which resist the 'logic of leadership' carry a DNA which is altogether different to the majority of organizational forms. They cherish the quest of:

'finding out what it means to be human, who we are, what we're capable of becoming, how we might organize our lives, and how our potential is stunted and deformed by hierarchical social relationships' (Weigl 2005: 6)

Anarchy will always be slandered and silenced as a Utopian pipe-dream or caricatured through sensationalist media coverage. All the same, when seen as a utopianism that stops trying to 'change the world but simply change...lives' possibilities do seem to open up. The task becomes developing ontology that will challenge the political assumptions built into the present systems of organization (Parker 2004: 212). If alternative structures and politics are to formulate, then a convergence of many positions seems a priority. But will the identification against the system and management enable sustainable mobilization within a rainbow coalition of voices and positions? Is George Monbiot right in saying 'we have discovered an oppositional accord which overrides our differences?' I am not too sure. As previously identified, oppositional politics need the balanced of a radical ontology of hope and spontaneous ordering. Identifying the demons and casting them out always holds the danger of being contaminated by the same powers. The processes and tactics of resistance must be seen as important as the acts of opposition. This will require cross-fertilization of stories to develop experience and discernment of all forms of emerging managerialism and hierarchical power within grassroot narratives. This is important because problems arise in the development of alternative possibilities:

'There seems, in fact, to be a dilemma of culture: truly strong movement cultures tend to stimulate commitment and participation but to be authoritarian, while weak cultures, even though they are democratic and participatory, under stimulate commitment and participation' (Loftland 1985: Chapter 9)

As Loftland (1995) states elsewhere, the trick must be to cultivate culture(s) that sustain participation without 'stifling democratic participation and sponsoring demeaning treatment of non-members'. Anarchic syndicalist thinking does seem to hold some potential hope in breaking this impasse. Divergent groups identifying values and goals through which they can connect and create, whilst not having to be fully converted to one another's worldview. But the main point being made is that this could only take place from an agreement, within all spheres of life, to cast out the demonic principalities of hierarchical leadership and organization. This paper demonstrates that such a commitment is developing within those connected and disenchanted with *Ecclesia Anglicana*, but it would seem madness to miss the opportunity to identify the strength of this quest within the context of academia.

The hope in writing this paper was to have my current praxis critiqued, my paradoxical Christian anarchism provoked and plundered. I anticipate that this will be the case at SCOS: Nijmegen, but a greater hope is to identify how the analysis of *Ecclesia Anglicana* resonates with the working environments of European academia. This 'stranger from a strange land' would be truly fascinated to know how much hierarchical power, holds the dominant organizational logic within universities? And what movements and narratives are trying to dislodge its hold? Or should the

questions be. What appetite is there to subvert structures and release more anarchic forms of pedagogy? What is being done to counter sectarianism within departments and universities? How much of a 'name making' culture is there within academia? What is the role of networks such as SCOS in making the shift from idea generation to reflective implementation in academia's own organizational culture(s)? What level of change is taking place at a personal symbolic lifestyle level? Change that not only courts 'expected controversy' via radical interpretation, theory and publication(s), but that which could cause individuals and groups to face sanction and expulsion. Do such struggles exist? What do they look like? And where are they being fought?

Looking from the outside in, it would seem that such issues would raise similar struggles and dilemmas as that being fought by the grassroots narratives discussed in this paper. Yet without such anarchic opposition the demons and devils of hierarchy, managerialism and personality cult seem to be the only options left. That is to say:

'if you're going to dine with those cannibals sooner or later  
darling you're going to get eaten'  
(Nick Cave 2005)

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**Paper SCOS XXIV**

**The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Organizations and demons**

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**Introduction**

The dominant entrepreneurship discourse predominantly focuses on the economic contribution of entrepreneurship and the alleged psychological traits of successful entrepreneurs. This narrative departs from the premise that entrepreneurs are white males, which results in a static and limited view of entrepreneurship. Yet, entrepreneurial identities are not unitary or fixed, as identity construction is a process which is contextually contingent (Haraway, 1991) and continuously developed through a dialogue with various constituencies. Consequently, entrepreneurial identities are unstable, fluid and multiple and constructed through various identity categories such as ethnicity and gender. This in line with the concept of intersectionality, which implies that everyone is always simultaneously positioned at multiple 'axes' of categories of identity and which provides a theoretical guideline to understand the interconnections of social categories which have diverse power implications (Wekker & Lutz, 2001; Crenshaw, 1997).

It is both theoretically and empirically relevant to investigate the intersectionality of people's gender, ethnic and entrepreneurial identities. Although the majority of the growing group of ethnic minority entrepreneurs is male, most stories on migrant entrepreneurship ignore the roles their female relatives play in these businesses (Westwood & Bhachu, 1987). Moreover, 26 % of all ethnic minority entrepreneurs in the Netherlands are female (EIM, 2004)<sup>2</sup>. Yet, little is known about the ways they are supported by their families and how family relations affect their identities.

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<sup>1</sup> Please do not quote without the permission of the author

<sup>2</sup> Respectively 12% of the Moroccans, and 17% of the Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands are female (EIM, 2004).

In the Netherlands, the Turks and Moroccans constitute two of the largest ethnic minority populations. They share an Islamic background, a comparable Mediterranean culture, as well as a similar migration history<sup>3</sup>. Today, a substantial number of this group is engaged in self-employment. That is why this paper focuses on the entrepreneurial identity constructions of female entrepreneurs of these two migrant groups<sup>4</sup>. The aim of this paper is to explore what kind of stories these Female Entrepreneurs of Moroccan and Turkish Origins' (hereafter called FEMTOs) tell about their entrepreneurial identities and how these stories are related to the gender and ethnic roles their families expect them to play.

The interrelationship between family and entrepreneurship has hitherto been under explored (Anderson et al., 2005). Only the literature on migrant entrepreneurship specifically deals with family as a source of resources, but often focuses on either the positive or negative consequences of this alleged entrepreneurial reliance and is less concerned with the entrepreneurial identity constructions that stem from the interaction between the entrepreneur and his/her family members. In line with Aldrich & Cliff's (2003) call for applying a 'family embeddedness perspective' in entrepreneurship studies, this paper hence contributes to the entrepreneurship and intersectionality literature by exploring how a hitherto under researched group of entrepreneurs construct their gender, ethnic and entrepreneurial identities in relation to their families. Inspired by the conference theme to view organizational life as Hollywood scripts, this paper takes issue with the dichotomy between the 'good and the bad' of family reliance of entrepreneurs. By using the ethno-drama/soap approach, it reflects on the ambiguity of family relations in the context of female ethnic minority entrepreneurship. Conceiving of FEMTOs' life stories as melodramas constructed by various actors and mediated through imaginative audiences (Rhodes & Brown, 2005), this paper analyses how these female characters develop agency in relation to distinct ideas of femininity, ethnicity and entrepreneurship that are predominant within their families.

The first section presents the societal story on Turkish and Moroccan women in which the stories of FEMTOs need to be situated. Next, the methodological approach of this paper will be explained. In the fourth paragraph, the narratives of five FEMTOs will be used to illustrate what kind of stories these women tell to make sense of their entrepreneurial identities in relation to the societal scripts on gender, ethnicity and entrepreneurship that are (partly) incorporated by their families. The final section of this paper provides a conclusion on the way FEMTOS develop storytelling strategies to cope with the family relations that are involved in the construction of their multiple identities.

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<sup>3</sup> Acknowledging there are of course several differences between the two, this paper (following other researchers in the Dutch context) takes both ethnicities as one group, and the focus is merely on the differences within than between.

## 2. The societal discourse on Turkish and Moroccan women in the Netherlands

The Turks and Moroccans<sup>5</sup> comprise an important group of migrants in the Netherlands as they share a similar migration history and religion. Their labor and migration history in the Netherlands starts in the 1960's, when Turkish and Moroccan men were recruited by the Dutch government from rural, poor areas to perform low educated labor in Dutch industries. The term 'guest workers' implies their stay was intended to be temporary until there were no longer shortages on Dutch labor market. However, it turned out their stay needed to be prolonged, and hence family reunification was supported by the Dutch government since the early 1970's onwards (Lutz, 1996). The women who came here to join their husbands stayed at home and took care of the household and their families as they barely spoke Dutch and were used to fulfill a traditional role in their home-countries. Therefore, the first generation Turkish and Moroccan women hardly participated on the labor market. Their daughters, women of the second and third generation, nowadays participate much more on the labor market. Nevertheless, compared to women from other migrant groups and Dutch women, their participation rate continues to be rather low<sup>6</sup> (although it doubled between 1995-2003 to 28% and from 17 to 29% respectively).

Until a few years ago the public opinion on migration used to be rather neutral in the Netherlands and many politicians even emphasized the virtues of the multicultural society. However, this vision changed dramatically because of politicians such as Bolkestein and Fortuin who openly questioned Islamic culture and the desirability of immigration, political occurrences (such as '9/11' and the constant fear of Al-Quada), and socio-economical developments (high unemployment and the forming of ghettos in the larger towns). Hence, a debate was initiated under the heading of 'the multicultural drama', calling attention to the isolated and disadvantaged position of ethnic minorities in Dutch society. In today's discourse on migration the term multiculturalism has been replaced by integration or even assimilation. The new adage as well as policy is that ethnic minorities should incorporate the norms and values of Dutch society. White Dutch people are represented as a homogeneous group (called 'autochtonen') in opposition to 'others' (called 'allochtonen'), who are non-whites and/or Muslims. Consequently, migrants have become the cultural, ethnic and religious 'others' (Lutz, 1996).

This discourse on ethnic minorities is not only expressed by dichotomies, such as 'they' and 'we', but it is also shifting towards a discussion about the alleged contradiction between Islamic and Western values. The public debate often focuses on the position of women as they are the bearers of cultural and religious values (Prins, 2002). This position is predominantly uttered by in Dutch media often disputed practices such as honor-revenge, female circumcision and arranged marriages. This discourse has huge implications for the position of these women. For instance, wearing a head-scarf seems to underline the

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<sup>5</sup> The Turks (350.000) constitute the largest group, while the Moroccans (305.000.) constitute the third group (CBS, 2004)

<sup>6</sup> The participation grade of Dutch, native women was 57% in 2003 (Portegijs et al., 2004).

oppression of these women in Dutch discourse as it is regarded to be incompatible with the Dutch self-image as an emancipated society (Van Nieuwkerk, 2003). Ergo, 'being different' is understood against the opposition of two sorts of women: the Dutch woman, and the 'other' Islamic woman (Lutz, 1996). In this view, the Islamic woman is considered to be the prototype of the female migrant, captured in her own culture without equal rights and social equality. The Dutch expect her to take up traditional gender roles, which often coincide with the positioning of these women by their ethnic community in relation to men. Within this context women's activities are restricted as they might damage the honor and bring shame to the family. Hence, Muslim women, who in the Netherlands are particularly Turkish and Moroccan, are categorized as either un-emancipated, or 'Dutch' or 'integrated'.



### 3. Methodology

Research on female migrant entrepreneurs is still in its infancy and little is known about the situational contingency of enterprising. Hence, an exploratory study on the relationship between FEMTOs' multiple identity constructions and family dynamics contributes to a better understanding of entrepreneurship.

In accordance with the intra-categorical complexity approach to intersectionality which reveals the complexity of lived experiences and actions of particular groups at neglected categories of intersection (McCall, 2005, p. 1774), twenty narratives were gathered. Narratives explore the lived experiences of particular individuals and extrapolate illustratively to the broader social location embodied by these individuals (McCall 2005: 1781) in order to reveal the partiality, complexity and diversity within the group these individuals belong to. To approach and select FEMTOs, various networks for women and ethnic minorities were contacted, and additionally the 'snow-balling' method was used. Using McAdams' model (MacAdams, 1993), the FEMTOs were asked to organize their life-story in life chapters referring to the most important phases in their lives. After this open part, a few specific questions regarding the theoretical framework were asked. All conversations between FEMTO and researcher were conducted in Dutch.

The narratives were recorded, literally transcribed and sent back to the FEMTOs for possible corrections. After reading the adjusted transcripts, content analysis was applied to find general patterns and themes (Lieblich et al., 1998); one of them was family dynamics which this paper focuses on. A holistic approach towards narrative analysis was used to reveal the kind of stories these women tell in relation to the available societal scripts, or cultural repertoires (Buitelaar, 2002), on gender, ethnic and entrepreneurial roles. There is an increasing attention for stories in organization studies, and the link with fiction has been made by several authors such as Rhodes & Brown (2005) and Czarniawska (2006). Mangham & Overington (1987) even conceptualize organizations as theatre. The narrative structures that govern most of the telling of stories in Western tradition are 'comedy', 'romance', 'tragedy' and 'irony' (Murray, 1989). As soaps and melodramas generally comprise all four elements, this paper uses the ethno-drama (Rhodes & Brown, 2005) or soap approach to illustrate the ambiguities and dynamics of family involvement in entrepreneurship. By converting the life stories into story-like scenes<sup>7</sup>, the processes of identity construction that are mediated by family members are dynamically illustrated.

The ethno-drama/soap approach is very suitable to demonstrate that stories are always filtered, mediated, and linguistic constructions made in close interaction with the researcher. Ergo, there is no such thing as a 'true' reading of stories. It is not so much the question *if* these stories are true, but *how* they are true: what do the texts provoke (Mak, 2000). It should however be noted that this approach is not unproblematic and could be conceived as an easy way to entertain the reader. Applying this approach in social science therefore requires the responsibility of the author to avoid too much of an irony and to stay

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<sup>7</sup> All stories are based on the telling of the interviewees. The quotation marks display the literally told.

as close as possible to the words of the interviewees. Moreover, it is important to recognize that the researcher's identity might affect the stories these women tell. As the researcher and author of this paper is a highly-educated woman of Dutch decent, it is conceivable that the stories might have been told in a different way if the researcher would have had another identity. Yet on the other hand it is not only the researcher who is in power; FEMTOs also have agency in the way they tell about their identities and it is the ethno-drama genre that symbolically shows this. Just as stories may have a truth effect on their audiences, FEMTOs can present their characters or identities to imaginable audiences by strategically performing their life stories (Ramsdell, 1973; Brown, 1994). Since I am interested to explore the nature of the stories these FEMTOs are able to tell within their family environments to portray their identities, it is therefore interesting to reveal the narrative styles these women use to acquire this agency of identity construction.

## **The stories**

These are the article's main characters: Nerli is of Alawite Turkish descent and owns a dress boutique. She is 33 and arrived in the Netherlands at age 7, has just remarried a man she met in Turkey and has a son from her first marriage. Occasionally, her sister helps her out. Mouria, a 47-year-old Moroccan female, who came in the Netherlands when she was 17, has her own beauty-centre and has one employee. She is married and has a son and a daughter. Gülay, 30, is of Turkish origin and has a hairdresser shop. She employs a young girl and a middle-aged woman, is married, and has 2 children. She came to live in the Netherlands when she was 1,5. Sourya (30) came to the Netherlands when she was 8, has a traditional Moroccan clothing shop, and in the back of her shop she also dresses women and does their make-up. She is married and has a daughter. Finally Salima, 32 years old and born in the Netherlands, is a traditional Moroccan weddingplanner, or *zyana*. She is divorced, has a daughter from her former marriage and has a new Moroccan boy-friend.

Below, three acts are presented in which becomes clear how family members play an important role in the development of FEMTOs' entrepreneurial identities. Act one demonstrates how these women are often taught in their childhoods about archetypical images of femininity. Act two illustrates how marriage and raising a family might affect the development of these women's entrepreneurial identities. The final act shows how family members may hamper or sustain these identities. The acts will be analyzed by interpreting the variety of stories these women are able to tell within their family context, and how they make use of the gender, ethnic and entrepreneurial scripts these women have access to. By making analogies with existing melodramas and soaps it will be metaphorically illustrated what kind of stories these characters create in order to come across the sometimes restrictive gender, ethnic and entrepreneurial scripts that are often incorporated by their families.

### ***Act 1: 'How to become a good woman'***

Sex-role socialization of girls in Turkish and Moroccan communities, or the way families play a key role in the decision on the appropriateness of behaviors and actions of the two sexes (Mischell, 1971; Raffaelli & Ontai, 2004), is often centered on appropriate behavior among girls<sup>8</sup>. They are expected to behave feminine and to adhere to female roles that are highly related to the private sphere, such as motherhood and being a housewife (Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2006). Therefore, they are rewarded and/or punished for proper gender behavior and inclined to copy this behavior from their parents and peers. The result of such processes is that gender roles become a central feature of adult personality. In this act we see how Sourya, Mouria and Gülay perform these roles in dialogue with their parents and siblings.

At age 16 Sourya always has to knead bread right after she comes home from school. However, she prefers to play soccer. Why can't she just play outside like her brother, she resists? But her father tells her she is just not allowed. To mislead him, Sourya often tells him she is with girlfriends. When her father finds out she is still playing soccer, he is very angry and determined about his daughter not leaving the house at night. And so he tells Sourya to quit. Sourya is very disappointed, and still attempts: 'well, then I will play indoor soccer'. But she isn't allowed either. As she is so hung up on soccer, she does it anyway; and so she plays soccer for four years against her father's wishes... But then the inevitable happens: a broadcasting company comes along to film the team; imagine her father's friends' reactions after they see her in short trousers on television! The telephone is constantly ringing: 'what's that, you don't have a son do you, but a daughter!?' And so again she has to quit, just when she is asked for the Amsterdam eleven. 'Do you know what the problem with Moroccan people is', she says, 'they think: what will the people say? They don't think: how does my daughter feel, is she happy?' It is in these years she starts thinking about setting up her own business, as she is eager to do 'what you want, what you like, how you want it, your own little shop'.

This scene demonstrates how Sourya is trained to be a 'good Moroccan woman', which refers to domestic activities, as opposed to her brother who can play outside. Just like in *Bend it like Beckham*, a melodrama about a young girl ('Jessminder') of Indian descent who wants to play football but is prohibited to do so<sup>9</sup>, Sourya's Moroccan family does not allow her to play football as this does not agree with their idea of femininity. Whereas the movie has a happy ending- during the wedding of his other daughter Jessminder's father is so touched by his older daughter's happiness and Jessminder's grieve that he allows Jessminder to go to an important match- Sourya's parents are not to be persuaded. Accordingly, she has to quit in order to save her father's name. Yet, as she wants to perform an alternative image of femininity, she revolts against this 'gender inequality', and decides to do the opposite by telling white lies, doing things secretly, and just persisting.

This scene illustrates that Sourya apparently has always had an independent character, and that 'the public' attracts her more than 'the private'. This plot furthermore suggests how Sourya's family contributes to the development of an entrepreneurial identity while obstructing the development of a more 'masculine' gender identity: all her father's and Moroccan communities' objections even make her more determined to set up something for herself. Ergo, in this story we clearly see how Sourya is socialized to perform 'appropriate feminine behavior', and how, while ignoring her father's demands, she tries to resist

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<sup>8</sup> Phalet & Schönplug (2001) explicate that the effect of parental collectivism on conformity goals is stronger in Turkish than in Moroccan parents. This fits into the pattern of the more tightly knit Turkish immigrant families.

narrow-formulated gender norms. These expectations can be related to the discourse of honor and shame which prevails in her family's social environment and which they seem to have incorporated. When gender role expectations are not met, the honor (*nefs* in Moroccan and *namus* in Turkish<sup>10</sup>) of the family is often at stake (Pels 2000: 77). Woman's sexuality is a threat to men's identity and gendered power relations, especially when she enters the public without a guarding male. Sadiqi & Ennaji (2006: 2004) expressively illustrate this process of trespassing the gendered public/private space dichotomy by their Arabic linguistic analysis of the verb *xarjat* (she went out), which marks the 'going out' of a woman as a movement from the private/interior to the public/exterior. Hence, the status of the two sexes is strongly related to the division of labor: domestic versus 'man's work'. Men's honor in families is guaranteed by exercising social control/gossip, mostly executed by the traditional sectors of the community. Women have to 'watch how they behave', and wearing a veil in the public space facilitates them to remain symbolically in the private space (Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2006). The preservation of women's chastity contributes to the separation of women and men in public spheres and is an important mechanism to prevent shame, being predominantly connected with femininity, whereas honor is related to masculinity. As 'Bend it like Beckham' moreover demonstrates, honor and shame is not only an issue for the Moroccan or Turkish migrant community in the Netherlands, but also the Indian community in England.

Appropriate feminine behavior frequently returns in FEMTOs' life stories, but also depends on the ideas, norms and values of their parents. Perhaps because of the fact that Mouria's parents have no sons, her parents' are less affected by what 'others' will say about their daughters:

Mouria's mother frequently tells her daughters that they should not forget what people expect from them as girls, and that they are somewhat mature. So they have to behave themselves, be decent and when they receive visitors they have to do the dishes and cooking. But at the same time they get another message: even if they are no boys, they should also try to achieve and accomplish something. 'Not only boys are capable, girls are too!' They should be autonomous, and not think about quitting school earlier. Mouria's parents even warn them that otherwise the chances will be bigger to be married off. Later, Mourya says: 'so that's something we fortunately we got in our upbringing, and I still have the urge to achieve something without having a man around'.

Universally, weddings are socially constructed as the high point of a woman's life, as can be seen in many soaps, or *telenovelas*, and melodramas. However, marriage is not always depicted as an act of mutual love; often weddings are cancelled because of second thoughts or prevented by 'enemies' or jealous lovers. Alternatively, occasionally marriage represents the notorious Sword of Damocles, which

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<sup>9</sup> When the researcher referred to this movie in the interview, Sourya enthusiastically reacted that she happened to have seen it a week before. It is possible that seeing this movie influenced the way she told her story.

makes the characters prone to extortion. The fragment above shows the ambiguity in Mouria's upbringing: on the one hand she is socialized that as a woman she is particularly assigned to the private, but on the other hand she ought to be autonomous since one is never secure about the future. Ergo, in contrast to some feminists (such as Firestone, 1979) who claim there is a universal experience of oppression in which all women are subjugated by men and which can be referred to the Grand theory of patriarchy (Grant, 1993), this fragment shows how Mouria's parents, as well as Mouria herself, resists patriarchy. Her parents even go far to stimulate their daughters' independence: they 'blackmail' their daughters to marry them off if they would quit school too soon. Evidently, Mouria's parents know this will frighten their daughters, and so they employ their power to develop their daughters educationally, which makes them less dependent on potential husbands. Mouria has taken over this philosophy of female autonomy, as she still wants to prove she can 'achieve something, without having a man around'. It should be notified however that this progressive view on their daughter's upbringing might have been different if they have had also sons. In the absence of sons, their daughters are the only children to gain honor with. Moreover, Sadiqi & Ennaji (2006: 14) mention that in the years after Morocco's independence 'many middle and upper classes sought in educating their girls some kind of social prestige', in a context where many parties merely had political goals to emancipate women, instead of a genuine interest in the liberation of women as individuals. Yet, women's education aimed at producing good housekeepers and child-rearers. The work of women, and hence their money, was considered as a dishonor to the family (Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2006: 5). Ergo, this ulterior motive could apply to Mouria's parents too.<sup>11</sup>

This scene also illustrates how early children in Islamic countries and communities, particularly girls, are being introduced to the topic of marriage. It is not only the personal ideal but also the social norm. Ideally daughters get married as early as possible, as this decreases the risk for family dishonor. 'For men the period between puberty and marriage implies a materialistic preparation and at the same time relative freedom. For women in contrast this period signifies a stronger morality; they need to be protected against their own desires in order to retain the family honor' (Buskens 1999: 373). To be married off is furthermore still a common practice among Arab and Turkish people. 'Traditionally, marriage is conceived to be a family matter, rather than a union between two independent individuals' (Lievens 2006: 719). The respectability of the marriage candidate's family is therefore of utmost importance, and partners originating from the same region are preferred as they are thought to have similar values and norms. Hence, the ideology of arranged marriages is to be able to perpetuate communal relations and to attain 'ethnic and religious purity' (Schoenmaeckers et al., 1999). The

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<sup>10</sup> A lot of studies are devoted to the study of honor and shame in Morocco and Turkey, as this discourse plays a central role in many people's lives (see for instance Gilmore, 1987; Van Eck, 2001)

<sup>11</sup> Also in the Turkish and Moroccan communities in the Netherlands there seems to be a double standard regarding their children's socialization: although they encourage their daughters to obtain education and to find employment, many strongly retain the ideal of the man as the sole breadwinner (Pels 2000: 88).

literature suggests this practice to be more common among Turkish than Moroccan families; similarly it has been observed that overall in Europe the Turks constitute a rather closed community<sup>12</sup>. And although the number of arranged marriages in general is declining, still a few interviewed FEMTOs affirm to have been married off, and marriages that are based completely on free individual choice without further interference by parents still seem to be rare and often a source of conflict (Lesthaeghe & Surkyn 1999: 13).

Ergo, the basis of FEMTOs' stories, just like soaps and melodramas, is family life, and every member is allocated a smaller or larger role (Geraghty, 1991). This means that not only parents play an important role in the identity constructions of these women. Also brothers prominently feature in these families, as Gülay's story demonstrates:

When Gülay's mother is just pregnant of Gülay, she considers aborting her baby as she is already the sixth. But her oldest son tells her: 'If you are going to abort it I will kill you with my own hands'. Since Gülay's mother knows abortion in their culture is not allowed, as it is '*haram*', murder, she doesn't proceed. Gülay's brother still occasionally tells Gülay: 'It is because of me you're still alive'. Gülay actually admires her brother: 'My father is a real delicate person, but he finds it sometimes difficult to distinguish between bad and wrong'. So the fact that her brother sometimes plays the father over her is kind of pleasant for Gülay. Although he shouldn't go too far: as Gülay is not allowed to go out alone, her oldest brother accompanies her once when she is about 16. He tells his friends: 'this is my sister, watch carefully, and pay attention to her', and her brother is continuously keeping an eye on her. That is why she decides not to go out anymore... Later on she notices she is always somewhere else with her thoughts. She withdraws herself, but does what she wants anyway; she just keeps many things to herself. Years later she confides she is still like that as 'you have to stand firm in your shoes as a female entrepreneur'.

This is a real strong scene which could have been borrowed from the *Godfather*-trilogy. Apparently, Gülay expects her father to be a powerful patriarch, as she speaks friendly but not very highly of her father. Instead, for her it is her brother who performs the strong '*Godfather*'-character, as he controls her mother's movements by threatening her with murder if she would damage her family's honor and acts protective towards Gülay. Yet, we may also observe a contradiction in Gülay's story, as she tells she does not like to be continuously watched by her brother and prefers to do her own thing. Her agency might therefore perhaps be best labeled as opportunistic: she adheres to her brother's support and male authority when convenient, but occasionally distances herself from both him and other relatives to divert them from her plans.

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<sup>12</sup> Likewise, the number of 'import brides' in the Netherlands is larger among the Turkish community than the Moroccan

Although mothers in both Turkish and Moroccan communities generally play a much larger role in socialization processes than fathers, as raising children is generally conceived to be confined to the private sphere<sup>13</sup>, this scene shows that also fathers and (older) brothers can play a central role in the socialization of appropriate gender roles and may exercise their influence to uphold the honor of their family. In this particular story ‘the ideology of motherhood’ furthermore prevails, which refers to the idea that motherhood constitutes an important element in the construction of the female identity. Female bodies are inscribed with the ideal of motherhood, and therefore charged with the reproduction and continuity of Turkishness (Strüder 2001: 16). The male body is inscribed with authority, stability and charged with the reproduction of the economy (Strüder, 2001). Ergo, women are often encouraged to internalize specific feminine roles, such as a mother, wife, sister or daughter (Salih, 2001).

Although Gülay’s brother might not have been serious about killing his mother, his threat can be contextualized in the shameful practice of ‘honor-revenge’, which is still performed in both traditional patriarchic communities around the Mediterranean, the Middle-East and Asia, as well as the migrant communities in western countries that originate from these regions (SCP, 2006). The honor usually concerns the chastity of women, and it is often women that have supposedly violated this honor and are therefore killed to save the family honor (van Eck, 2001). Honor-revenge is not an aspect of Islam, but merely of culture (Van Eck, 2001; SCP, 2006). When a man or woman has committed ‘zina’ (profligacy, adultery), the Qur’an says s/he should be punished by a hundred lash beatings, but not stoned as Islamic legists later determined in the ‘Hadith’<sup>14</sup> (van Eck, 2001). Punishment because of ‘zina’ furthermore should be decided by an Islamic court; therefore honor-revenge by definition is disallowed by Islam.

### ***Act 2: ‘Marriage as support, escape or nightmare’***

There are several stories of FEMTOs who married at a young age because they wanted to get out from under their family’s yoke, while at the same time keeping their family’s honor. However, some women got from the frying-pan into the fire, as we will see in this part where Salima is introduced. Fortunately, this did not happen to Sourya, who married the man of her dreams she secretly dated before:

Sourya is determined to set up her own business and thus makes long hours. As she financially hardly succeeds, she has to submit a business plan to attain a loan. Her husband, who also has a company, helps her with this business plan. They have a good life, and they undertake a lot together. Yet, many acquaintances take offence of him, and tell him it is un-appropriate for him to go out with his wife and to go on a vacation together. Yet, Sourya dismisses this by saying it is

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community (Lesthaeghe & Surkyn, 1995; Schoenmaeckers et al., 1999; Lievens, 2006).

<sup>13</sup> Although it is also widely known that Dutch fathers spend far less time with their children than mothers, even when she is active on the labor market, caring fatherhood seems to be somewhat more part of the Dutch male gender identity than the Moroccan and Turkish male gender identity (Pels, 2000).

<sup>14</sup> Written traditions ascribed to Mohammed.



jealous behavior. And Sourya continues to go alone on a business trip to Morocco, despite of what others say....

Various contemporary (western) melodramas demonstrate how women still struggle with their prescribed housewife role, and the hegemonic discourse in these dramas depicts women wanting to escape from expected feminine behavior as too masculine, and not a 'real woman' (Ramsdell, 1973), assuming both universal feminine and universal masculine essence (Nochimson 1992: 159). Melodrama-analyses even reveal that in soaps 'real women' are more sinned against and women exposing 'alternative' behavior are sinning. Alternatively, women 'doing the right thing' are being rewarded. There are however a few cases in which the female heroine reinvents proper feminine comportment, deviating from social norms and expectations, which are recognized in Sourya's story<sup>15</sup>. Various people, relatives and friends alike, blame Sourya's husband for treating his wife equally, making her an 'unreal woman'. Yet, Sourya dismisses this narrative as jealous and un-useful in her identity construction as an entrepreneur, while persevering her individual business activities and consorting with her husband. Ergo, jealousy is Sourya's interpretation of people talking badly about both her and her husband who treats her equally. His emancipated comportment could be explained by the fact that he is grown up in Holland and is an entrepreneur himself. Sourya and her husband seem to be on the same wave length as he also has a business and they enjoy undertaking many activities together; it is 'them against the rest'. Therefore, Sourya may afford to act like nobody can thwart her in any way. For it is this supportive marriage, that makes her feel confident in her position as an autonomous female entrepreneur.

In the Moroccan and Turkish community there seems to exist no alternative cohabitation mode to marriage; living together is inconceivable and living alone is considered to be a threat to the social order as one cannot be (sexually) controlled (Buskens, 1999). When Moroccan or Turkish women get married, they generally are expected to be supervised by their husbands and their freedom of action is considerably decreased in order to 'protect' the gendered segregated social order. When we compare these women with Dutch women, we observe a great difference in this freedom of action. In contrast to Sourya, Mouria needs to work her husband much more to accomplish her goals:

Mouria imagines how her life will turn out if she stays in Morocco. She works as a secretary, but is afraid that if she marries there and get children she will have to stay at home. That's not what

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<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, Irna Philips ('the Mother of the soap') developed in the early '70s a new character in the soap *As the World Turns*: 'Kim Reynolds' (later Kim Hughes), an independent and aggressive young woman who pursued what she wanted on her own terms, and who seduced Dr. Bob Hughes, one of the serial's 'ideal' husbands. When the audience reacted with shock and surprise to Kim's success, Proctor & Gamble (who financed the soap) said Reynolds had to be punished and the affair terminated, as Philip's story was viewed as public sanction for immorality. When Philips refused to accommodate the demand, she was fired. A few years later Reynolds eventually got what she wanted anyway (Nochimson 1992: 16). Tragically however, Philips had already died.

she wants in life! From friends she hears about the freedom, prosperity and educational possibilities in the Netherlands. Therefore, she agrees to be linked up with a man she hardly knows. But after two weeks in the Netherlands they are already quarrelling. She is all alone with her husband, very depressed, and thus she calls her uncles: 'yea, you just coupled me with that man, and now he wants to boss me around!' From the beginning of her marriage she has to fight to accomplish things, such as starting a beauty-salon which is her big dream. But as she is dependent from her husband, she decides to play things clever: sometimes she 'begs a bit, or just tells things on pleasant moments'. To persuade him to set up her own business, she argues: 'some things are better for us, than I'm off for a while'. She is so eager to have her business she is 'even willing to risk a divorce for it'. She succeeds because he is fed up with the fights and wants to avoid a divorce.

Upward social mobility through marriage is an often discussed theme in all kind of melodramas and soaps (Ramsdell, 1974). For instance *Bold and the Beautiful*'s character 'Brooke Logan', 'a valley-girl' who marries upper-class Ridge Forrester being the heir of a big fashion-concern in LA, is frequently depicted as opportunistic by Ridge's family. This might be explained by the fact that individualistic countries such as the US typically celebrate achievement through hard work, instead of marriage. Yet, Mouria's upward social mobility is typically recognized in Latin telenovelas and Arab soaps. In these discourses using one's femininity at the right time on the right place is a commonly accepted (identity) strategy to gain more female autonomy within a highly patriarchic environment, without having to openly and publicly act against men. Ergo, this strategy to climb socially through marriage is a much more socially accepted move for women in less individualistic societies.

The scene illustrates how Mouria dreams of a better life, and imagines the Netherlands to be heaven on earth. Instead, at first it seems like hell. She feels alone, and she is fighting with her husband all the time. It is therefore understandable she feels to be betrayed by her uncles who saddled her up with a 'bossy man'. But she is not easily daunted; she wants a better future for herself, and thus she manipulates (which is a great soap ingredient) her husband to be her own boss, instead of being bossed around. She applies a 'double agency' to accomplish her purpose of female autonomy: at times she butters him up and explicates a win-win situation<sup>16</sup>, and at other times she provokes him to show she is determined. When Gülay started her own company, she had to come with even more heavy artillery:

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<sup>16</sup> Also her marriage to an un-known man can be interpreted as a win-win situation: he probably wanted to have a decent wife and posterity, and she wanted to leave her country for a better life

'Listen, I didn't make this child alone, these children are also yours, just take a few days off, and you go and take care of them. If you agree, I would really like it, if not, we go our separate ways.....And else I will call your father that his son is coming and that he can already prepare the divorce papers''. This really scares her husband, and his fear becomes reality as his father calls him three days later. So he asks: ''so Gülay, did you really call my father in Turkey? Gülay: ''yes, that's what I did. I don't like it, but I want to save my marriage''. He eventually asks Gülay what she wants him to do, so she says: 'taking a day or two off a week, and taking care of your children...' And so he agrees....

This quote resonates with 'Gabrielle Solis' the Latina 'Desperate Housewife', who has featured the last couple of years as an icon of these kind of negotiations with relatives. Whenever she wants something done from her husband 'Carlos', she approaches her mother-in-law or other relatives to make him do what she wishes. In a western individualistic perception, this approach might appear odd or shrewd. Yet, as they are a Latin family, it is very customary to have family members involved in their private lives, just like it makes sense to Gülay to involve her father-in-law to improve her marriage. Taking her culturally different context into account, accomplishing her wishes through other relatives is a natural thing to do. Gülay is fed up with her husband, who does not do anything in the household, whereas she is working all the time and does the household. Ergo, something has to be done to push him. And so Gülay does not shrink from involving her father-in-law in her plan. Since her husbands' father, even if he lives in Turkey, is still the *pater familias* of the family, she turns to him to include him in her 'intrigue' at her wits end. Divorce would imply a shame to the whole family, and thus he is forced to persuade his son to conform to his daughter in law's wishes.

In Turkey and Morocco, family members are usually requested, even by judges, to provide reconciliation, as divorce is the ultimate solution in Islamic countries which should be prevented at all cost. This fragment also touches the issue of work/life balance in these women's lives. Almost all interviewed FEMTOs, divorced or married, complain to have a distorted work/life balance and report guilt towards their children. Because the private is even much more ascribed to femininity in the migrant communities these women belong to, it is difficult to have their partners doing domestic tasks<sup>17</sup>. This is however one of the least concerns of Salima, as we can observe in the next scene:

To get more freedom, Salima decides to get married. Yet her Moroccan husband regularly intimidates and abuses her, which makes her feel insecure, incapable and worthless. Once Salima is so beaten up she finally has the courage to file for a divorce. At the same time, she starts a

company through which she realizes she is capable of achieving a lot. In years she hasn't been this happy. Yet, the problem is that while she has the Dutch divorce within half a year, she has to wait for the Moroccan for another eight years! 'How unfair', she says, 'you seem to be divorced for the Islamic law when your husband cannot care of his wife; then a marriage in Islamic terms is not legit. But for the Moroccan law it is legitimate, that's the illogical thing about it!' And so she can't go to Morocco for many years, as she is afraid for kidnapping and claiming of her child.

Soaps increasingly pay attention to societal issues such as rape and abuse. Unfortunately, this excerpt illustrates that these are indeed the tragedies some of these FEMTOs also experience. At first Salima is intimidated and beaten up by a man, and then it turns out that although she is divorced according to the Dutch and Islamic law, she cannot return to Morocco. An obstructive factor in the development of her female autonomy is not only her ex-husband's attitude, but also the patriarchic Moroccan law system. Ergo, her whole marriage, as well as the aftermath, turns out to be a nightmare. A bright spot in this whole nightmare is her entrepreneurship through which she regains her self-esteem. Demonstrating that as a woman of Moroccan descent she can set up and run a whole business is the best therapy to overcome this tragedy.

Six out of the twenty interviewed FEMTOs are divorced. As we can see from the above example, this particularly brings Moroccan women into trouble, apart from the shame a divorce implies in both cultures. The old Moroccan family law, or *Mudawwana*<sup>18</sup>, is partly based on the Islamic law, the *Shari'a*. Yet, it is often suggested that the *Mudawwana* provides men with more rights than the *Shari'a*. For instance, there is still the male expulsion right (Buskens, 1999), the one-sided marriage dissolution. And although it is officially determined that the man needs to offer his ex-wife financial compensation and reimburse part of the dowry, in practice this is often hardly redeemed<sup>19</sup>. A wife, until recently, only had the opportunity to persuade her husband to expulse her, or to have a judge (who was/is usually male) transfer an abandonment to a legal divorce after one year of her husband's absence, after proving her husband's failure to maintain her, or after causing her great damage (Buskens, 1999). However, practically, this seemed very difficult to accomplish for women due to fear, the costs and length of such a procedure, and the burden of proof. Since Mohammed VI has been assigned, some adjustments in favor of women's divorce rights have taken place. Through a progressive interpretation of the *Shari'a*, *jithad*, the family code has been reformed and since 2004 the 'Nouveau Code de la Famille' has become operative. For both men and women durable disruption ('*Shiqaq*') is a new ground for divorce ('*Taliq*')

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<sup>17</sup> Pels (2000) states that many fathers are discouraged by traditional sectors of the Turkish and Moroccan community to become too domestic and feminine, as this would decrease their honor.

<sup>18</sup> The *Mudawwana* has been adjusted on a number of parts in 2004. Sourya was interviewed in 2003, and was thus still confronted with this highly gender biased family law.

<sup>19</sup> Not only in Morocco, but also in Turkey the family-law, the *Hürriyet* (which is not based on the *Shari'a* but merely shaped after the Swiss Civil Code (Buskens, 1999)), is gender biased. For instance, 'zina' by men was penal until 1966, whereas 'zina' by women was penal until 1999 (Van Eck, 1991).

and women are no longer obliged to prove this through witnesses. Married couples can request for a mutual dissolution, and expulsion without a legitimate reason is rejected (Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2006). Yet, still a lot of gender inequalities remain in the family law, and as the number of specialized judges in this reformed code is small, women continue to be discriminated against in divorce procedures (Sadiqi & Ennaji, 2006).

***Act 3: 'All in the family: you can't enterprise with or without them'***

We finally zoom in two plots where FEMTOs construct their entrepreneurial identities in relation to their families, when developing their own businesses. To demonstrate this, another FEMTO enters the stage:

Nerli comes home after having lived with her ex-husband in another town for two years. It wasn't a good marriage; she married him to have more independence, but instead he dominated and mentally abused her. She is psychologically in bad shape, but then her brother tells her: 'you know what, I am going to open a travel agency, and then you can work there and get some experience.' And also her sister who has a sewing-shop says she is welcome to help her. When recovered after a while, she considers doing 'something with clothes', as she'd always had a thing for clothes. It must have been predestined, because a few weeks later her brother-in-law tells her: 'I have a surprise for you. We are going somewhere and then you may observe it and decide upon it'. Hence they are heading for A. to check out an interior of a shop. If she agrees he will help her to open a boutique, also financially. Alternatively, she may proceed with the police academy, but they tell her the negative elements about the school, that she has a small child, and would return home late. When she decides to go for her own company, Nerli experiences that although it is never said openly, it is very difficult to get money from banks because of her Turkishness. Therefore her brother-in-law finances it first which takes months. They do it 'the Turkish way: first arranging everything, hiring a place, and at the end the money'. She knows 'of course this is not ideal or well sort out, but hey. It is already heavy enough, being a single mother and an entrepreneur'. Fortunately she receives lots of support from her parents.

Just like many melodramas Nerli's narrative starts badly, but it eventually seems to have a happy end. Nevertheless, there are many paradoxes in this story: just like Salima she marries to achieve more independence. But when she divorces, her family 'overcomes' this shame and provides her with all the family support she needs to build up a new life. The fact that even her brother-in-law takes a lot of effort to help her underlines how close family ties are, especially in Turkish communities, which in this case contributes to the development of Nerli's female entrepreneurial identity. Yet, their support might not be

that unselfish as it seems, for they might try to avert possible shame of a fallen woman in the family by ‘putting her under their guardianship’ by employing her first, and through their heavy involvement in her company later. All the same, Nerli’s agency in developing a company is conforming to her family members, instead of distancing herself from them. The approach to set up a business without securing the capital first, which is referred to as typically Turkish, is not recognized to be in favor of entrepreneurship. This could imply that the ethno-centrally determined entrepreneurship discourse is at stake in her entrepreneurial identity construction. Traditional literature on entrepreneurship strongly emphasizes particular psychological traits of entrepreneurs, such as being innovative and creative, urging for achievement and autonomy, exhibiting risk-taking behavior and individualism (Thomas & Mueller, 2000). Ogbor (2000) however notes that these entrepreneurial traits are ethno-centrally determined since entrepreneurship theories are typically based on US-research and mostly deal with white male entrepreneurs. Migrant entrepreneurs are therefore often inclined to adhere to these traits when constructing their entrepreneurial identities. This dominant discourse might also affect banks’ perspectives on migrant entrepreneurship, as Nerli experiences to be discriminated against as a (female) Turkish entrepreneur requesting money. Still Nerli seems to be practical (‘but hey’) and grateful. She can use all the support she needs as a single mother<sup>20</sup>, which might have in fact contributed to her decision to become an entrepreneur. Baycan Levent et al. (2003) namely suggest many women prefer integrated and flexible forms of entrepreneurship in combination with other roles in family and the household<sup>21</sup>.

Some theories on migrant entrepreneurship celebrate the financial help provided by family members, although the literature applying network theory to ethnicity and entrepreneurship implies that ethnic minority entrepreneurs are detrimentally stuck and restricted within their strong-tie network because they are socially and financially dependent on a rather informal network (Flap et al., 1999). But apparently, as this fragment demonstrates, this family reliance is not just culturally determined, but also due to mainstream organizations’ reluctance towards migrant entrepreneurs. In contrast to Nerli, Gülay anxiously resists her family’s interference:

Gülay often experiences opportunism from many people, even her family, who think: ‘she has her own business, so she earns well. So let’s do nice to her’. Hence, Gülay concludes that if you have money, you are someone, if you don’t, you’re nothing. Therefore she warns her family: ‘this is my shop, and everyone has his own business, end of discussion!’ Yet, they still try to push her. For instance her youngest brother expresses he would prefer her quitting her business and wearing a headscarf. But Gülay’s reaction usually is: ‘ho, wait a second, that’s the limit! I earn my living with this’. And so she tries not to care too much.

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<sup>20</sup> As discussed earlier, more FEMTOs have been divorced and mention the difficulty to raise both their child(ren) and their business, and some even report to feel guilt towards their children as they are too busy as business women.

Soaps such as *Dallas*, *Dynasty*, and *As the World Turns* clearly demonstrate the commonality of intermingling family relations with business. These discourses only present a few women entrepreneurs; usually explicitly represented as cunning, deceiving, and/or flirtatious (remember Alexis Colby from *Dynasty*?). Ergo, the subtext in these stories is that women can only get to the top through a devious leadership-style instead of their capabilities and strong character. An exception to the case might be Lucinda Walsh in *As the World Turns*, who is nowadays depicted as a strong, capable female business-owner<sup>22</sup>. It is this image Gülay seems to hold on to persevere an independent position as a female entrepreneur.

Aldrich & Cliff (2003) state that families and businesses are inextricably intertwined, as norms, attitudes and values within families often affect entrepreneurial behavior, and financial and human resources are often provided through ‘strong ties’<sup>23</sup> with family members (Aldrich & Cliff 2003: 577; Anderson et al., 2005). Yet Gülay strongly takes issue with the discourse in the entrepreneurship literature that advocates mediating family and business. Clearly, she is afraid that involving her family in her business would either imply financial loss or even the end of her career. That is why she takes a strong offensive attitude to keep potential gold-diggers far away.

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<sup>21</sup> In contrast, Carter et al. (2003) note that women are less inclined to set up a business than men, because they are still primary responsible for household chores.

<sup>22</sup> It should be mentioned however that also Lucinda Walsh had to go through diverse character-changes to ‘acquire’ this identity.

<sup>23</sup> Weak ties consist of business associates and formal organizations.

## Conclusions

By conceiving of FEMTOs' life stories as melodramas constructed by various actors and mediated through an imaginative audience (Rhodes & Brown, 2005), this paper has analyzed how FEMTOs constitute their entrepreneurial identities in relation to distinct ideas of femininity, ethnicity and entrepreneurship within their own families. It has been illustrated how FEMTOs and relatives are both actively involved in the construction of these women's identities and how women, just like in melodramas and soaps, use their power to sustain their (entrepreneurial) identities.

In line with Stanley & Wise (1983), this paper has moved away from the universalized conception of 'the family' in socialization theories, as this view suggests that children are obliged to internalize these values which are largely defined by society as well as a dichotomy of 'properly gender stereotyped'/not properly gender-stereotyped', mal-socialization. Contrary to this perception, this paper has argued that people not passively internalize stereotypical gender roles, but rather actively relate themselves to these in different ways. Yet we have seen that the struggle between personal freedom and loyalty to their family is important in the stories of these women. Their migrant communities often hardly consider them as independent actors, but rather in relation to (male) family members; as daughters, mothers or wives (Lesthaeghe & Surkyn 1995: 15). Yet, this is not a clear cut situation, as some FEMTOs report to have also been stimulated to develop their autonomy. Others reported to have received great family support when setting up their businesses. Hence, the entrepreneurial identities of FEMTOs are effected by various relatives whose influence is not unambiguously disadvantageous or advantageous, but situationally dependent.

All interviewees' stories point out these women struggle with female autonomy at least at some point in their lives, either in relation to their parents and siblings, their husbands, or both. Nevertheless, just as soaps increasingly take issue with patriarchal premises (Nochamson, 1992), this paper has demonstrated how strong these female characters challenge male-dominated families, migrant environments and sectors that have a masculine connotation. Ergo, FEMTOS play an active role in the construction of their gender roles, by continually resisting, reinterpreting and changing the norms and rules of patriarchy (Halford & Leonard, 2001). They seem to develop different storytelling strategies to sustain their entrepreneurial identities within the scope of their family environments and without having to loose the respect from their family members.

Three storytelling strategies can be distinguished. The first one which is applied by Sourya can be labeled as the '*stoic persevering*' strategy. In order to get what she wants, she opposes family members and acquaintances either openly or secretly. At any rate, she is determined not to be diverted. This is line with Ketner's et al.'s (2004) 'secret behavior' strategy applied by adolescent girls of Moroccan decent to avoid the contradictions in norms and values regarding gender between family members and themselves



by not telling about certain occasions. Mourya and Gülay seem to apply more complex strategies: the '*opportunistic and double agency*' strategy: whenever they think it is useful for them, they go along with their family's wishes. But when are obstructed by their family members, they either 'beg', 'butter them up', or 'blackmail' them to push them in the right direction. It is remarkable how much these tactics are similar to their family members' strategies; apparently they have had good examples. This strategy contains some echoes of Ketner et al.'s (2004) 'strategic use' strategy, in which adolescent girls use their knowledge between Islam and culture in order to force their parents to reconsider certain demands. The third is the '*docile compliant*' strategy, in which FEMTOs tend to seek female autonomy from their family members in a more traditional and safe way. In order to obtain more independence and simultaneously retain the acceptance by their families, both Salima and Nerli decide to marry a man they hardly know. After having been subordinated for a long time, they finally decide to file for a divorce and go back to their families, whose interference is now much more appreciated as they might contribute to the development of their entrepreneurship. This might however also be a way to show that the zones in which they invest are quickly transformed into private spaces; in this way they remain the illusion they do not trespass the space they are confined to (Sadiqi & Ennaji 2006: 8). The only price they have to pay is that they have to 'share' their company with the whole family. This last strategy corresponds with the 'compromise' strategy found by Ketner et al. (2004), in which they found women to negotiate with their parents to be able to work if they would return home straight after work, and to defend them working as advantageous for a later future as a good mother and wife.

The women interviewed might have told their stories in a particular way to convince both their audiences and themselves about their multiple identities. Therefore, the style of these strategies can be related to the different narrative models which Chanfrault-Duchet (1991: 80) distinguishes: the epic model reveals identification with the values of the community, the Romanesque model expresses the quest for authentic values in a degraded world, and the picaresque model reflects an ironic and satirical position in relation to hegemonic values. As in the Romanesque model the subject views the possibilities of change through individual challenge (Chanfrault-Duchet 1991: 81), Sourya's narrative style can best be positioned in this model. Since Salima and Nerli merely comply with their family members' demands and ideas, their presentation approaches the epic model, in which the subject melds with the community, which, in its values, is beyond change (idem: 81). Finally, Mourya and Gülay's narrative performance approximates the picaresque model, as they ironically and satirically continually question and object dominant social values (idem: 81).

In 'western terms' these storytelling strategies might seem odd or even cumbersome, but they might be conceived as the most sensible thing to do for these women entrepreneurs in order to be both

true to themselves- to be able to be their own boss- and to be loyal to their families. Or as Fatima Sadiqi<sup>24</sup> told me: *'You cannot judge the strategies there with our standards of individualism. One wants to avoid trouble in family and such so one has to be careful in how one presents oneself'*. Sadiqi furthermore states it is very common for a wife to go to her husband and say: *'I've this good idea (you cannot say it is your idea), it's not mine, I read it somewhere, what if it is mine?'* Hence, Sadiqi agrees that women have to know 'how to play the game': *'So within this patriarchy, women are very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of men and that's how they use it; they are socialized to do this'*. This implies that the concept of autonomy has a different meaning for these women in their cultural contexts as opposed to western contexts. Through these strategies and by not openly critiquing the patriarchal mechanisms in their society, they maintain the respect from their siblings and are able to be autonomous at the same time. In this context, entrepreneurship can be conceived as the ultimate tool and empowerment to achieve female autonomy.

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<sup>24</sup> Professor Fatima Sadiqi is director of the Centre for Studies and Research on Women in Fés, Morocco, and has done a lot of research on the position of women in Arab societies and the gendered use of Arabic languages. She was interviewed in Fés by the author of this paper, who stayed for a short period in Morocco to gather background material for her research.

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# "Carnival Knowledge": Lilith, Queen of Demons, as Allegory of Catharsis and Taint

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## Abstract

This paper considers how allegory can be employed as a poetic device in a study of documentary texts setting out traditionalist Anglican-Catholic objections to the ordination of women to the priesthood and episcopacy, the office of bishop, in the Church of England. Allegory is considered as a technique of *indirection* (Law and Singleton, 2002, pp 16-17), which, by surreptitiously referring to one story while actually telling another, creates a network of correspondences between allegorical subject and primary text which opens access to deeper structures of meaning and generates possibilities of multiple interpretations. Traditionalist texts are here conceptualised as outcomes of lived experience (Strati, 1999, p 59), charged with distinctive forms of "sensory knowledge" (Gagliardi, 1996, in Clegg et al. p 566) which cannot be expressed in conventional language. As such, they are responsive to poetic readings which (Strati, 1999, p 60) enable lived experiences to be evoked and captured through imagery, comparison and allusion.

The subject of the allegory is Lilith, Queen of Demons. According to Rabbinic myth, Lilith, originally created by God to be the first wife of Adam, rebelled against the restrictions of her life in the Garden of Eden, particularly Adam's refusal to acknowledge her as his intellectual and sexual equal. She escaped from the Garden, taking up residence on the shores of the Red Sea where she consorted with resident demons and became a succubus, a demonic sexual predator. Lilith's symbolic power is concentrated upon her sexed body, which generates a complex, multi-layered allegory simultaneously encompassing the apparently antinomic attributes of catharsis and taint. Using a selection of extracts from traditionalist writing, I consider how it can inspire the evocation of a series of correspondences between Lilith and Anglican-Catholic theories of the divinely-ordered role of women, arguing that these allegorical correspondences work on both overt and subtle levels to reveal traditionalist Anglican-Catholic valorizations of the patriarchal subordination of women as a *poetics of narcissism* (Schwarz, in Gagliardi (ed.) 1990).

" Women are a magical force. They surround themselves with an emotional tension stronger than the rationality of men....Woman is a very, very strong being, magical. That is why I am afraid of women."

*(C.G. Jung, 1941, in an interview. Quoted in Watsky, P., 2002).*

## **Lilith's Story**

Lilith is a heroine, a diva, a determined woman who rebelled against patriarchal subordination and survived God's punishment to enact her own libidinous sensuality which glories in its own carnivalistic excess. She's phenomenal in both of the senses used by Battersby (1998, p.1) firstly in being wonderful, spectacular and awesome in her refusal to be subjected or defeated, yet phenomenal also in the sense of having only the semblance of existence, a myth, a fantasy, a creation of spirit, imagination and desire, both acknowledged and repressed. Armstrong (2005) views myths as works of art, transformative narratives that enables us to ground human experience in the mysteries of the universe, and it is in this spirit that Lilith is invoked here.

What Lilith represents both literally and metaphorically in the study is a force of strong, powerful feminine energy which refuses subordination and is embodied as an erotic, lustful , indulgent sensuality She impels the feminine beyond a patriarchy that seeks to capture and limit its strong, instinctual energy. This is her story of her escape from the Garden of Eden as told in a Rabbinical midrash :

" God formed Lilith the first woman just as He had formed Adam except that he used filth and impure sediment instead of dust or earth. Adam and Lilith never found peace together. She disagreed with him in many matters, and refused to lie beneath him in sexual intercourse, basing her claim for equality on the fact that each had been created from earth. When Adam saw that Lilith would overpower her, she uttered the ineffable name of God and flew up into the air of the world. Eventually, she dwelt in a cave in the desert on the shores of the Red Sea. There she engaged in unbridled promiscuity, consorted with lascivious demons, and gave birth to hundreds of *Lilim* or demonic babies, daily.....

..... It is said that soon after Lilith left Adam he stood in prayer before his creator and said : ' God of the World, (the) woman you gave me has run away from me. Immediately God, the holy one, dispatched the three angels, Sanvai, Sansanvai, and Semangelof. to bring her back. They caught up with her in the desert near the Red Sea. ' Return to Adam without delay,' the angels said, 'or we will drown you!.' 'How can I return to Adam and be his woman, after my stay beside the Red Sea ?' ' It would be death to refuse !' ; they answered...."

( Koltuv, 1986, pp 19-20 and p. 103-104, citing the midrash Alpha Beta Ben Sira, in Eisenstein, J. D., ed., 1915, Otzar Midrashim, New York, J. D. Eisenstein.)

But Lilith neither died nor returned to the constraints of life in the Garden of Eden. God exacted a dreadful retribution from her, killing one hundred of her demon infants every day, then freeing her to return to her demon lovers and make her way as a succubus, a demonic seductress who arouses men and uses them to satisfy her lust before killing them. In this role, Lilith stalked the night, searching for susceptible humans on which to exercise her legendary, predatory sexuality.

### **Lilith as Allegory**

On a simple level, allegory is a means of using one thing to refer, on a deeper, symbolic level, to something different. It relies on an active play between correspondences, between the overt and the covert, which releases a host of evocative associations. Law & Hetherington (1998) describe allegory as a form of representation which "....seeks... to create a link between a hidden vision and its mode of representing that vision in another guise laden with symbolic clues....allegory challenges linear forms of representation and regional thought. It seeks, through the indirectness, the shifting play between signifiers and signifieds, to establish non-linear connections between seeing and saying." In the context of this study, allegory is assumed to work as a poetic epistemic device, offering ways of knowing and understanding which offer access to alternative readings of source texts. Lilith's allegorical significance lies in the nature of her experience as a fugitive from the constraints of patriarchy and in her sexed body which, though we are invited to view it as an object of loathing, can also be read as an instrument of jouissance and freedom.

Leaving behind the predictability of life in the Garden of Eden, Lilith is propelled into the space of abjection, "ejected beyond the scope of the possible, the tolerable, the thinkable.....the place where meaning collapses" (Kristeva, 1982, pp 1-2). She emerges from her cave on the desert shores of the Red Sea as from a matrix of transformation. Her identity as Adam's lesser partner rejected and repudiated, she becomes, outside the patriarchal enclosure of the Garden, a demonic other, seeking meaning and identity through a sexuality that is at once restless, insatiable, and death-dealing.

Rachel Gear (2001), drawing on the work of Barbara Creed, describes how "...the female body is rendered abject in a phallogentric society that fears otherness. Woman is specifically associated with pollution and menstrual blood, which arouses fear and disgust as fluidity threatens to overcome fixity..." Grosz (1994, p 192) points out how abjection demonstrates the construction of the body by dominant cultural, and in this case specifically religious, narratives. Lilith's body, formed from excrement and always emphasised in her mythology as sexed, even highly-sexed, engages in a struggle with patriarchy, targeting its notions of female subordination and its fear and distaste for overt female sensuality. If she does not win, she nevertheless manages to survive undefeated. God originally fashions her as a



contaminated creature from a form of filth even lower and more despised than that from which he made Adam, the man. This causes no problem as long as she remains in her God-given role as helpmeet and humble partner. Following her escape, however, this contaminated origin becomes the prime source of the twofold taint she is made to bear as both creature of filth and member of a demonic underclass. Yet Lilith, unbroken and unashamed, takes up her taint and uses it to power a licentious, predatory sexuality. She makes her career of it, carrying it into the human realm of rabbinic patriarchy as a succubus, implicating righteous men and women in her depravity, returning it to its source in the hypocrisy which despises the female body even as it casts it as the supreme object of desire. Even the most private and intimate domestic spaces were not safe from Lilith's stealthy, nocturnal incursions. Though her main domain was the space of the solitary male, the self-pleasurer or restless, tormented celibate, she was also known to invade even the marital chamber to prey on couples who had the temerity to forget their duty and take sexual pleasure in each other. In her embrace of her own taint, her persistent and pervasive invasions of the sexual activity of others, Lilith achieves a strength and purpose that enables her to make a fool out of patriarchy. Her contamination is thus seen to be inseparable from her catharsis, defined here as an inspired surge of energy, a *jouissance* of the soul, that releases her to follow her intuition, escape from the garden of containment, and pursue her destiny.

Before proceeding to consider in more detail Lilith's relationship to these inseparable antinomies of catharsis and taint, I propose to spend some time exploring the nature of Lilith's embodied sexuality, using Grosz's (1994, p. viii) four-part model of sexuality. It can be understood initially as a basic drive or impulse, then as an act, a series of practices and behaviours centred around the body, an identity or gender, and finally as a set of preferences - desires and orientations which shape the ways in which the subject seeks pleasure.

I expect to move freely between each of these elements as I develop my appreciation of Lilith's allegorical significance. To do full justice to this, especially that element I've designated as *catharsis*, I offer, not so much a fifth dimension as an enhancement of the first, sexuality as drive or impulse, which enhances all of Grosz's components by understanding sexuality as a source of energy which can be directed to the affirmative, aspirational and projective dimensions of the female psyche. Morny Joy (1996, p. 610) discusses this enriching essence as an " .....affirmation of embodiment (that) reflects the passion which many women insist on not just their sexual inviolability, but its vital connectedness to the core of their being."

This notion of a libidinal energy which infuses every fibre of being with vibrancy and purpose, which has its root in the sexual but which extends above and beyond the sexual as a form of *jouissance of the soul*, is the very heart of Lilith's significance as allegory of catharsis/taint. This *jouissance* has the potential to restore a vigour and purpose to the feminine which has been enervated, rendered passive and introspective, by traditional monotheistic religious discourses. The remains of these ancient discourses survive in traditional Anglican-Catholic opposition to the ordination of women to the

priesthood and episcopacy, the office of bishop. The traditionalist ideal of womanhood finds expression in representations of the Virgin Mary which emphasise her passivity, her willingness to put her sexuality at the service of the divine, her modesty and introspection, and her silent, stricken witness at the foot of the cross of her son's martyrdom, an example of which is given later in the paper. This is woman who occupies the spaces which man does not need or has no interest in, what Luce Irigaray (1985, p 22) has described as ".....the feminine....deciphered as inter-dict : within the signs or between them, between the realized meanings, between the lines...and as a function of the (re)productive necessities of an intentionally phallic currency..." Lilith's action of wresting her freedom from those who seek to capture it and chain it to their service reasserts the strength and dignity of femininity, asserting the right of women to follow their intuitive promptings and attain their vocation.

## **Lilith's Body**

### **.....As Taint**

## **Lilith's Abjected Sexuality**

Russo (1995, p 54 ) speculates on the means by which a progress can be made from carnival as a historic event to carnival as semiotic performance. Lilith's body, her abjected sexuality and her appearance, can be seen to perform both catharsis and taint, linked together in the manner referred to above. I propose to begin by considering her performance of taint, as this is the main preoccupation of the original myths about her as evolved from patriarchal fears of uncontrolled, disordered femininity. Her performance as catharsis relies much more heavily on more forgiving contemporary interpretations of her story, and it therefore seems more appropriate to deal with it at a later stage.

Lilith's taint is threefold. I have already expressed the view that it originates with the creation of her contaminated body from excremental filth. It arises also, from her predatory demonic sexuality which seeks out impure or unrestrained human sexual desire and tempts the negligent or foolhardy to activities( see below) which result in shame and, sometimes, death. And, finally, it is the stigma imposed on her by patriarchy as punishment for leaving Adam and the Garden to strike out on her own.

In Rabbinic myth, Lilith is associated with sexual activity which is abjected, transgressing what Kristeva (1982, p 73) describes as the 'clean and proper body', the body which resists its own shameful urges and engages only in activity which is sanctioned and ritually pure. Scholem (1996, pp155-157) refers to ancient Kabbalistic beliefs that Lilith and members of her demonic band tempt men to acts of sexual self-pleasure, impregnating themselves with the spilt semen and giving birth to demonic children which shadow their reluctant human progenitor and reappear at the time of his death to participate in the mourning. She also mounts sleeping men to satisfy her desire and father more of her demonic children. Scholem mentions a rite of purification, the *tikkun shovavim*, which men undertook to "' correct', by special prayers

and acts of penance, that taint which a man inflicts on his true form by nocturnal pollution and onanism" (p 156). In Kabbalistic lore these weaknesses were thought to arise from Lilith's temptation to a man to sin, rather than from desires which intermittently escaped repression.

Lilith did not, apparently, confine herself to benefiting from acts of illicit self-pleasure. She was also thought to visit the marriage chamber itself. Naphtali (quoted in Patai, p 235) describes how, under certain circumstances Lilith can be drawn to marital intercourse : "Lilith, God preserve us, has dominion...over him who couples with his wife in candlelight, or with his wife naked..." Scholem (p 157) recounts a Zoharic ritual to keep her away :

“ ' In the hour when the husband enters into union with his wife, he should turn his mind to the holiness of his Lord and say :

Veiled in velvet - are you here ?  
Loosened, loosened [ be your spell] !  
Go not in and go not out !  
Let there be none of you, and nothing of your part !  
Turn back, turn back, the ocean rages,  
Its waves are calling you.  
But I cleave to the holy part,  
I am wrapped in the sanctity of the King.

' Then for a time he should wrap his head and his wife's head in cloths, and afterwards sprinkle his bed with fresh water.' “

It is intriguing how, in this instance, Lilith is drawn to the marriage bed by what are now widely considered to be devices of sexual intimacy designed to heighten enjoyment and mutual pleasure : the absence of clothing as a barrier and the sight of a partner's body during intercourse. It is hard to resist the idea that Lilith's identity here merges and blends with that of the wife : it is the sight of the wife's nakedness and the sight of her body that constitute the source of taint. The man is responsible for purifying and ritualising intercourse by reciting incantations which could as easily be directed at his wife as Lilith. We see from this that sexual acts, whether undertaken solo or with a partner, are regarded as dangerous when they are a response to desire or, even worse, seem likely to foster intimacy between men and women. Acts of this nature are hazardous because they open the pure space of sanctioned sexuality to the demonic, the impure, initiating " ...(the) vortex of summons and repulsion " (Kristeva, 1982, p 1) characterising the abject, which attracts even as it disgusts but is nonetheless an intrinsic part of the "I" by which it has been repudiated.

## **Lilith's Monstrosity**

Accounts of Lilith's bodily appearance as creature, a combination of human and animal, re-emphasise her performance of abjection and taint, predicating her also as a harbinger of chaos, instability, and confusion of the orders of creation. The description of her recorded by Patai ( 1990, p 222), as "slender, well-shaped, beautiful and nude, with wings and owl-feet ", identifies her as a member of the category known as "Were creatures", whose bodies signify a collapse of the boundaries between human and animal...." (Creed, 1993, p 10). Zoharic myth (Koltuv p 67) casts her as the serpent who tempts and disturbs Eve, causing her to seduce Adam into having sex with her while she was menstruating, thereby incurring ritual impurity. Indisputably, Lilith is a monster, a creature who, according to Lykke, (in Lykke & Braidotti, 1996, p 5), "(signifies) chaos, heterogeneity and unstable identities." Braidotti, ( in Lykke and Braidotti p 136), draws attention to the ambivalence of the monstrous, which attracts even as it repels the beholder : ".....*teras/teratos* refers to both a prodigy and a demon. It is simultaneously holy and hellish, sacred and profane. Again, the simultaneity of opposite effects is the trademark of the monstrous body."

Lilith's monstrous body enacts a complex performance of attraction and repulsion. Note the lascivious attention to detail of the following description from the Zohar (quoted in Koltuv, pp 40-41) of her arrayed for seduction and death, which plays upon her shape-shifting ability to fascinate and terrorise :

"....Her ornaments for the seduction of the sons of man are: that her hair is long and red like the rose, her cheeks are white and red, from her ears hang six ornaments, Egyptian chords and all ornaments of the Land of the East hang from her nape. Her mouth is set like a narrow door comely in its décor, her tongue is sharp like a sword, her words are smooth like oil, her lips are red like a rose and sweetened by all the sweetness in the world. She is dressed in scarlet and adorned with forty ornaments less one. Yon fool goes astray after her and drinks from the cup of wine and commits with her fornications and strays after her. What does she thereupon do ?.....she removes her ornaments and turn into a menacing figure. She stands before him clothed in garments of flaming fire, inspiring terror and making body and soul tremble, full of frightening eyes, in her hand a sword dripping bitter drops. And she kills that fool and casts him into Gehenna. "

## **Lilith's Body as Catharsis**

Lilith's break for freedom is viewed here as catharsis, charged as it is with a resonant, evocative, inspirational poetic energy. It is much greater than the petulant act of a woman thwarted in her bid for intellectual and sexual dominance (Vogelsang, 1985, p 153). Her desire to escape, is, in Braidotti's (2003, p 44) phrase, as much ontological as libidinal. It is "*the desire to be*", to establish oneself as a self outside the bounds of patriarchy, to realise an identity beyond that of being at the disposal of a man and his male god. Lilith's

body of filth leaves Adam's body of clay behind soars to as she struggles to confronts what Joy ( p149) calls "...the basic psychological problems (of) the woman who experiences the need to grow beyond Eve ", Lilith's more passive and submissive successor. For Koltuv (p 22), Lilith represents the woman who refuses to be bound within a relationship, or be content shared identity, and ultimately stands for four qualities of the rejected feminine. She sees Lilith as representing the archetypal feminine Self, the female body as instinctual, libidinal, desiring and possessing, fired with an energy and vigour denied to the enervated, passive receptacle of life favoured by patriarchy. Lilith embodies *gnosis*, a kind of intense intuitive understanding which pervades and charges the entire being ( Baring and Cashford, 1991, p 618) and stands opposed to *epistemi*, intellectual understanding or logos, the Word and law of patriarchy.

I have referred to Lilith's flight and subsequent career as a jouissance of the soul. Certainly no angel, she spurns the abjected identity which patriarchal forces attempt to project on to her and succeeds in making a fool of her oppressors. Rutledge (1998, p 14) draws attention to a detail of her myth that is often overlooked. Her rupture with patriarchy is made especially dramatic by her utterance of the most sacred unknowable name of God ; indeed it could be said that this is the key, or cipher, which makes possible her escape. How did Lilith come to possess this deepest and most secret knowledge of the architect of the universe ? Whatever the answer to this question, it reinforces the power of Lilith's identity as a "thief of essences" who was able not only to have her sexual way with human men, mounting them by night and appropriating their semen, their essence, to reproduce her kind, but contrived to steal into the most secret and forbidden habitations of the divine, the heart of the divinity itself, and possess herself of the essence, the name of Godhead. In this act we witness the culmination of Lilith's cathartic power : a theft, an appropriation of the source and virility of divinity, the Father in Heaven. Lilith treats divinity and its human heirs with a carnivalistic disregard for the sacrosanct and the taboo. She achieves, in Bakhtin's phrase, a "decrowning" (1984, p 125) which exposes patriarchy as vulnerable, unstable, and open to ridicule.

## **Women, Ordination and Traditionalist Texts**

Before considering how Lilith's allegorical significance can be considered in relation to Anglican Catholic writings opposing the ordination of women, it seems appropriate to refer briefly to the background against which this opposition came into being. The ordination of women has been discussed on several occasions since the mid-1960s by General Synod, the national assembly of the Church of England. Finally, in 1992, Synod passed the 1992 Priests( Ordination of Women) Measure, which provided for women to be ordained as priests though not as bishops, since it was considered that there was insufficient consensus within the church for this to be considered acceptable. The Measure also permitted parishes which felt themselves unable in conscience to accept a woman priest to make alternative arrangements (Jones, 2004, p 4). There have been many criticisms of the way

in which the Act of Synod was put into practice (Rees, 2002, pp 11-140), with some supporters of women's ordination expressing a conviction that it cast women as second class citizens and appeased traditionalist opponents. More than ten years after the first ordinations, which took place in 1994, the priesting of women remains a contentious issue. While a study published by the Lincoln Theological Institute has concluded that "There is a high degree of acceptance of women's ministry as priests amongst both clergy and congregations" (Jones, 2004, p 204) , a report of the House of Bishops' Working Party on Women in the Episcopate, (2004) published in the same year, begins by commenting upon the "strong opposition" which was generated by the decision to ordain women and has persisted ever since. Recent progress towards admitting women to the episcopate, or bishop's ministry, has given this opposition fresh impetus.

Patterns of resistance are complex, and originate from different theological standpoints. I do not feel it to be appropriate, in the present context, to enumerate the various different sources. My research is concentrated upon what I would describe generally as a poetics of opposition contained in a selection of documentary texts produced by traditional Anglican Catholics who oppose women's ordination on the stated grounds that it is contrary to the scriptures, is potentially divisive in that it does not have the agreement of the entire worldwide Anglican Communion, and that it constitutes a major barrier to unity between Anglicans and the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. (<http://www.forwardinfaith.com/about/index.html>). I should make it clear at this point that not all members of the Anglican Church who consider themselves to be Anglican Catholics or who use this term as a description of their faith position are opposed to women's ordination and that the term Anglo-Catholic or Anglican Catholic is not in itself indicative of such a stance.

Like other theological interest groupings, including those which support women's ordination, traditional Anglican Catholics have grouped themselves into associations to rally support, lobby decision-making bodies and promote arguments favourable to their cause. One such organization is Forward in Faith, which describes itself as "... a worldwide association of Anglicans who are unable in conscience to accept the ordination of women to the priesthood and the episcopate..." (Forward in Faith, June, 2006). Forward in Faith makes available a variety of documentary texts which, directly or indirectly, set out reasons why women should not be ordained .These texts take the form of leaflets, a journal (New Directions), books, and a variety of discussion documents which are freely obtainable to any interested enquirer by post or via the internet. I have chosen the collection available through Forward in Faith for pragmatic reasons rather than a desire to draw particular attention to their work. The material they supply is readily accessible, and sufficiently comprehensive to give a useful overview of the main principles which inform traditionalist arguments. It is not my purpose to offer a detailed critique of individual texts or to comment directly on the rhetorical means by which they make their case so much as to explore, through Lilith's allegorical correspondences, the possibility that they communicate a poetic of the very distinctive lived experience which has contributed to their authorship. I begin by offering, through the inclusion of selected extracts from some of the

available writings, a review some of the major themes discussed. Where further explanation appears necessary, I have used material from the report produced by the Lincoln Theological Institute as a means of illustration. I have tried to keep personal commentary to a minimum at this stage, as the links I make between the texts and Lilith's story to be expressive of my own reactions to the material.

## **Traditionalist Themes**

### **.....Sexual Differentiation**

Traditionalist opposition to the ordination of women is underpinned by the view that sexual differentiation, expressed as a male-female bipolarity, was instituted by God to serve his purpose for mankind. This divine purpose is considered to be embedded in the material world through the institution of a system of social and domestic relationships structured as patriarchy. According to traditional Anglican Catholics, "gracious patriarchy" (Geoffrey Kirk, *New Directions*, May 2005) is universal, inevitable, natural and essentially benevolent. Within the patriarchal framework, men and women are seen as equal but different. Each has his or her special areas of activity, as designated by divine will. Only men are permitted to lead, though public statements of traditionalist Catholic positions scrupulously stress the importance of women and their ministry, as demonstrated by the following extract from a *Forward in Faith* leaflet :

".....the Church is always described as 'she', and as having a feminine nature. Within the Church, therefore, there can be no possible grounds for depriving women of their rightful and proper place; it can be no haven for misogynists... We read in Genesis how God created man and woman in his image. He created them as helpmates for each other, male and female, equal but complementary as masculine and feminine. It is the complementary nature of man and woman that forms the bedrock of marriage. Throughout the Church's history women have exercised an important, a vital, part in its ministry. Because of that complementary nature, women bring to the Church's ministry gifts that are often denied men, as men bring gifts that are likewise denied women..."

This notion of complementarity is a facet of the "equal but different" philosophy, extended by Michael Harper (1994) into a detailed and comprehensive critique of contemporary social disintegration. In the following extract, he reiterates some the arguments of Steven Goldberg's work ' *The Inevitability of Patriarchy* ' :

" .....we need to see that the exclusion of women from teaching, headship (elders), and priestly ministry in the Old Testament was not the arbitrary decision of a God who wants to make women inferior, and to keep them in a place where they are dominated by men. As we have seen, it fits in with the pattern of societies everywhere in the world, and at all times in history. Another observable fact, pointed out by

Goldberg, is that women equal or surpass men in all test areas *not related to dominance and abstract reasoning*.....But 'dominance and abstract reasoning' is the stuff of leadership and teaching, the very roles which Jesus Christ, the apostles, and the Church Fathers denied to women.....”

Harper argues not only that women should avoid activities for which they are neither theologically nor biologically designed, but blames much of what he regards as the degenerate condition of contemporary society on the displacement of men from their natural position as head of the family and the abandonment by women of their natural responsibility for the care and nurture of children. (1994, p 176-177).

#### **.....The Necessary Maleness of the Priesthood**

Implicit in traditionalist ideas of the unfitness of women to lead and teach is the importance of the masculinity of Jesus. Because God chose to incarnate his son as a man, the priest, who effectively deputises for Christ at the altar, must be a man also. The celebration of the Eucharist, or holy communion, is a performance reserved exclusively for male actors. The man-priest takes on Christ's symbolic role as the bridegroom who inseminates the Church with his love and his life :

“ .....Christ's role as a bridegroom is mightily symbolized in the Easter Vigil Rite when the priest plunges the candle into the font, the life-bearing womb of the Church...” (Bridge, 1998, p 41).

Bridge shudders to contemplate the corruption of symbolism which occurs when a woman takes the place of a man at the altar, trembling at the thought of a divine presence which waits in the shadows to avenge transgression:

“ For a woman to occupy the position of groom suggests something very unnatural indeed, and turns God's plan upside down. This shocking reversal of created and natural relationships underscores the gravity of trifling with things that are God's order, things that are deeply mystical, and beyond our understanding. We dare not underestimate the damage caused by tampering with what we do not, and can not, fully comprehend “ ( op. cit., p 42).

#### **.....“Unnaturalness” and Taint**

It can be seen from the above that patriarchy depends upon the assignation, to women in particular, of a definite space which defines, or circumscribes, the range of roles and functions to which they are expected to restrict themselves. When women venture outside these spaces, the results vary from social breakdown in the material world ( Harper), to the profound thwarting of the divine purpose itself prophesied by Bridge. His horror at the unspecified “unnaturalness” of female celebration of Holy Communion is echoed and compared to the arcane barbarities of pagan ritual in the following quotation from a book of articles submitted to the Rochester Commission, a Church of



England committee convened to discuss issues surrounding the admission of women to the episcopacy :

".....Perhaps one cannot say that the notion of 'taint' is entirely wrong-headed. For instance, the symbolism associated with women and blood (childbirth) is very different from the symbolism associated with men and blood (battle). Is a woman priest standing at the altar and performing a ceremonial action with body and blood incontrovertibly miming the sacrificial death of the God-Man on Calvary ? Or might she not be miming the incarnation of a god, born from the womb of a god who is beyond gender or from a liaison with a sporting Zeus ? ..... 'Taint' need not be a fear of menstruation. It may be fear of a fatal muddle of symbol. " (Burnham, in Baker (ed.) p 200).

In Burnham's extract, unnaturalness is intensified to remerge as *taint*, the fundamental soiling and corruption of the pure by the impure. Burnham uses the concept of taint to compare women's ministry to the invocation of primitive gods, but it has a wider application context in the context of the ordination controversy. Taint is literally evoked in the instances, noted in the Lincoln Theological Institute Report, of male clergy objecting to the celebration of Holy Communion by women priests who are menstruating or pregnant, as this is considered to pollute the sacrament. (Jones, 2004, pp 63-64). It also features on a more general level in the idea of the "theology of taint" (Jones, 2004, p 164-165) which asserts that because a woman cannot be a priest, her ordination by those who oppose this view is irrevocably tainted, as are the sacraments she administers. Forward in Faith's Code of Practice sets out principles upon which contact with women priests should be ordered. The Code of Practice does not use the term "taint" though it does stipulate that neither bishops, priests nor laypeople opposed to female ordination should "receive" the ministry of women, particularly "the sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood."

(Forward in Faith, June 2006, at [http://forwardinfaith.com/about/uk\\_code\\_of\\_pract.html](http://forwardinfaith.com/about/uk_code_of_pract.html))

#### ...."Feminists"

So far, I have not considered the question of how traditionalists react when women question the models of femininity made available to them through monotheistic and patriarchal discourses<sup>1</sup> and offer alternatives which compensate for some of the deficiencies they detect. Michael Harper (1994, p10) describes women who support ordination to the priesthood as "feminist". While conceding that feminism has done much to redress gender inequality (p11), he later describes it as a 'flawed ideology' which, in its contemporary, more radical form has done much to undermine the sacred patriarchal institution of the family. He associates it with "unsavoury" (sic) practices such as occultism, witchcraft and "New Age", commenting that a high proportion of its leaders are "professing lesbians" (op cit. p 129). He struggles to maintain the distinction made early in the book (p 11) between radical feminism, to

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<sup>1</sup> See Frankenberry, N. (2005) for a comprehensive discussion of feminist epistemologies of religion.

which he attributes a fundamental breakdown in communication between men and women, and Christian feminism, which is generally considered to be more supportive of the family.

Extreme language is used by other traditionalist writers to describe "feminists". Robbie Low (New Directions, April 2000) describes the movement to which "feminists" are assumed to belong as "....this bastard daughter of Marxism with its manufactured oppressed class, dismissal of opposition as a false consciousness, emotional tyrannies and hatreds mainly men and children eating away at the fabric of communion and family life"(sic). For Geoffrey Kirk they are the "frightful phalanx of feminists" (New Directions, December 1998). William Oddie (1988, p xvi), in the Foreword to his critique of Christian feminism, laments the difficulty of avoiding, when "describing and assessing an often bitterly militant movement and an overwhelmingly polemical literature", a tone which is similarly hostile and enraged.

There is little understanding or acknowledgement, in any of these extracts, of either the looseness of definitions of "feminism", which is a term used to cover virtually everything from radical feminist theological speculation to an expressed desire to allow women in the Church of England to honour their vocation on the same terms as men, or of the extent to which terms such as "bitterly militant movement" and "overwhelmingly polemical literature" could equally be applied to the action and writing of Anglican Catholic traditionalists.

#### **....The Feminine Ideal**

If "feminists" are seen as hate-filled and destructive, the Virgin Mary is regarded as the antithesis who constitutes the ultimate ideal of womanhood :

" In affirming the importance of women's ministry in the Church, we must never forget the supreme example of the Blessed Virgin Mary, a lay person upon whom God bestowed a dignity higher than that given to any other human being.

....In her faith, humility and devotion, St Mary is a type or image of the whole Church.....submissive to her Lord, open and receptive to God's grace.....

For all Christians, both men and women, St. Mary is the supreme image and example of the Church waiting upon her Lord, pondering mysteries in her heart. We need to imitate our Lady's humble, meditative approach: to be less eager to overthrow what we do not like or do not understand and more ready to ponder , to think deeply about things in our hearts, to develop the art of meditation, to receive God on his own terms. "

( G. R. Bridge, 1998, p 134-135)

Here, St. Mary is represented as a passive container, a feminine receptacle waiting, in humble submission, for God to enlighten her with a sense of purpose. Her ministry is perhaps best expressed as one of withdrawal, of endless waiting to be called by someone for something. While she may "think deeply in her heart ", she has no means by which to express the outcome of her deliberations or share them with others. St. Mary is empty ; being voiceless, she can articulate no needs or aspirations of her own to trouble vested interests. She stands, or rather sits, as the ultimate contrast to "feminism".

## **Lilith and Traditionalist Poetics**

I now explore briefly some of the allegorical correspondences which can be established between Lilith's story and the themes of the traditionalist texts. This can do no more than touch upon the substantial potential I see in this material to generate multiple meanings and inspire alternative ways of reading and interpreting source materials, but I hope to be able to give at least a foretaste of what is possible. The setting up of likenesses, contrasts, contradictions and comparisons on which this exercise is based is essentially a creative process which aims to touch the deep structures of lived experience present within texts. Strati (1999, p 60), draws on the work of Dilthey to describe a method of engaging with lived experience by responding to it poetically and rendering it tangible in images charged with creative energy. The poet, or perhaps in this case the researcher-poet, has to try to infuse both her own psychic states and those of her subjects with this inspirational energy, bringing them together and capturing them in an act of creative expression. This generates what Denzin (1984, p 60) calls "... (a) circuit of selfness... (which) attaches the person to the world. In that circuit, emotionality, meaning, and the other are joined.... the person and others jointly produce a field of experience that each enters into".

The traditionalist "circuit of selfness" is approached through the use of allegory, which works in this context by evoking a series of comparisons or likenesses between the metaphorical subject, Lilith, and the material subject, the ideas and lived experiences articulated in the texts. Law and Singleton (2002, pp 17 - 19) refer to allegory as a technique of indirection in the sense that it does not tell a story so much as appreciate, enact, evoke and condense a reality that cannot be conceptualised and charted as a coherent whole. I am relying on the telling of Lilith's story to initiate a process of creating both likenesses and un-likenesses which leads, through the evocation of new insights, to the discovery of a poetic in the text, a thread of lived experience which runs beneath the rhetorical structures and gives a characteristic feel to what has been written. Strati, (1999, p 95), drawing on Polanyi's theory of "tacit knowledge" refers to this mysterious phenomenon as " (the) something that is left unspecified, .... something that evades explicit knowledge". Linstead (2000, p 73) locates it within "the tension at play between (the) words and experience", the point at which a text opens up to multiple interpretations, excesses of meaning far beyond the original intention of the author. At the moment, I am not able to improve on either of these descriptions.

Out of the many possible sources of correspondence between Lilith's story and traditionalist poetics, I have chosen to begin by considering how both she and the Anglican-Catholic opponents of women's ordination exist in, and to some extent are defined by, a distinctive relationship to patriarchy. The most obvious way of conceptualising patriarchy is as a network of religious and social relationships but, preferring a more poetic approach, I propose to work with it as a kind of space. Lilith's story begins in her discontent with the life assigned to her in Eden, the primordial patriarchal space. Her restless ambition to *be* (recalling Braidotti's phrase), causes her to outgrow the space of her birth and the dumb, submissive relationship to which it chains her. She develops wings, she soars into the sky and flies off to a new life. Adam, of course, remains rooted to the ground of Eden and stays there to enact his own drama of alienation with his new partner, Eve. I cannot help feeling that traditionalist opponents of women's ordination find themselves in a similar position to Adam. Inflexibility wedded to their theory of "gracious patriarchy" ensures that they remain trapped in a restricted space, a kind of wasted Eden, which they find themselves obliged to defend. The church, and the world, move on around them. Although women priests continue to face opposition from some quarters, they have largely been accepted and valued for the contribution they have made. Though their progress to the episcopacy, the office of bishop, seems likely to be slow and painful, it appears likely at the time of writing that they will ultimately reach their goal.

In spite of traditionalist protestations about the high value placed on women, inside the church and out, this approval is conditional upon them accepting male definitions of their role and function. It seems that patriarchal space offers them room to do very little more than be a prop and support of prevailing institutions. The vituperative language reserved for "feminist" degradations reveal a degree of fear, hostility and aversion that would have been familiar to the Rabbinical patriarchs who recited incantations to prevent Lilith from entering the bedchamber. The term "feminist" itself – which is rarely defined and never applied consistently- is applied as a generic term of abuse to cover virtually any attempt made by women to question their position within the Christian metanarrative or assert their right to have their religious vocation honoured on the same terms as men. Women who are dissatisfied with what is allowed to them inside patriarchal space are forced to make extreme choices. They can either stay in Eden and accept the inescapable limitations of their role or escape to join an underclass of "feminist" demonesses, repudiated by those from beyond whose reach they have placed themselves and stigmatised as raging, insatiable harpies.

Perhaps the most direct point of comparison between Lilith and the traditionalist poetic is the contrast between her and the ideal feminine, St Mary. Here, allegory meets allegory. We have already seen how St Mary is depicted by Bridge as the embodiment of an enervated, listless femininity, one of lack, of deficiency, of cool, passionless withdrawal, not so much unattractive as unfulfilled and incomplete.

An important aspect of St Mary's appeal to traditionalists, and one to which I have not as yet referred, is her perpetual virginity, preserved by God in gracious acknowledgement of her role as Christ's mother. Bouyer (1976, p 61,) explains how Mary, in spite of pregnancy and childbirth, was able to avoid the taint that these states would normally confer on women, who will have to wait until the second coming for their own virginities to be restored :

"..... In Mary, this virginity was consummated without being tainted by the fact of her motherhood of grace, whereas in the Church at the end of time this motherhood by grace will be consummated in the restored virginity of the morning of creation..."

There is direct opposition between Lilith's sexed body, triumphant in its abjection, roaming the universe and St Mary's withdrawn, unsexed body, purged of its involvement with procreation, literally restored as untouched, confined to the smallest of spaces, a veritable statue's niche. It seems as though patriarchy has here achieved its ultimate aim, of limiting the space allowed to woman to what she can fit into, a seated figure lost in contemplation, embodying, in Bridge's quotation of Bishop Jeremy Taylor, "only those graces which walk in a veil and silence". This is the feminine ideal : woman voiceless, purged of her body's involvement in pregnancy and birth, silent, covered, invisible in her veils, walking aimlessly to pass the time until the secrets of her heart are unlocked.

### **A Poetics of Narcissism**

What can be learnt from this admittedly small selection of extracts from traditionalist texts about the lived experience in which they originate ? I believe it's possible to discern traces of a distinctive narcissistic poetic around what I've expressed as traditionalist desire to defend their space, their Eden, where definitions of gender difference based upon male—female distinctions reign unchallenged and women are generally subordinated to men. Narcissism, according to Freud, originates in the fear, rage and loss that results from the existential displacement of a person from a world of which he is the acknowledged centre and to which he passionately desires to return. ( Schwartz, 1990, in Gagliardi, ed., 305-307). Kristeva regards narcissism and abjection as inseparable companions :

" Abjection...is a *precondition of narcissism*. It is coexistent with it and causes it to be permanently brittle. The more or less beautiful image in which I behold or recognise myself rests upon an abjection that sunders it as soon as repression , the constant watchman, is relaxed.....Narcissism...appears as a regression to a position set back from the other, a return to a self-contemplative, conservative, self-sufficient haven.." (1982, p 13-14).

The Lilith myth illustrates the rupture of this essential bond between abjection and narcissism. The repudiated desires, in this instance rage at the woman's escape , fear of the loss of her nurturing subservience and frustrated sexual desire are projected onto the female who refuses to accept subordination and

to be less than she is capable of being. She is demonized, and represented as enacting the rage and resentment which is actually the disowned emotion of the patriarchal male. The allegorical correspondence at this point between Lilith's experience and that of Christian "feminists" who assert the right to reclaim the instinctual, vigorous feminine which has long been banished from Christian theology and ecclesiology and to honour their vocation to priesthood on the same terms as men could hardly be made clearer.

Traditionalist narcissism can be discerned in several areas : the vituperative language, contempt and ridicule directed against "feminists", the claim to a monopoly of truth, authenticity and righteousness and, perhaps most significantly, the apparent lack of any willingness to fundamentally question their refusal to compromise and co-operate with those who are deemed opponents. While it is possible to acknowledge the pain and difficulty they experience, it also seems reasonable to attribute at least some of this to a refusal to acknowledge changes which are now irrevocable. "Questioning and conflict "according to Helen Stanton (1998, p 52), " are inevitable companions of profound change...The insights of Christian feminism are now an unavoidable part of the Christian landscape."

After troublesome desires and emotions have been relegated to the demonic "out-there", what remains to traditionalists ? They continue to occupy Eden, wasted though it is by the feminine by defection. Narcissism, the clinging to notions of truth, authenticity and righteousness, insulates from uncomfortable realities by perpetuating the illusion that one is championing traditional values in degenerate times and perpetuates reliance on defensive devices which obscure how one's lived experience, the fear and pain which result from unwelcome and unsought change, have the power to charge and condition ways of thinking, speaking and acting. Warren Colman explains how it is possible to become imprisoned within a state of mind which causes us to "...cling to... fantasies with..force since to give them up would expose (us) to unbearably painful experiences of absence or loss that may amount to fear of annihilation. Like Narcissus, (we) would often rather die than give up the enchantment of our illusions. "(2006, p 22)

### **Lilith as Diva, Heroine, Clown, Fool**

Out of the many possible readings of Lilith's myth, the exposure of the blindness and narcissism of unyielding patriarchy is, for me, one of the most fruitful. Lilith as diva and heroine, icon of the restored feminine, plays a role in traditionalist texts analogous to that which Bakhtin (1981, p 158), assigned to the clown and the fool in the novel:

" Their very appearance, everything they do and say, cannot be understood in a direct and unmediated way but must be grasped metaphorically. Sometimes their significance can be reversed-but one cannot take them literally because they are not what they seem. ....Essential to these figures is a distinctive privilege-the right to be "other" in this world, the right not to make common cause with any one of the single categories that life makes available..."

David Rutledge (1998, p 3) draws attention to the etymological play of *yada*, the Hebraic verb *to know* which signifies both the knowledge of cognition and the knowledge of sexual intercourse. Lilith's knowledge, the insight she offers into the struggle of women to fulfil their potential, is the carnival knowledge that troubles and unsettles the established order. Her theft of the essence of patriarchy revealed its basic insecurity, fragility and vulnerability to loss and pain. Whore and demoness she may have been, but Lilith knew the sacred name of God, and knew also when to utter it.

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## ***SCOS conference – The Good the Bad and the Ugly***

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### ***How to bring seamen to life: Leadership Ethics and Aesthetics on board merchant marine ships***

#### ***Setting the context***

Few outsiders have any idea about life on board a merchant marine ship, and it is not widely associated with either aesthetics or emotion. This paper argues for the importance of understanding aesthetics and emotions on board ships in order to understand the morale of seafarers who might be expected to be beaten or depressed, and emotions and aesthetics that are not about creating false hopes or wishful delusions. As a crew manager said, ‘the aesthetics of relationship and communication become a very important issue under the specific conditions of risk, lack of home comforts and warmth, stress and isolation. A false note, a dissonance in relationship is not accepted by seamen.’

Our research has involved fourteen interviews with captains, first officers, chief engineers, crew managers and seamen. Our early findings showed that the leadership relationships on board merchant marine ships involved strongly felt emotions and were very often full of aesthetic appreciation of their surroundings. As one seafarer says: ‘I like a stormy sea. The stormy sea has magnificence. I like to look at a rough sea and to listen to the roaring of the waves. I am looking for the beauty in my surroundings, because it is important, not to feel like a mechanism for earning money but to see and enjoy the beauty around us. My work gives me a lot, means a lot for my emotional life...yes, we are working for money but feeling and emotional satisfaction is more important than material things’.

Viewing aesthetics as a form of knowledge (Strati, 1992; Dean et al., 1997) positions aesthetics as a form of social power, which raises ethical problems. Aesthetics may be used toward dictating the ‘right’ way that people should feel. Understanding the dynamics of aesthetics, particularly the role of human agency in creating a positive ‘spirit’ in residential organisations, how emotion and lack of emotion affect organisational members, shows up the role of power in shaping aesthetics. As one seaman said: ‘the biggest test is through power. People who are not morally and aesthetically educated enough can damage, emasculate others. Sometimes badly timed words are more dangerous than gunshots. Especially at sea, where people are isolated and very much stressed...human souls as well as bodies should be beautiful.’

There is such a strong boundary between work and leisure in our society that, for many people, there is the feeling that it is only when they are outside the organisation that they can be themselves, that they can free the possibilities of the inner life or express themselves or realize their potential for experience. Anger, anxiety, shock or stress, longing for the workday to end: these are emotions felt by some people in their day-to-day experience of organisations (Strati, 1999).

When we ask where feeling is in people's accounts of work, we find it not in statements of feeling, but in stories about work. Stories invite us into the workplace, to see and feel what workers see and feel. A great deal of feeling goes into the relationship between crew members and officers. People say little about what they do on the job, but more about how they get along with others.

One seafarer told us this story, 'On one of the vessels on which the Chief Engineer was disembarking, and on which I was staying, when leaving the engine room and saying goodbye to his team, he turned, looked at us with nostalgia, and said: ' Oh my God, how much work, energy and emotion we invest in this place. Honestly, I feel that I am leaving home, my heart bleeds. I liked his words and I looked at the engine room the same ways as he did; - we really were one peaceful family. The vessel was our home.'

The most frequent feelings they described are inspiration, love and respect that give them a sense of harmony. As another seaman put it, 'The vessel is our home and the crew is our family. I spend half of my life on the vessel. I try to influence people to feel that they are in their home and they must care about it, to make it more beautiful. They must feel like a part of this family, of our small society. We must be sensitive to each other. Sometimes people are very closed in themselves; then we are living as strangers in one family. That's why we must try to have harmony in our relationship. In order to achieve harmony of relationship the feeling of responsibility, morality and beauty are necessary. We need harmony everywhere. At the least, we must strive for beauty and harmony.'

One of the captains said, 'If humanity and feelings work well together this will bring harmony to the work. The vessel is our 'home sweet home'. And this is true. The vessel is our wet-nurse... The ship is a female (she) and you cannot know her without loving her.'

When people behave morally and treat each other with love, this is beautiful because it pleases the senses. This sense of beauty cannot be replaced by anything else. As one seaman said to us: 'When you are in the work place the best stimulus is to receive normal human treatment and have a human relationship; you do not need anything else. That is like a good, peaceful family... Sometimes against our moral principals we decide in favour of rationalism. People always, in every situation must remain human. First and foremost we are humans. People must be honest with themselves and with others. The most fearful judge is your conscience. And if you have good relations with your conscience then you feel happy.'

### ***Leadership ethics and aesthetics on board***

As another seaman said, 'On board ship everything is in order. Discipline and hierarchy is strict as in the Army. Everything is in the intonation. It is the aesthetic of communication, the colour of command.' Power in organisations belongs to those who can define reality for others. How power is deployed, and by whom, affects the aesthetic character of the organisation by influencing the 'spirit of the place'. Organisational members experience and communicate the spirit of a place in how they treat each other. This is (in part) a reflection of organisational framing, policies, and practices (Strati, 1999).

As one officer said: 'Sea crew are very close to each other. Every act of a seaman is related to others. If another member of a crew snubbed a seaman he cannot get over it easily as he could do on shore by meeting his family or friends. We are living together; we are eating and sleeping and working together and not just for one or two days but months. In our small community people who are able to act in an immoral and ugly way cannot remain for a long time, they cannot survive. The other members of the crew will try everything possible to get rid of him... It is painful when somebody hurts you... It is very important to have a positive moral climate on the vessel. If there is anger it will affect everything: our work and the beauty of our relationship, our existence at whole. If we are cooperating in harmony it is very positive for the whole crew. We need to show people, to give them an example of how to work beautifully. Beauty characterises humans. If we are not aware of aesthetics, beauty and purity then we look like more animals than humans.'

The spirit of a place focuses on the aesthetics of social relations. Relational communications are linked with the most important issues of social power and ethical issues. As one seaman says: 'Moral acts are always beautiful and immoral are always ugly. People must be aesthetes in their soul. External beauty is not real... We learn about each other very quickly, because we are together twenty-four hours... But the whole climate on the vessel depends on the Captain. He has all authority; all lines go through him. The moral and aesthetic climate of the vessel depends on the morality and aesthetics of the Captain.'

As one captain put it, 'People know my requirements regarding their personal behaviour and ethics. But they also know that I always call their attention to see the beauty of the nature surrounding us. It can be a school of dolphins playing with a vessel or when the whale is following the ship by turning on its side and wagging with its flipper, then trying again to catch up the vessel by saluting us and playing with us, and doing it again and again... And when after the rain the huge rainbow appears at sea and it seems like the ship is entering the arch. By marine tradition the seaman must make a wish and his wish will come true. All these help people to relax from work. We have very intensive working hours and sometimes there is no time even to think about aesthetics. But if it is possible after working hours we organise events, which make people feel they have had a break...'

Emotional and often sentimental expressions from the seamen define the work relationship and convey the sense of their feelings. Seafarers identify their feelings with aesthetic categories. For example, they link a feeling of responsibility with beauty. Unethical behaviour is ugly and unacceptable for seamen.

As one officer said: 'The feeling of responsibility is a beautiful feeling. All these issues of culture, discipline and morality, ethics, aesthetics and beauty are interrelated.'

One captain said, 'Human beings differ from machines because of their emotions and feelings. When we are satisfied with our work and with each other: the crew with the Captain and the Captain with his crew, when everything is going well in loading and discharging you feel a burst of energy. My main purpose is to make people satisfied with their job and encourage them to feel happy and feel joy in order to leave the vessel with positive memories, with the feeling that they learned something new and acquired experience. People always appreciate your support and your responsible relationship of them.'

As another captain says, 'At sea we become more sensitive to each other. The sea sensitises us to our surrounding circumstances, to our fellows, and to our loved ones... Sometimes when a member of crew is disembarking after completion of the contract, when we say goodbye we have tears in eyes, we are all deeply touched... When leaving the vessel I have a feeling that I leave part of myself on the ship.' These are just some of the seafarers' sentimental responses.

Listening carefully to emotional responses of Merchant Marine seamen gives us clues to their ethical and aesthetic state. Emotion in an organisation is a barometer of moral and relational ethics (Waldron, 1999) and aesthetics. Inexpressive organisations, those where emotion is restricted to the private experiences of members, may be those that no longer debate matters of the good, the bad and the ugly.

## ***Conclusion***

'It is the separation of the sensuous aspect of aesthetic experience from knowing and understanding that has led to the trivialisation of the aesthetic domain' (Witkin, 1974). As Renato Barilli (1995) points out, that aesthetic feeling relates not so much to the heart and the sentiments as to the senses, that is, to the network of physical perceptions: seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting and smelling are actions which provoke emotions in both organisational actors and the researcher.

Feelings of the beauty of their surroundings help seamen to survive and perform at sea. Emotional responses of seamen proclaim the healing powers of aesthetic experience on board. 'As I have learnt to work with people and become more experienced, I begin to understand that it is beauty, which is very important in our work and in our life in general, because it helps to organise', says one ship's officer. Those who exercise leadership on merchant marine ships (captains, chief engineers, first officers) have strong views on the importance of understanding aesthetics and emotions in discharging their responsibilities, and this was borne out strongly in our interviews.

Aesthetics opens the doors to artistic creation and beauty, reframing our thinking in a positive and potentially productive way. Art can give people an alternative approach to those aspects of consciousness that are too limited by the impersonal rules of reason, in which the private joys and fears of people are not taken into account.

Art speaks indeed to the mind in the language allied with pathos, which seek to unite the private and the working life in a brave new paradigm. Pathos must be transformed through a strict concept of logos and ethos; if it is to be able to release the capacities of dispositional attitudes, of moods, and of cognitively shaped emotions to procure justice inside the organisation. Art might easily be used to create a hospitable space for shaping our future conversations so that we can relate to others in more responsive and ethical ways. The naturally arising art of the sea, the vessel and the engine certainly seems to work like that.

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# **The Phantom of the Operating System: Using the Ontology of Dramatism to Explore Technology Use**

## **Abstract**

This paper examines the drama of technology use in its everyday setting for the ordinary worker – a phenomenon of little interest in the dominant paradigms of research and practice that takes for granted the benefits and good which come from deploying technology productively to transform organizations. However, everyday use is not an unproblematic existence – technology fails to work or users fail to get technology to work on a somewhat regular basis. Using the methods of Kenneth Burke's dramatism, our analysis of technology failures, as 'performed' by users and the help desk technicians they call for assistance, reveals a more complex relationship between individuals, their work and the technology which they must use to accomplish it. Specifically we uncover what technology imposes on the accomplishment of work, the substantive agency it assumes in its organizational setting and the negotiated order which must necessarily occur between workers and the technicians who help them, as they both attempt to resolve technical failures so that the work of the 'organizational machine' can go on. Implications of these findings are then presented.

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# **The Phantom of the Operating System: Using Dramatism to Explore Technology Use**

## **Introduction**

Virtually no area of the organization has escaped the inexorable infiltration of information technologies to support work activities. Touted as the key to improved productivity, information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become inseparable from task accomplishments for large populations of organizational workers. ICTs in use take on a 'ready to hand' character (Heidegger, 1962), slipping into the background of the everyday work environment.

This rise in the 'technization'<sup>1</sup> of work (Barley and Orr, 1997) results in organizations which employ proportionally more technical and professional employees (Barley, 1996; Barley and Orr, 1997). As well, it results in work which has been substantially re-skilled – informed - (Zuboff, 1988), as advanced computerized technologies alter the tasks of office workers, making their jobs more abstract and more inescapably linked to technology and technical knowledge (Barley, 1996; Zuboff, 1988). Yet, despite these trends, few researchers have attempted to understand the implications for organizing of the steady rise in the technization of organizational work.

Instead organizational research has focused on how broad technological shifts require new strategies and structures (Dewett and Jones, 2001; Melville, et al., 2004) while other individual level research has focussed on understanding how practitioners might do a better job of deploying technology in organizations – improving adoption rates by individuals (Griffiths, 1999; Venkatesh, et al., 2003). The dominant paradigm in these bodies of research takes for granted a 'tool' view of ICTs along with its inherent goodness – i.e. that ICTs are tools which we have created to enhance individual and firm performance, that we control these tools and that they are beneficial to use. This research emphasizes organizational and individual efficiency and effectiveness arguments and how to overcome individual resistance so that new ICTs are implemented seamlessly into the firm, with benefits appearing to flow automatically. Yet for the individual, work life with technology is not always good – no matter how 'well designed' and implemented it is the technology itself has a way of taking on a life of its own.

There are moments during everyday use in which technology is called into the 'present at hand' (Heidegger, 1962) – when technology fails to work in the intended way, or the technology user is unable to accomplish tasks and requires help. In these moments, the technology and its usage come into the foreground in ways which can serve to broaden our understanding of these tools, the individual's work relationship to them and importantly, how they are implicated more broadly in work life at the organizational level for good or bad. Thus our research seeks to understand what is revealed about work and organizing when the technology implicated in that work suffers temporary failures.

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<sup>1</sup> We draw on Barley and Orr's research in which technized work is described as "work which is comparatively complex, analytic, and even abstract, because it makes use of tools that generate symbolic representations of physical phenomena and that often mediate between workers and the objects of their work" (Barley and Orr 1997, 4).

In this research we use the ontological inspiration of Burke's dramatism (Burke, 1955; Burke, 1966; Burke, 1970) and methods to analyze audio-taped technical support calls to the technical help desk of a large financial institution. These are crisis events in which a user's work is interrupted and halts while technical problems are attended to in concert with help desk technicians. These events create a hermeneutic rupture – an interruption in the normal ebb and flow of everyday work life. They allow us to focus on the implications of technology for the individual but they also form the route into focusing on the organizational system as a whole.

Our review of prior research leads us to conclude that the impact of the technization of work on the day to day work life of the 'ordinary' worker is critically important for organizational theorists to study with substantial implications for organizing. Technized work (where work and technology are fused) serves to call attention to the decreasing relevance of simple classifications of tasks, technology and expertise as separable entities which has a long history in organizational studies. Such classifications simplify analysis and enable generalizations, yet practically, if such classifications no longer exist, then we must re-consider how we study work in organizations and what our findings mean for practice.

At an organizational level, work which is more technized and therefore creates a strong 'de-coupling of knowledge from authority' (Barley, 1996; Barley and Orr, 1997) calls into question the organizationally enframed Tayloristic underpinnings of structure based on the hierarchical division of labour. Instead, technized work requires re-consideration of work structure and of the organizing logic for separating 'technical expertise' from subject matter expertise as distinctly as now occurs.

The background for this research which is presented next examines the organization and individual level work within which our research is situated. We seek to briefly outline broad perspectives which have been influential in establishing the ground work for studying technology in organizations, while then narrowing down to how we have sought to understand technology in the life of the individual worker. Our methods section discusses dramatism as the ontological position of this work and as the methodology which we deployed. We explain both the broad positioning of dramatism within its particular paradigm and then our application of it to our research site and data analysis. Our discussion section reviews our thematic analysis and findings which focus first on the individual level interactions revealed in our data and which then contribute to a broader understanding of the organization's relationship with technology. We conclude with a summary of the depiction of organizational life with technology which is revealed in this work and the implications this has for current thinking about organizing.

## **Literature Review**

Early understanding about the relationship between technology and organizations came about almost 50 years ago with the work of Joan Woodward (Woodward, 1958) and her efforts to categorize the types of core technologies of firms which fit with particular organizational structures to achieve optimal firm performance. The emphasis then was on opening the 'black box' of the firm which tended to be ignored by the dominant economic paradigms of the time (Hatch, 1997). This research emphasized a largely deterministic view of technology as influencing particular outcomes with an expanding array of contingency variables (Dewett and

Jones, 2001; Perrow, 1967; Thompson, 1967). Whereas the economic view was that the firm itself was a 'technology' - a means of production influencing society - the organizational theorists of the time held that within the firm, technology consisted of three elements: tools and equipment, activities and processes (techniques) which reflected methods of production, and the knowledge skills and abilities to develop tools and methods and apply them (Hatch, 1997). Within this view, the broad aim was to generalize and understand a firm's 'core' technology (as a singular entity) rather than to examine technological diversity and its elements throughout the firm.

In the ensuing decades, particularly as a result of advanced technologies including information and communication technologies (ICTs), research has diverged in level of analysis of technology (firm, department, individual), in paradigmatic views (functionalist, interpretivist, critical), in contributing disciplines where technology takes on different meanings (strategy, organization theory, information systems, sociology, anthropology etc) and on the emphasis within research on temporal dimensions (technological change, new implementations, new technology choices versus static technology-in-use etc.) (Liker, et al., 1999).

ICTs impose particular challenges on organizing and work. As Karl Weick theorizes, they are abstract, continuous and stochastic (Weick, 1990). These properties make work increasingly complex and non-routine as knowledge becomes increasingly embedded in the technology, reliability of ICTs becomes increasingly emphasized (over efficiency) and technical complexity creates seemingly random problems with the ICTs with which workers must cope (Hatch, 1997). The results can be stress and confusion on the part of the worker and failures of comprehension which can lead to serious performance consequences ((Barley, 1996).

Since the advent of ICTs and their proliferation out of the backroom onto desktops, firms have increasingly sought ways to mitigate some of these challenges by providing technical support to workers. In this line of research ICT support has been conceptualized as a key mechanism for developing the ability of users to learn and use increasingly complex and interrelated technologies (Brancheau and Brown, 1993; Speier and Brown, 1997). A review of early research defined support as the range of organizational actions taken to plan, organize, staff, support, and coordinate technology and services to assist end users (Brancheau and Brown, 1993). Thus, the goal of support has been to assist and help end users realize productivity and performance gains from their technology. Despite this emphasis on 'helping' users, most work in this area has focussed on what services to provide to workers and how to provide them rather than on the users actual experience working with technology day in and day out and what happens to them and their work when they actually need to use the help provided.

More recently, research has sought to understand the point of view of the technician – the individual whose work role has emerged as a result of ICTs (Barley, 1996; Barley and Orr, 1997) and who, in the case of the computer technician studied here, serves as a buffer between the technology and the rest of the organization. This research acknowledges the professional occupation of technician and emphasizes that because technical work embodies substantial professional, specialized knowledge without attendant authority, it challenges the core assumption of hierarchical divisions of labour. In today's world, managers often do not comprehend the work of those in lower level positions (like technicians) and therefore expertise

is no longer their source of legitimacy in decision making (Barley, 1996). Additionally it challenges cultural assumptions about the relative value of such work vis-à-vis knowledge workers who carry out the ‘actual’ work of the organization. Technician’s work is necessary – it lives in symbiosis with the work of others – neither can exist without the other and both benefit. Yet the work lives of technicians are challenged by enframened modes of vertical organizational structures and unchanged cultural beliefs which can often place them in the role of “insufficiently servile servants” (Barley, 1996, 430; Barley and Orr, 1997).

It is within the work context of technical problems that these latter two perspectives collide. Abstract, continuous and stochastic work which arises due to the integration of technology with tasks performed by the ordinary worker/manager provides the setting for reasonably frequent technical breakdowns. On these occasions individuals must act to get the technology functioning so their work can continue. Very often this requires the assistance of computer technicians to provide advice and/or coordinate repair services to get the technology operating again. It is within this setting that we explore the users’ experience in working with ICTs and what this understanding reveals about organizing more broadly.

### **Dramatism as Theoretical Frame**

Dramatism is one of the interpretative traditions of research in which reality is viewed as being socially constructed (Prasad, 2005). The method and philosophy of dramatism was developed by Kenneth Burke (Burke, 1955; Burke, 1966) who is acknowledged for his work as a literary theorist, philosopher, and critical theorist.

Dramatism is an approach to understand social life as a drama (Prasad, 2005) in a literal rather than a metaphoric sense. By using dramatism we view life *as* a drama, not life *as if* it were drama. This difference is very important because allows us to fully explore the interpretations, or motives, of the actors. In dramatism the motives are “interpretations of situations that are convincing to both self and others” page 53 (Prasad, 2005). These interpretations are not peculiar to the individual. Both the broader socio-cultural milieu and specific interests of the moment mediate the motives (Prasad, 2005). A major element of dramatism is to examine dramas (social action) in order to identify the motives and the interests behind them (Prasad, 2005). In order to unearth the various vocabularies of motives in our data we used the five elements of the Pentad, and the resulting ratios, to question the discourse.

Burke’s pentad is a widely accepted tool for breaking down a situation (or speech or event) into more manageable analytic segments so as to be able to uncover underlying motives. It is “a simple way for the critic to name the elements in the act and then study the relationships between these elements” page (Bettis, 1996). The Pentad is made up of the five key terms of dramatism (Burke, 1955): Act, Scene, Agent, Agency, and Purpose.

The act is the event of interest. It is important to note that the act can be a minor everyday event or it can be a spectacular event (Prasad, 2005). The scene is the background of the act. It refers to both the immediate scene and “the wider context in which the act takes place” (Prasad, 2005, 73). The actors involved in the act are the agents. The agency refers to the actions of the actors.

The final term in the Pentad is purpose. This term refers to the “intentions and desires (both shared and conflicting) influencing various actors in their agency” (Prasad, 2005, 73).

The five elements of the Pentad do not exist independently of each other (Burke, 1955). They influence, shape and manipulate each other - they are the “principles of determination” (Burke, 1955, 15) and offer the greatest benefit when they are paired into ratios. These ratios go beyond the simple analysis of who did what, when, how, where and why, but focus attention on combinations of each pentad element to answer questions such as: how does *where* something occurs (the scene) influence *what* has happened (the act) – this is a scene-act ratio analysis. Or how does where something occurs (the scene) influence *who* becomes involved (agents) – this is a scene-agent ratio analysis.

We can use the scene and the metaphor of the container to further our understanding of the ratios. The scene contains and constrains the act. Certain acts can be played out within certain scenes. The container metaphor, however, should not be understood to represent something immutable – any scene can be understood in a variety of ways, depending on the particular combination of the other elements of the pentad. Depending on how the scene is understood, the act, agency, and purpose make different kinds of sense. Certain acts occur in certain scenes, but acts often dominate scenes by playing out in unexpected locations. Certain kinds of agency are more legitimate within certain kinds of scene and certain purposes are more appropriately played out within particular scenes. Thus, even as the scene contains and constrains the other elements of the pentad, the other elements also play their part in defining the scene, hence the importance of studying the elements of the pentad in relation to each other, through ratios. Implicit in this idea is the notion of what is expected in terms of the different combinations; understanding what is considered ‘normal’ within the ratio can reveal a great deal about the broader understanding that agents and observers might have about relating to other agents. Additionally, unexpected twists, not unlike twists in a plot, provide opportunities to understand even the limits of these expectations, or what circumscribes the normal.

We theorize that a dramatic rupture occurs when there is a shift in the ratios. For example, the agency of one actor is superseded by the agency of another actor. In a situation like this the actor may be a human or may be a non-human (Latour, 1987). This rupture allows us to clearly examine the underlying assumptions that have been made about the event under examination and our constructed expectations of each of the elements in the Pentad.

Our theorizing is further informed by the use of Burke’s concepts of the *terministic screen*, the *circumference*, the *guilt redemption cycle*, *scapegoating* and *mortification*.

Burke used the term terministic screen to refer to sets of symbols that are the screen through which we see the world and through which the world makes sense to us. Burke stated:

"When I speak of 'terministic screens,' I have particularly in mind some photographs I once saw. They were *different* photographs of the *same* objects, the difference being that they were made with different color filters. Here something so factual as a photograph revealed notable distinctions in texture, and even in form, depending upon which color

filter was used for the documentary description of the event being recorded" (p. 46) (Burke, 1966).

Thus, terministic screens serve as the foundation by which the world and events in it are interpreted by individuals and it would be expected that in an organizational setting, individuals in different areas of the organization, with different types of responsibilities, might have different terministic screens through which they would view the same event.

Burke's notion of circumference is meant to draw the analyst's attention towards where they draw the boundaries in investigating particular events. For example, a public speech by a U.S. President may be analyzed as an independent act with the circumference being the context of the national setting. Alternatively, we could expand the circumference by considering the broad, global political situation of the past 10 years. Here, circumference is a tool for taking in more or less of a field of view whereas terministic screens are used for taking in the same field of view in different ways.

The guilt-redemption cycle, scapegoating and mortification are other core concepts in Burke's dramatism. Burke conceptualizes man as: 1) a symbol using animal; 2) inventor of the negative; 3) separated from nature by instruments of his own making; 4) goaded by the spirit of hierarchy and 5) rotten with perfection (Burke, 1955). These basic tenets underpin much of his ontological and epistemological position. Burke suggests that man's constant need to seek perfection condemns him to a life filled with guilt. Thus, Burke conceptualizes guilt as "the driving force in the human drama" (Murray, 2002, 56). Guilt overwhelms us so much that it is the "chronic state of human being" and needs redemption and purgation at through either scapegoating or mortification.

Scapegoating is needed by humans to "cope with the burden of failure and guilt" (Crusius, 1999, 159). A scapegoat takes the position of 'them', which allows us to define ourselves in opposition (Crusius, 1999, 205). By defining a scapegoat we can be "cleansed" (Crusius, 1999, 205) through the victimization and separation of the scapegoat from "us". The scapegoat does not aim to redeem itself. It "serves to purify or redeem the group that has chosen it as a sacrifice because of its power to represent the group's defining sin" (Anderson, 1999).

If one cannot scapegoat then mortification will occur in order to cleanse the individual or group so that they can move forward. Mortification "can take the form either of suicide or martyrdom" (Anderson, 1999). Burke conceptualized mortification as "a kind of governance, an extreme form of "self-control," the deliberate, disciplinary "slaying" of any motive that, for "doctrinal" reasons, one thinks of as unruly." (Burke, 1970) .

Within our research study, described next, the dramatisitic framework helped us to understand the actors involved, including the non-human actants (Latour, 1987), the fluidity of our constructed distinctions between subjects and objects, the manner in which the scene is set up, the shifting agency of the different actors involved, and the manner in which the intentions and desires of the various human and non-human actants are enacted. Based on this framework, we discerned some hidden meanings in technology use and the way in which we are entrained to/with it. From this, we draw conclusions about aspects of the totality of our existence with ICT tools.

## **The Research Study**

In this section we briefly lay out the data we collected and our analytical approach and introduce the three themes we see as feeding into what eventually emerged as our understanding of the broader role of information technology in present day banking practice.

### The Bank Setting:

The setting for data collection was the IT help desk of a large North American bank. We collected data from audio recorded calls for 11 days over a four week period. During our time in the field, we identified 588 support events from the call logging system as potential data sources and, of these, 201 were usable for this research. Our conditions for using the data were that the call had to be completely recorded and logged on the system, and that the bankers calling had to be located within the geographic boundary set by the firm for the study (a large area which was representative of the firm's national coverage). Of the 201 usable support events our final data set consisted of 108 calls involving over 13 hours of audio data. We discarded the remaining 93 support events because we could not locate the banker (10), they declined to participate (13), or we were unable to directly contact the banker within a three day limit which we set to gain their consent to participate (70 cases). Of the 108 calls, 6 calls were ultimately discarded from the data set because the audio was incomplete. This left 102 calls for analysis representing just over 13 hours of audio recording.

The callers were employees of the organization in a variety of administrative and managerial positions located in branch or home offices. The technical help desk consisted of three groups (total of 39 staff) organized by the types of problems they supported: Group 1 helped bankers with the organization's computer network; Group 2 helped with the bank's software (proprietary and MS Office) and email services; Group 3 helped with software and network issues specific to mobile employees. The average call volume for the help desk was 800 calls per day. Group 1 and 2 calls represented employees from all levels of the institution (from front line customer service staff/tellers, to branch managers, division/regional managers through to senior executives). Group 3 calls represented mobile bankers – largely senior branch level employees with loan, mortgage and investment sales and service responsibilities.

The subjects represented a wide cross-section of bankers with different job responsibilities; 72% were female and 28% were male. Based on interviews at the bank, every banker involved used a PC or laptop extensively but the type of use varied. Some individuals used proprietary applications almost exclusively; others used a mix of MS Office and proprietary applications. Laptop users were generally remote workers, comprising just over 20% of the participating user group.

The average call duration was 6 minutes 45 seconds but they varied from 50 seconds to 26 minutes and 16 seconds. Group 1 analysts handled 41 calls associated with a range of network connectivity issues. The mean call duration for this group was 6 minutes and 32 seconds. Group 2 analysts handled 40 calls where technical support was required for non-mobile workers. The

mean call duration for this group was 5 minutes and 37 seconds. Group 3 analysts handled 23 of the 102 calls from mobile bankers. The mean call duration for this group was 9 minutes and 6 seconds.

For each call we developed various attributes to describe the call beyond the content of the interaction with the technician. We noted caller gender, technician gender, call group (1, 2 or 3), call duration, and certain features of the calls themselves which we coded: degree of solution achieved (solved, partial, unsolved), and problem characteristics along three dimensions of high medium and low on three attributes: 1) structuredness (existence of rules to solve), 2) complexity (small or large number of steps to solve) and 3) controllability (the degree to which the user could control having had the problem).

### Analytical Approach

The bank setting described above is a context with which most readers will readily identify in view of the pervasiveness of information technology in modern lifestyles and the concomitant need to seek technical support every once in a while. It was exactly this level of familiarity that provided our initial challenge: we had, in a sense, heard these kinds of interchanges in other contexts, most often involving ourselves looking for technical assistance. Our first challenge, therefore, was to be able to look beyond what initially appeared to us as unremarkable interactions; we needed to make the familiar unfamiliar.

The data coding process was accomplished using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis tool. After having all the calls transcribed and verifying the accuracy of the transcription, we entered each transcript as a text file into the NVivo database. We then entered the 'attributes' for each data file – the key characteristics of each call (see above). This classification helped us group the calls into broad categories and gave us a view of useful subsets of the call database. At this point we were ready to look for broad themes within the data.

We began the analysis process by applying the dramatism framework as we individually read through transcripts of the calls, attempting to parse the calls on the basis of the pentad elements and the ratios among the elements, as recommended by Burke (1966). Simultaneously, we met weekly over a five-month period to (a) discuss what we thought we were seeing and (b) to listen to selected calls (as we discovered, the transcripts were unable to capture the richness of the dramatisitic interaction; listening to the calls gave us at least a measure of this richness) and make observations about what we were seeing emerge. While the pentad elements were relatively easy to identify, we began to realize that to pin down key ratios – the particular contextual 'balance' between pentad elements – we would need to expand the circumference (Burke 1966) of our investigation to include elements of the contexts within which these calls had taken place. An audio recording of each meeting was archived and we summarized the themes we discussed following each meeting.

As we expanded the circumference of the scene (i.e., each call) and dug beneath the normalcy of the familiar, we realized the need to expand Burke's dramatisitic framework to account for the role that the technology was clearly playing as an independent element within the interactions between agents. We began to draw on two particular theoretical perspectives that helped us focus



more keenly on this element. Actor-network theory (Latour, 1987) gave us the vocabulary to understand the technology as a crucial non-human actant embedded in the semiotic frame at which we were looking, with its own imperatives to action as well as constraints on other actions. And Martin Heidegger's (1993) well-known characterization of the essence of technology as *ge-stell* (enframing), the technological way of being in the modern world, helped us see how we (as well as the participants in the support calls) had lost sight of the influence that the technology had come to exert on people's actions just because it had become ready-to-hand (Heidegger, 1962). We continued our thematic analysis informed by these theoretical angles.

Later, we began the process of revisiting the transcripts to identify instances of the themes we saw emerging. We had, by then, begun to see the support calls as evidence of a hermeneutic rupture, the rent in the fabric of everyday work practices that allowed us insights into the constitution of those very practices. Based on this perspective, we realized that we were gradually beginning to see what the support calls revealed about the notion of organizing in locales such as banking and, indeed, about the current discourse of organizing and organizations in general. We were able to narrow our thematic structure into three specific themes that cumulatively led us to our overarching characterization of organization within the technological milieu of the present day. We labelled these themes *The Technological Presence*, *The Power of Numbers* and *The Organizational Machine*. Before we present these themes in greater detail, we describe by way of example how we analyzed and characterizing the support calls in terms of Burke's dramatic framework.

#### Setting: The Pentad Enacted at the Bank

The *scene* in this study is a complex space, not merely a physical place. On the one hand, the physical location of the branch is commonly where the 'problem' originates, with all its attendant practical pressures and contexts. It represents the immediate (and preceding) scene for one *agent* (the banker agent) and in the context of the banker agent's workday might be expected to have a strong influence on the ensuing telephone 'conversation' – our scene of interest. On the other hand, leaving aside the physical location of the banker agent for the moment, the telephone call as scene is a disembodied interaction between (usually) two voices (sometimes more people from the bank and/or the help desk become involved). It has a different economy of cues, protocols, and meanings than what might occur in a face to face interaction. This is not to say that it has no continuity with the corresponding economy in the physical branch, in fact it does – the scenes can only be separated analytically. But it takes away certain otherwise allowable modes of interaction and introduces others uncommon to face-to-face encounters.

The other agent, the technician agent, while also operating out of a physical space, is more of a virtual presence within the encounter. Her/his physical location is never noted as of any importance, especially in relation to the often strong contextual presence of the caller's physical location, usually a branch. Within the branch the banker agent, often a person of some seniority, calls upon a certain brand of *agency* in the conduct of her/his work, an agency that relies on expertise, experience, and a particular performative competence.

When a technology malfunction compromises the capacity of the banker agent (or a colleague) to continue working, the banker agent usually spends some time investigating the problem, drawing

most often from a limited reservoir of knowledge about the technology in question, but nevertheless making some attempt to resolve the matter without calling the support desk (as well, doing the necessary investigation that will subsequently have to be reported to the technician agent). By the time the *act* commences - making the call - many banker agents have already entered an unfamiliar domain in which their basic competencies are of little use. No doubt, their common *purpose* is to restore normalcy, and some approach the scene and the act with a peremptory impatience to set things right, seemingly carrying with them their workplace demeanour.

Complementing these broad commonalities are broad variations. Some calls are directed to mobile support technician agents, others are handled by more generalist technician agents. Callers vary in their technical competence, their level of seniority, and the level of frustration they bring to the act. Within the economy of protocols and cues appropriate to a support call, there is considerable variation in the opening 'gambit', which often serves to set the tone for later parts of the call.

It is within this space and context, therefore, that the support calls unfold. Using these discrete interactional units, the support calls, we undertook the qualitative analysis described in the previous section. We now turn to the themes that emerged from the analysis. Supporting quotations from the calls are used to demonstrate aspects of our discussion. Where these quotes identify individuals – names, employee numbers, branch numbers etc. these forms of identification were disguised to preserve the confidentiality of the people and the setting.

## **Discussion of Themes**

### The Technological Presence

Within the bank setting, work is conducted by bankers (a term we use to denote all employees of the bank) who expertly combine and orchestrate their knowledge skills and technology-enhanced abilities with the task required to accomplish the bank's goals. On the surface and in keeping with modern tool views of technology, the technology slips into the background as servant to the banker. However, within our analyses we can begin to understand the creeping agency of the technology during its momentary failures. This theme then explores how the technology comes to make its presence known and how it conscripts others to action to serve its needs.

In locating the support calls within a dramatic space, we need to consider and contrast two scenes: the scene of work within which the banker as agent operates and the scene represented by the call itself (an adjustment to the circumference of our scene which proved necessary as our analysis unfolded). It is from the former scene of work that the latter, more ephemeral scene of the help desk call arises and into which it eventually subsides. As the enfolding scene, the workplace provides the context for the call and might naturally be expected to provide continuity into the phone call scene (a phenomenon, as we will see in our discussion of the following theme, which does not necessarily transpire). As such, we first take up the characteristics of this workplace scene with a particular focus on the technology that necessitates the transition into the call scene.

Several acts take place within the workplace scene involving a variety of agents and purposes. In a very general sense, the acts might be said to concern financial services to customers, making the customer an important agent within the equation. Importantly though, our focal agent is typically a financial services expert of some stripe (whether a branch manager, a mobile agent, or a teller, among several other roles), hired, trained, and empowered to operate independently and interdependently to satisfy the needs of bank customers. As such, the agency they bring to bear in the various acts that play out from day to day is the capability they have acquired through education and experience. We emphasize this point in order to draw attention to the fact that their knowledgeability is paramount in the conduct of their daily work: they are and must be seen by customers and co-workers as experts. Further, the banker agent's particular terministic screen, the filter by which they construe the events of their work and the inevitable technology failures which plague it, comes from within this perspective of knowledgeability and expertise.

There is no doubt that their expertise depends on the extensions to their own capabilities that are afforded by the technologies they use on the job. On the one hand, most if not all of them have developed considerable efficacy in the use of these technologies, seamlessly combining their own knowledge of banking with a knowledge of how to put a variety of technologies into play. Banker and technology, human and non-human (Latour, 1987), work together as an undifferentiated whole to provide the expertise that marks the overall banking experience. Within all of this, the agency of the technology in its own right is (appropriately) folded into the agency of the human agent: while the customer surely realizes that the banking experience involves the widespread use of technology, it is most likely the 'banker' who is credited with having provided the service. The technology, as commonly happens, is an 'invisible' agent, or, in Heidegger's term, is *ready-to-hand* (Ihde, 1993). For example, in the bank, the technology helps the banker choose the correct portfolio for a client based on available information regarding the client. However, when the portfolio strategy is successful, it is not the technology that receives the credit, which goes entirely to the banker.

It is when the technology breaks down – the focal phenomenon that eventually precipitates the support call – and becomes *present-at-hand* (Ihde, 1993), that both the agency of the technology and the limits of the expertise of the banker are abruptly brought into relief.

The non-human agent now attracts the kind of attention to which Latour (1987) alludes to in his discussion of simple presentation technology (the overhead projector), as one or more agents set about attempting to restore normalcy to their work by fixing the technology problem. Importantly, it is clear in almost every case that the work cannot continue without the technology, thereby underlining its independent agency in the conduct of the work of the bank, an agency otherwise obscured by or at least subsumed under the agency of the banker. This situation can be seen in the following call in which the banker agent is not able to complete her job but is also not able to fix the problem. Instead of fulfilling the tasks that make up her job (which is her agency) the technology makes her concentrate on itself. The technology is *present-at-hand* and she must wait until the technology problem is fixed so that she can continue with her work.

Banker agent: . . . I really need to get this thing up and going  
because it's been five days without being able to use a computer. I

talked to Credit Granting and I can't send my applications in paper base, so I really, really, really need to get this thing working like I'm kind of getting really nervous about this so can you check into this status of what's going on or should I call Implementation or...?

Sometimes, the individual or community knowledge available in the branch or other location is sufficient to resolve the crisis at hand. Indeed, there is clearly an expectation that reasonable attempts be made to fix the problem before 'outside' help is enlisted. This can be seen in the following call. Before she called to ask for a new monitor or for help fixing her monitor this banker agent tried basic steps to adjust it on her own.

Banker agent: Yeah it's very, very blurry and I know it's really old because we tried setting it so it can darken it a bit.

Once this step is taken, outside help can be enlisted. The source of this outside help is typically communicated by the non-human agent itself – a common 'feature' of the technology is a telephone number that can be used in the event of a technology crisis. Another common feature of the technology is a simple order to seek help. This is illustrated in the following call.

Banker agent: I've been locked out. It says to contact the Administrator.

At the point at which a support call is clearly necessitated, the human agent is, in effect, enrolled by the non-human agent (the technology which failed) to call into play our second scene of interest, that is, to make the call to the help desk.

At this point, the human agent's expertise (indeed, the agent's normal agency) has often reached its limit. As we will see presently, though, the occasional agent has at least the modicum of technological competence required to converse in the new 'language' now required, the jargon with which the responding technician is familiar. In effect, however, the transition from one scene to another can involve a dramatic shift in the agency of the caller, from expert to novice, a shift that is not always comfortably made.

### The Power of Numbers

We were struck in our analyses by the degree to which numbers were called into play in the scene of the help desk calls. Banker agents were required to produce a range of numbers as the call progressed including branch, employee, workstation, printer, asset, model, and others. Gradually we began to see these numbers, through the scene-act and act-agent ratios, as having special meaning in this phenomenon, the most salient of which are that they reflect an organizational structure for effective management (tracking things) and they represent an opportunity for the technician agent to exert his/her own agency and to gain control of the call regardless of the agency put into play by the banker agent at the beginning of the call.

As noted earlier, banker agents and technician agents approach the scene represented by the call in a variety of ways. In evidence often, in terms of attitude, is the expert status the banker agents enjoy within their everyday work worlds. For example, many of them are comfortable giving

orders and expect their orders to be followed. The discourse of technician as servant (Zabusky, 1997) often appears to inform this initial approach. An example of this can be seen in the following call in which the banker agent does not ask for the help of the technician agent but instead tells the technician agent what she wants done.

Banker agent: I need a service call for one of my CSR workbench printers.

Others approach the call with a subservience on their own parts, acknowledging unabashedly their lack of knowledge of the technological domain (in effect the technical problem has made them a servant to the technology). In these situations, the guilt-redemption cycle described by Burke is particularly salient. These banker agents immediately cede the ‘power position’ in the interaction to the technician agent. This approach can be seen in the following call in which the banker agent is polite and admits that she has a problem (acceding to a very subtle form of mortification) and waits for the technician agent to take the information about the problem and tell the banker agent what to do.

Banker Agent: I’m calling from Kennedy branch – 98765. We have a problem with one of our little printers on the CS work bench.

Technician Agent: Is it the receipt printer or the passbook printer?

Banker Agent: It’s the receipt printer

Technician Agent: Ok and what’s it doing?

Banker Agent: It has the journal paper out but we’re trying to put it in but it won’t accept it and it will only print on the journal paper.

Technician Agent: Ok – can I get your employee number?

Yet others bring to the interaction a note of resignation, appearing to accept the inevitability of their altered agency within the new scene. In the following example the banker agent admits that she did something wrong (a more severe form of mortification in the guilt-redemption cycle) and as a result appears to accept her altered agency.

Technician agent: Hi. What can I do for you today?

Banker agent: Yeah uhm my **Citrix** password, I got locked out because I forgot cap lock.

Technician agent: Oh okay.

Banker agent: Okay so can you reset me?

Technician agent: Sure no problem.

Interestingly, resignation occasionally flares into indignation about the interruption to the obviously important work of the banker agent, only to be doused adroitly by the technician agent. In the following example the banker agent appears to have accepted his altered agency within the new scene. He explains the problem he is having (he is a mobile banker trying to download a software update to his laptop). However, he quickly grows frustrated with both the

problem and the technician agent. The technician agent calmly explains the steps to take and tries to answer his questions in a way that will defuse the banker agent's anger, ultimately leading to the banker expressing mortification in the form of assuming responsibility for the failure, which the technician quickly deflects to scapegoat the technology.

Banker agent: Uhm no I shut that off (*his network connection*) because I saved it and then I got that same command as before so I went back in and redid the whole process and it said that I had to save the file which I said okay...

Technician agent: Yeah.

Banker agent: It said it's already saved.

Technician agent: Okay. Can you open Outlook and get to the email again...

Banker agent: I've done this three friggin times today. I'm just about friggin around the bend on this idiotic thing. Why do I need to be on connect mode when I've already got this file already saved?

Technician agent: Ok. But um we can't find the file no? When you try to execute it, the system is telling you that it can't find it. Is that right?

Banker agent: Yeah.

Technician agent: So my thought is that maybe we can save it again -

... *later in the call*

Banker agent: so did I do something wrong?...

Technician agent: no, no, you did okay, but I guess it didn't work for you, so I'm trying to do it a different way...

Although these examples represent a range of opening gambits on the part of the banker agent, this second thematic analysis uncovers the means by which the technician agents establish their own agency within the scene and 'standardize' the variety of approaches adopted by banker agents to the support call. Within the technician agent's particular terministic screen, there is a tendency to filter the world, through the responsibilities they have to understand the technology, to be able to fix it as required or to marshal other help (service calls) and to record their actions as required by the organization.

Further, if we consider their situation in light of the act-agent ratio, within the act of the support call the technician agent clearly has the organizational authority to 'demand' certain information from the banker agent beyond the nature of the problem and its specific location, thereby giving the technician agent a certain level of control over the situation to which the banker agent can merely provide specific responses; the act-agent ratio is decisively tilted in favour of the technician agent. The actual means of controlling the interaction does not involve clearly stating this power differential in any way but rather, in a polite but firm manner (seemingly accounting

simultaneously for the 'customer' status of the banker agent, the general discourse of politeness over the telephone, and the expert status of the banker agent in the operation of the bank), having the banker agent provide a series of numbers that allow for the orderly resolution of the technology crisis.

This is illustrated in the following call. This banker agent begins the call by telling the technician agent what she needs done. By redirecting the banker agent into providing a list of numbers, the technician agent reaffirms that she is in control of the call and that the technology problem will be resolved in an orderly manner. Specifically it is not until the banker agent has answered all the questions regarding the required numbers that the technician agent asks about the nature of the problem. Note that in this example almost three minutes of time in the call involve waiting while the banker agent moves about the work scene, searching for the 'correct' numbers.

Banker agent: I need a service call for one of my CSR workbench printers.

Technician agent: Is it the passbook printer or is it a receipt printer?

Banker agent: No, it's a receipt printer.

Technician agent: Okay. Is it a TM270 or TM290 model?

Banker agent: Okay, hold on. (pause 1 minute 20 seconds)

Technician agent: I'm just waiting (*Speaking to someone else*).  
(pause 2 minutes)

Banker agent: Okay. It's an Epson printer.

Technician agent: Okay, and did it have anything with a TM270 or TM290?

Banker agent: No.

Technician agent: What is your Employee number?

Banker agent: My Employee number is 897676543.

Technician agent: And that's an 8991?

Banker agent: Yeah.

Technician agent: And is your phone number (905) 555-1432?

Banker agent: Yeah.

Technician agent: Which LUT number and the workstation this is attached to?

Banker agent: Okay, hold on. (pause 36 seconds) Okay, so it's attached to Workstation #19.

Technician agent: Okay, and the LUT number?

Banker agent: LUT8ENFO. This is the second or third time that we've had a problem with this printer. Now, we've been able to bring it back up but.. .

Technician agent: What's it doing? .....

Through this approach, the crisis is invariably transformed into a routine event: the workplace disruption, the rupture in the flow of expertise of the banker agent, and the time expended by one or more people to get the work back up and running are recast as normal, everyday happenings. Any note of frustration on the part of the banker agent seems to lose its legitimacy and appropriateness as the numbers are requested and provided. The situation, if it was tending towards antagonism or revealing the agitation of the banker agent, is becalmed. This is not to say that the banker agent is necessarily assuaged. Many of the numbers sought by the technician agent are ones with which most banker agents are unfamiliar (LUT number, printer number, workstation number, ticket number, CDU number, model number); they only come into play when the technology becomes present-at-hand. Thus, the matter-of-fact request for the number from the technician agent often translates into a harried search by the banker agent for the number, sometimes with the help of others at the branch who are tuned into the call or enlisted to help the caller when the technician agent's requests for numbers prove difficult to fulfil. The banker agent is often 'sent away' by the technician agent in search of a number for a considerable period of time, thereby potentially increasing the frustration of the former, but the call as scene continues to exude a calm normalcy. This is illustrated in the following call in which the banker agent's frustration was apparent by the tone of his voice.

Technician agent: Could I get the LUT number for the CDU please?

Banker agent: Okay just hold for a second.

Technician agent: Okay.

Banker agent: Yeah the workstation that is controlling the CDU is LUP....

Technician agent: Okay.

Banker agent: ...20....

Technician agent: Alright.

Banker agent: ...XAO....

Technician agent: And it's workstation number nine?

Banker agent: Uhm workstation...I'll go and see. Just a minute.

Technician agent: Alright thanks.

Banker agent: Yes it is workstation number nine.

Technician agent: Alright thank you. Just give me a sec here, I will find your server and \_\_\_\_\_.

Banker agent: No problem



The use of numbers in itself is unsurprising. The bank, following the discourse of organizational and management rationality, appears to assign numbers as a means of tracking all events, assets, and people for reporting and management purposes. Happily, this approach dovetails neatly into the manner in which computers operate, hence allowing the delegation (Latour, 1987) of the management of technology breakdowns to that technology. Interestingly, within the context of the call as the scene of our dramatic event, this organizational tool – the inexorable tracking through numbers – is transformed into a slightly different kind of tool for the technician agent. The organizational imperative to record all the numbers involved becomes a means for the technician agent to standardize the flow of each call, irrespective of the variety of ways in which the banker agents approach the calls; each caller must provide the series of numbers requested and arrive eventually at the point where the technician agent (calmly) provides the instructions on what the banker agent should do next.

The use of numbers also highlights two interesting paradoxes. First, while the numbers are created to ensure uniqueness for tracking within the organizational context, within the scene of the call they are used to create sameness – a levelling of the playing field by the technician agent and the creation of a uniformity of practice around the provision of support.

All of the support calls contained exchanges of numbers of some type. In the following call the banker agent referred to by the caller does not exist within part of the organization because her employee number is incorrect. She is not numbered properly or uniquely - thus she does not exist at an organizational level. Further within the call which is supposed to be about a technical problem – help cannot be provided until the correct employee number is provided.

Banker agent: Yeah her, do you want her employee number? Her name is Mary Hall.

Technician agent: H-A-L-L?

Banker agent: Yup double L.

Technician agent: Her employee ID is?

Banker agent: 786

Technician agent: You said her employee number is 786?

Banker agent: 786543215..

Technician agent: 543215.

Banker agent: Yup.

Technician agent: 786543215?

Banker agent: Uhm uhm.

Technician agent: It's not what shows in here. She shows as 65498723.

Banker agent: Okay just one second. No this is her employee number - hmmm.

Second, the numbers prove reductive, in that they reduce the banker agent, in spite of that individual's acknowledged uniqueness and expertise in the banking domain, to part of the technology in a sense – printers are numbered, workstations are numbered, and so are people; the subject is suddenly the object. This can be seen in the previous call and in the following two calls. In the first, the banker agent's problem and situation are not discussed until the employee number is given. Additionally, the banker agent's name is neither offered nor asked for. The banker agent is reduced to an object without demonstrating any resistance.

Technician agent: Good morning Mobile Support may I have your employee number please?

Banker agent: 5554368. I'm calling because on my computer my Microsoft Photo Editor does not work. I understand you have to transfer me to another department to fix that.

In this second call, having supplied all the necessary numbers, we see that the banker agent is further reduced to a "body" a piece of the organizational machine since 'it' does not have a computer.

Technician agent: We'll have a service call sent out to you.

Banker agent: Please as soon as possible - because we have a body without a computer.

We turn to the implications of such paradoxes in our discussion of the next theme.

### The Organizational Machine

Our first theme focussed attention on the specific work setting of the bank and the banker agent's shifting agency within that setting when technical problems occur. Our second theme attended to the technician agents' efforts to exercise their agency to help banker agents, within the context of the organization's imposed work structures. We consider in this section what our prior themes 'mean' when we focus on the organizational system as a whole. Specifically we examine next how the developed agency of the technology impacts the banker's work (regardless of position or title) and thus the work of the organization. Then we consider how it delimits the technician's agency even as the agent invokes his/her own agency to fix it. Finally we consider how these depictions suggest a shift in the ontological status of organization and technology – which seem now to exist as inseparable elements of the 'organizational machine' – a view of organizing in which we accede to the requirements of the technology in the conduct of its work because it has become inextricably coupled with tasks and people (knowledgeable and skilled performance) even as we maintain the illusion that we are, in fact, in control.

We have seen how the agency of the banker agent shifts from one scene to the next; from purveyor of expertise in the branch or office to reluctant seeker after expertise in the support call. This shift, of course, is familiar to us all, living as we do in an age when "expert systems" (Giddens, 1990) abound, where we develop our own in-depth knowledge of a domain of work but rely increasingly on the similarly honed expertise of others in other domains (Beck, 1992, Giddens, 1990). This suggests a need to orchestrate a more commensal division of labour

based on different expertise ((Barley, 1996) rather than a hierarchical division of labour which relies on lower level knowledge being subsumed in higher levels of knowledge.

Of some note in our scene of interest is the fact that the shift in agency of the banker agent is not usually a fleeting one: the events leading up to and sometimes following a support call can stretch the duration of the interruption to amount to a disruption and in some cases a cessation of work. The agency of the technology halts the work/act of the banker within the scene.

Given also the omnipresence of the customer, either in person or in symbol, such interruptions can seriously impact the credibility and productivity of the banker agent and diminish the performance of the organization as a whole. Thus, a technology malfunction might have a more debilitating impact than anticipated on the work of the banker agent and conceivably others. One can imagine extensive mortification and scapegoating occurring within the bank scene before, during and after the support call as bankers attempt to reconcile themselves to these 'failed' performances with technology. These issues are illustrated in the following call in which a technology malfunction may result in this banker agent losing a great deal of information. Initially the banker agent attempts to scapegoat the technology and the previous technician to whom he spoke when they discussed attempting to re-boot his computer. His motive is suggested by his statement that he fears losing critical customer information which is not backed up elsewhere. This scapegoating is rejected by the technician whose punishment is to expose the banker agent's guilt in not following organizational policy (to save to the H drive).

Banker agent: I'll just give you a brief scenario. This morning I came in and I tried to sign on and only the Microsoft Windows NT screen is appearing. The control alt delete screen is not appearing.

Technician Agent: Have you tried rebooting already?

Banker agent: I tried rebooting four times even when the guy was on the line. He asked me if I heard a beep I told him no I didn't hear a beep instead I heard like instead of sort of rumble sound and he said he was going to send a diskette for me to update the software. He advised that I was going to lose the stuff I had on the C drive and H drive.

Technician Agent: Not on the H drive.

Banker agent: Not on the H drive okay. Okay I can't afford to lose the stuff on the C drive because I'm a personal banker and the stuff I do, it is client's information and I don't have a copy of it.

Technician Agent: Well the thing is that when the computer is gone, the computer's gone. Okay. Like you're supposed to save the stuff to the H drive. Maybe - are you sure you have it on the hard drive because you're supposed to save all that stuff to the H drive in case of...okay let me uhm pull this reference number up and see what I get.

Importantly, this shift in agency occurs across the hierarchy represented by the callers. Senior bankers, even if their initial approach to the call emphasizes their positional authority, are drawn

invariably into the standardized call routine by the support agent. In order to appreciate the implications of this flattening of hierarchies at the scene of the support call, we might consider how a technology breakdown might have been experienced by a senior bank manager in an earlier time. While this is admittedly speculative, we might have expected the senior manager to 'send for' a technician, someone who would appear physically and then attend to and resolve the problem: a servant, in effect, calling on no more than a little patience on the part of the master. This servant, however, does not exist any more (Barley, 1996). The technician is now a legitimate professional who takes control of matters vis-à-vis the banker agent during the call. This can be seen in the following call in which this technician agent instructs the banker agent on the proper procedure to load a receipt journal.

Technician Agent: Ok now if you open up the back of that particular receipt journal printer.

Banker Agent: OK.

Technician Agent: Do you know that there's supposed to be a roll in the back to hold that one little pin down. Can you get -

Banker Agent: We're putting the roll in the right way but -

Technician Agent: Make sure it's not threaded through right -

Banker Agent: Pardon?

Technician Agent: Make sure it's not actually threaded.

Most of us would recognize, however, that the power wielded by the technician within the support call and its context has its own substantial limits. To begin with, it is decidedly confined, both in terms of the act and agency (the technology alone, not banking matters) and the scene (the breakdown of the technology, not so much its continued use). It is also reactive, warranting an understanding of what the technology requires in order to ensure its smooth functioning – in this sense, support agents are also users of a technology they have not designed, and therefore serve its requirements. It is modularized; each support agent understands some defined area of the technology and hand-offs to other agents are common. And sometimes the behaviour of the technology, in its interactions with all the other technology components in place, leaves the support agent puzzled. Thus, even though their status as servants to bankers has been effectively obliterated, the support agents remain subservient to the technology that they ostensibly control. This can be seen in the following call in which the banker agent's token is out of synch but the technician agent cannot explain the reason – instead an attribution is made that the technology has some mysterious capacity to do whatever it wants.

Banker Agent: Yeah I understand. I'll just refresh again here. My token's out of synch eh? That's weird because I can't do anything at this end without a token.

Technician Agent: I know sometimes the system just acts up.

We can see from these present-day phenomena that that organizational technology has come to occupy a position of considerable, if not consuming, influence on the day-to-day activities of the bank. As the support calls reveal through the hermeneutic rupture they represent, both bankers and technicians seem to have to abdicate their positions of expertise to the technological

machine, even if initial appearances suggest they are in charge. This is not to suggest that it is all technologically-supported structure and no human agency. Structuration (Bourdieu, 1977; Giddens, 1984) does indeed occur and the reproduction of the technological infrastructure is not inevitable; new systems are introduced (customers, after all, perhaps expect the bank to keep up with the latest technology in order to maintain and enhance service levels) and existing systems are tweaked to accommodate unanticipated issues. But our analysis of the support calls suggests the more constraining influence of the technological infrastructure than might have been the case prior to the ubiquitous deployment of (especially information) technology across the bank's desktops.

We speculate that the current scenario contrasts to a more fluid interplay of structure and agency in earlier organizational forms, leading to our view of the bank as an organizational 'machine'. We recognize of course the contrasting connotations of such a metaphor ('runs smoothly' as opposed to 'lacks humanity'), so we deploy (and slightly stretch) a Burkean argument here to try to clarify our position. As noted earlier, Burke (1955) insisted on the ontological status of dramatism, noting that he did not see life *as if* it were drama but rather *as* drama, an actual interplay amongst actors with specific purposes, scenes, and agency. We point here to the ontological status of what we call the organizational machine; it is not just that the organization looks *as if* it were a machine, but actually functions *as* an autonomous machine, not overly resistant to change by those who 'feed' it, but decidedly inflexible in terms of what procedures are followed and even of what changes are made. We are sensitive here to charges of reification, of according to technology, via our characterization, a reality that it might not actually possess. We do this, though, to point to the fact that, even as we convince ourselves about our greater than ever capabilities as human beings, the very objects we bring into play to ensure that increasing capability (and therefore agency) serve to constrain what we do and how we do it; as we take heart in our increasing expertise, we may be misrecognizing that expertise as our own.

## Conclusions

Through the unique view afforded us by examining moments of technology failure at a bank, our Burkean analysis has enabled us to 'see' organizing and work in a unique light by providing us with the analytical tools to consider the continuities and shifts in everyday work interactions with technology. Within this effort, Latour's actor network theory allowed us to examine the agency of the non-human element – the technology. Our study of the Heideggerian moments of attention to technology exposes our misapprehension of the extent to which we may actually control the technology in our being in a state of inattentiveness to technology.

Our analysis uncovers the reality of the constraints to agency which technology imposes on an individual's work. Indeed we find that the emergence of technology as agent in its own right plays a major role in the bank – an organization that relies substantially on ICTs. In this setting, our research reveals the paradox of ICTs which are deployed to assist users as tools. In a sense ICT tools are intended to improve users' ability to exert their agency in their work life by informing their work and up-skilling their tasks - but which ICT in turn demands users' assistance in its ongoing functioning. This notion supports Weick's observation about high technology which requires a shift in focus from efficiency to reliability (i.e. keep it working)

(Weick, 1990). Thus this constrains the user's realized agency and reveals the paradoxical agency exerted by the ICTs themselves.

For users, technical problems call into the foreground competence, capability and identity – rupturing individuals' internally held beliefs about their capabilities in relation to their work. Individuals displayed many reactions to technology and their work during moments of crisis, from scapegoating (Burke, 1955), in which they blame other things/people for the situation, to mortification (Burke, 1955), in which they display their felt shame and guilt towards the technology and their perceived lack of ability to 'keep it working' and accomplish their tasks.

Help desk technicians play a critical role in this phenomenon. The seemingly ordinary way in which most organizations divide labour – creating a specialist role for technical knowledge – suggests a role for technician's as servants/helpers. Yet in these moments of crisis, the degree to which they must exert their expertise and the ambiguity that this imposes on the relationship between user and technician (master and servant?) reveals an important negotiation for equality which flies in the face of the technician as servant mindset of most organizations.

By examining moments of technology failures, we have been able to reveal much about work and organizing that was previously relatively unnoticed. Of particular significance is the recognition that often the work of the banker (and thus the bank) stops when technology is not functioning – a situation which is revealed in the shifting, contested agency between the banker, the technician and the technology. This observation calls into question the utility of theoretical distinctions which separate work into task, technology and people. At least in the setting of the bank, work performances involve an inseparable coupling of these elements – a socio-technical-cognitive view of work which resists modern conceptualizations. This line of thinking extends to our recognition of the organizational machine. When technology fails and where the work of the bank stops, the work required of the human agents to serve the needs of the technology begins. This presents a view of technology and organization in which once separable elements have become inseparable and in which the ordinary worker is conscripted to serve as a 'tool' to meet the organizational machine's needs so that it can continue its work and accomplish its goals.

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Unocal in Burma: Taking Care of Business  
The 21st Century Corporation – Good? Bad? Ugly?

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## ***Unocal in Burma: Taking Care of Business***

Maybe David Hume was right:

“In order to cure most of the ills of human life, I require not that man should have the wings of the eagle, the swiftness of the stag, the force of the ox, the arms of the lion, the scales of the crocodile or rhinoceros; much less do I demand the sagacity of an angel or cherubim. I am contented to take an increase in one single power of faculty of his soul. Let him be endowed with a greater propensity to industry and labour; a more vigorous spring and activity of mind; a more constant bent to business and application.” (Hume: 2003-06)

But if we bend all our energies into business, will business take care of us?

**The Yadana Pipeline:** The involvement of Western multinational oil companies in a gas pipeline project in Burma (for the rest of this paper we will use the less popular but current name Myanmar) (Reid and Grosberg, 2006) illustrates that business may indeed help cure societal ills, to bring positive benefits to at least some elements of humankind. In Myanmar, the Yadana gas pipeline project employed thousands during the construction phase and since then according to an outside assessment has improved living conditions for some 45,000 villagers. The oil companies successfully spearheaded efforts to improve health conditions by building and staffing medical facilities and also paid medical doctors to inoculate children, and to aid Malaria victims for the first time ever for that area. The oil companies built schools which not only provides education for many local citizens but also serves as a model school, serving as an example for educators in the nation. Employees have received training in energy related areas as well as instruction in safety. (Unocal, 2005).

But all did not go well with the pipeline project. First, there are those who questioned whether any Western organization should be in Myanmar (Anonymous, 1997). Myanmar had at that time in the mid 1990s, and still has in 2006, a brutal totalitarian regime. Doing business in the country or cooperating with the current regime is seen by many as supporting

an evil dictatorship. The arguments are reminiscent of calls for Western companies to pull out of South Africa to protest Apartheid in the 1970s and 1980s (Lamb, et al), calls to get out of China after protestors were killed in Tien An Men Square in 1989 (Landler, 1998). Indeed some Western firms have left Myanmar (Anonymous, 1997) and others have been deterred from entry (Anonymous, 2005).

But it is not the general cry to get out of Myanmar that has caught the attention of the media. In the actual construction of the project horrendous abuse of workers is alleged, and at least some of the allegations are true. There are allegations, again at least true in part, that villages and villagers in the path of progress were treated in terrible inhumane ways (EarthRights International, 2006). One of the companies involved, Unocal, was hauled into court in the USA, and ultimately paid an undisclosed amount to a group of defendants represented by US attorneys. Total, the European petroleum firm who was the major player in the pipeline project, was the target of angry complaints and boycott threats as well.

The actual construction of the pipeline involved the local military doing much of the preparation work, clearing the right of way on which the pipeline was ultimately built. This might be analogous to having the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers which is involved in 75 hydro energy projects in the US already (Anonymous, 2006) building a pipeline across Louisiana or Texas for ExxonMobil. The idea sounds a bit strange from Western perspectives, but in the context it seemed to make sense. The Army in Myanmar was large enough, and well organized enough, to tackle the huge project. And getting the project approved in the first place may have been made easier with the promise of involving the government in the work.

Unfortunately, the Army in Myanmar is not an outstanding role model of humanitarian management. Allegations included rounding up and relocation of villagers, sometimes with brutal force. Rapes are alleged. The Army apparently used forced labor for much of the project and treated “employees” much like slaves building the Egyptian Pyramids, the Great wall in China, or the Bridge over the River Kwai in World War II (George, 2004).

Allegations included physical abuse, torture, and even murder of workers on the pipeline project (Eviatar, 2003).

**Lessons from Yadana:** What can be learned about the nature of organizations from oil companies such as Unocal in Myanmar? The call for papers for Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism (SCOS) in 2006 called into question the notion that organizations inevitably lead to the betterment of humankind. The Yadana pipeline story told here indeed helps refute such a simplistic notion of innate organizational goodness.

But neither should the alternative notion as articulated by the SCOS ‘06 organizers be adopted. The SCOS 2006 call for papers asks “can we not argue that organizations produce rather than prevent evil and ugliness?” After studying the involvement of Unocal in Myanmar one might be tempted to agree. But the “organizations are evil” argument is as simplistic as the “organizations cure societal ills” notion.

On reflection, we would conclude that some organizations sometimes lead to the betterment of humankind. Some organizations sometimes produce evil and ugliness. Most organizations probably do both. One might also question whether focusing on the organization is appropriate. Is it organizations or individuals who should be blamed or praised? The challenge for organizational observers and scholars is two fold. We must not let the

assumption go unchallenged without thought that all organizations inevitably lead to great things. But we should also not blindly fall into an anti-business trap. As academics, our individual responsibility is great. We may not always help all our students see truth, but we can and must help them to see and recognize false statements about the “nature of organizations.”

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## **Is the Marquis de Sade an Entrepreneur?**

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## Introduction

There are certain moments in history when there is an explosion of enterprise. This typically involves individuals and groups vigorously challenging existing rules, constructing new institutions, developing new norms and new ways of thinking. Some times and place when this has occurred include the renaissance in the Italian city states, the Low Countries during the sixteenth century, Victorian England, nineteenth century United States, early twentieth century Russia and Eastern Europe after 1989. Each of these moments was characterised by a fundamental and discontinuous shock to existing systems. Such events provide an opportunity for entrepreneurs to construct new markets, establish new forms of organization and articulate new ideas. Indeed, studies of entrepreneurship remind us that fundamental discontinuous changes in existing institutions are one of the surest sparks to ignite entrepreneurship (Tarrow, 1994; Campbell, 2004).

Perhaps one of the most compressed and tumultuous explosions of various forms of enterprise and entrepreneurship was during the French revolution of 1789 (for a standard account see Lefebvre, 1967). The revolution not only swept away the *ancien régime*, but also provided widespread opportunities for 'institutional entrepreneurship' (see Hwang and Powell, 2005). Some of these projects of institutional entrepreneurship included the establishment of classical French cuisine (Ferguson, 1998), the rise of the modern social movements (Tilly, 1986), the establishment of the metric system and new standards of measurement, the creation of a rationally planned inner-city with large avenues (Benjamin, 2002), a modern sewerage system (Laporte, 2000), the creation of the modern medical clinic prison and asylum (Foucault, 1973, 1977, 2005), the creation of the *Grande Ecole* system of higher education (Osbourne, 1983) to name just a few. These diverse and widespread achievements certainly reveal the spirit of liberty and the dynamics of 'creative destruction' that are unleashed by large scale social upheavals. Each of these enterprises also appears to be under-girded by a common commitment to liberation from tradition through the institution of rational schemes.

As we know, the entrepreneurial spirit knows no bounds. The demands for reform in one sector lead to demands for the reconstruction of another sector of social life. Hence a kind of serial and wide-spread institutional entrepreneurship. As well as offering the possibility of fundamentally transforming the institutions of government, education, and exchange, the revolution also offered an opportunity to reconstruct the institutions of, for example, sexuality. There were a range of reform projects that made sex into a public issue which was subject to a whole range of techniques, professions and bodies of professional knowledge, as has been famously described by Foucault (1978). This reform process was prefigured by the introduction of the Christian pastoral confessional practices. These practices were promoted by budding institutional entrepreneurs within the Catholic Church in France. These new confessional practices encouraged worshipers to 'confess everything' and make sexual behaviour into an object of discourse, discussion and reflection. This was built on immediately before and after the Revolution through three projects (Foucault, 1978). First, this involved demographers making sex into an object of surveillance and policing through monitoring and intervening into rates of national birth and population. The second project involved the intervention of educators who developed a whole series of technologies and bodies of rules around the monitoring of childhood sexuality. The final project which sought to reform institutions of sexuality involved the medical fraternity developing a whole specialist body of knowledge and intervention. The target of medical efforts became the sexuality of women, children, deviants, perverts and other 'abnormals' (Foucault, 2003). Overarching each of these efforts was 'a regulated and polymorphous incitement to

discourse' (Foucault, 1978: 34) which attempted to create a rational science of sexuality. Thus what we observe is a similar attempt by a series of institutional entrepreneurs to liberate French society from 'traditional sexuality' of medieval Europe and replace it with a rational, regulated sexuality.

This movement to reconstruct sexuality did not only involve those 'decent' citizens who sought to carefully ensure a respectable and controlled bourgeois sexuality. It also provided an ideal opportunity for a loose literary movement known as the Libertines to put forward their own version of sexual reform. The Libertines sought to take the revolution at its word and press for absolute liberty in the institution of sexuality and pleasure (Feher, 1997). What is interesting about the Libertines for our purposes here is the fact that they were an extreme example of institutional entrepreneurship. In this chapter we propose to investigate this strange example of taking enterprise too far. Focusing on the most notorious Libertine, the Marquis de Sade, we reveal striking resemblances with his visions of liberation and those valorised by contemporary entrepreneurship theory and practice. We argue that what is so disturbing about Sade is that he takes the logic of entrepreneurship too far, showing up some of the horrific possibilities of enterprise at its extreme.

We proceed as follows. First, we introduce Marquis de Sade and the wider Libertine movement. We then clarify what is important about Sade and Sadeanism. We then proceed to draw out precisely how Sade takes the logic of enterprise too far, which makes the case for Sade being an entrepreneur. We then consider the other side of this picture, clarifying the aspects in which Sade fails to qualify as an entrepreneur. We conclude with consequences for the politics and aesthetics of entrepreneurship.

### **Sade and the Libertines**

In many ways, the Libertine is the other side of the nineteenth century medical practitioner. Instead of advocating the careful restriction of sex, the Libertine passionately proposes the opposite. They seek a radical multiplication of sexual acts and debauchery. In place of the technologies of inspection proposed by the medical fraternity, the Libertine agitated for the technology of the orgy. Like the medical, demographic and education reformers they produced a veritable explosion of discourse around sexuality. But instead of seeking to instil a 'normal' sexuality based around the conjugal family, the Libertine advocated revelry in sexual pleasure. Instead of complex rules around the sexual education of children, the classification of various types of sexual perversities, or the development of plans to increase birth rates, the Libertine provides a different kind of description. This is a detailed description of sexual liaisons of all, and indeed *every*, kind.

To be sure, Libertinage is certainly not a movement unique to revolutionary France. The word is derived from the Latin, *libertus*, which means freedman. It entered into common parlance during the sixteenth century and was largely associated with atheism. However, by the eighteenth century, Libertinage became associated with debauchery. The result was that by the end of the eighteenth century, Libertinage denoted 'a way of thinking and living that evoked sexual freedom, seduction and frivolity' (Cusset, 1998: 2). The 'successful' sexual reforms typically focused on the transformation of sexuality through social institutions such as the school, the hospital and systems of public administration. In contrast, Libertinage was largely a literary and artistic movement which sought to challenge and perhaps reform the cultural institutions associated with sexuality. As students of neo-institutional theory would claim, this is largely achieved through shifts in the discourses which are used to talk and think about a phenomenon (Philips et al, 2005). The Libertines sought to achieve such shifts



in discourse through circulating a range of scandalous literature. Well known representatives of libertine literature include Marivaux, Cr  billon, Laclos, and de Sade. We should note that the Libertine movement is typically thought of as a bridge between excesses of the *ancien r  gime* and the fervour of the revolution. Indeed, aristocratic excess is a favoured subject matter in much Libertine literature. We should also note that the libertine movement was by no means a well connected network of authors working towards a common goal. It was instead a series of individual authors working across more than a century whose work showed at least a common concern with celebrating debauchery. This means that there are important differences between what different libertines advocated. Perhaps the most striking is between writers such as Cr  billon who advocated losing oneself to the moment of surprise and physical pleasure, and writers like Laclos and Sade who emphasised the need for self control and purposeful and rational pursuit and organization of pleasure (Cusset, 1998: 2). What we therefore seem to have is a movement with two opposing models to guide the reform and radicalization of sexuality. On the one hand there are those who advocate a reform of sexuality through generalised abandonment to sexual whims. On the other hand there are those who advocate a rational and highly organized pursuit of sexual satisfaction. It is this second model which perhaps gained the most ground following the revolution, and it is to this model we shall turn our attention.

Perhaps the pre-eminent example of the extreme rational pursuit of sexual pleasure can be found in the work of Donatien Alphonse Fran  ois de Sade (1740-1814), better known as the Marquis de Sade. Sade was a French Aristocrat who first came to public attention for his sexual misconduct with young prostitutes and employees of both sexes. This led to a series of imprisonments and confinements in asylums throughout his life. Sade also played an active role in the revolution. According to Sadian legend, a few days prior to the storming of the Bastille, goading crowds from his window in the Bastille that prisoners were being murdered inside. He later took up a number of official positions within the revolutionary government and a seat in the National Convention. During Sade's long stays in prison he produced a range of plays and novels, the best known of which are *Dialogue between a priest and a dying man* (1782), *120 Days of Sodom* (1785), *Justine* (1791), *Philosophy in the bedroom* (1795), and *Juliette* (1798). While Sade's literary outpourings were influential during post revolutionary France, they quickly fell into ill repute, only to be recovered during the middle of the twentieth century through promotion by a range of literary champions such as Maurice Heine and Gilbert Lely and prominent intellectuals of the time such as Simone de Beauvoir (1966), Georges Bataille (2001), Jacques Lacan (1989), Pierre Klossowski (1966), Maurice Blanchot (1967). In 1975, Sade was again the topic of public disgust following Pier Paolo Pasolini's film version of *Salo, or, The 120 Days of Sodom*. Today, Sade is considered to be one of the central exemplars of the Libertine movement in French literature.

Because the efforts and impact of Sade were largely literary in nature, we shall emphasize his literary works at the expense of a fuller treatment of his engagements with the political institutions of the republic and instead focus on his literary output. In Sade's literary works we find striking parallels with other attempts to reconstruct institutions in France following the revolution. Central to these efforts are claims to liberty and rationality which continue to be at the heart of contemporary entrepreneurship discourse. However, what is interesting about Sade is that he takes these discourses to their extreme. By taking the discourse of liberty to its limits, Sade alerts us to the pathologies and possibilities that lie at the heart of some calls to free enterprise.

Before proceeding, we should be clear that we find Sade deeply objectionable, and we are making no effort here to celebrate or glorify him or his writing. Instead we are using Sade as an example of someone who takes the promises of enterprise to its logical extreme. Indeed we propose to present Sade as a 'abject' figure. By this we mean an object that is simultaneously attractive and disgusting, which catches one in 'a vortex of summons and repulsion', which Kristeva explains is like an 'inescapable boomerang', that might be thrown away only to return (Kristeva, 1997: 229). It is this kind of object that we have elsewhere described as 'The sublime object of entrepreneurship', and here is figured in all of its abjectness (Jones and Spicer, 2005). By engaging with a figure who pushes the logic of enterprise too far, we are able to tease out the ugly and disgusting logic which lurks beneath the otherwise well-dressed figure of the entrepreneur.

### **The Sadean Enterprise**

On the face of it, the idea that an Aristocrat libertine who spent over half his life in prison is an entrepreneur is patently ridiculous. If we applied to an economic definition of the entrepreneur as the character who creates novel combinations of the factors of production and is rewarded with an entrepreneurial profit (Schumpeter, 1934), then Sade and his fellow libertines would certainly be instantly dismissed from consideration. Indeed, in many respects Sade is quite the opposite of the entrepreneur that Schumpeter describes. He was a member of the aristocracy which meant he was not compelled engage in any serious ventures of his own capital, nor did he engage in labour, nor did he attempt to devise a novel combination of land, labour and capital. Rather he lived exclusively off rents from lands which he inherited from his father. Nor could we say that Sade was a great champion of economic entrepreneurship as such. Indeed, following the revolution he authored and circulated a revolution pamphlet entitled *Frenchmen! One More Effort if You Wish to be Republicans*, in which he advocates the abolition of private property. Such bold claims to institutional innovation are not typically associated with the successful entrepreneur.

But despite these two notable cleavages between Sade and the entrepreneur, we can recognise in him some of the aspects widely associated with entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship. In particular, note his distaste for established institutions, his seizure of opportunity, his inclination to radical thinking and radical solutions, his willingness to ruthless organize and above all his attempts to change dominant patterns of organization. So perhaps instead of suggesting Sade is an economic entrepreneur, we might see him as a kind of institutional entrepreneur. According to the growing literature on the topic, an institutional entrepreneur is an individual or group who seeks to establish new institutions or transform existing institutions (Eisenstadt, 1957). In many ways Sade's efforts can be seen as an attempt to violently intervene in the existing institutional of his day surrounding sexuality and reconstruct them. To be sure, Sade did not attempt to transform existing rules around sexuality, nor did he mobilize significant resources in this effort, nor did he attempt to build any plausible institutions such as a libertine community. What he did do however was seek to challenge the dominant patterns of thinking about sexuality of his time through his shocking and scandalous work. This involved an attempt to transform what institutionalists call 'the cognitive schemas' (Scott, 1999) which instituted a particular form of sexuality. However, unlike most skilled institutional entrepreneurs (for example, Fligstein, 1997; Garud *et al*, 2002), Sade was patently unskilled in coalition building. In fact his tactics led to the instant dissolution of any coalition which might form around him. He was unlikeable, and disliked. But this has not stopped entrepreneurs in the past, and Sade also took a different path than likeability. The thing which made Sade into a serious 'institutional entrepreneur' was his ability to propagate scandalous and shocking discourses in the field of debates about

sexuality. Just as elite chefs sought to change the institution of cookery in France following the revolution by developing codifications which appeared in cook books (Ferguson, 1998), Sade sought to change sexual behaviour by developing his recipes of extreme sexual feats.

Perhaps the most immediately striking feature of Sade's recommendations is their excessive nature. They never involve a simple scene of a couple copulating. Rather they typically involve excessively crude, violent and cruel acts. A typical page of Sade's writing will involve the unusual use of semen, anal sex, group sex, restriction of freedom through restraint, rape, threats to life, paedophilia and murder. These acts are typically performed by large teams of participants and involve complicated combinations of bodies. We quickly become aware that Sade is in no way attempting spin an erotic tale. Within seconds of setting eyes upon Sade's work, we are plunged in a cruel and perverted world which unreasonably exceeds any apparent moral order. Indeed the events are so disgusting that they defy our imagination. Then, once Sade has shocked us beyond belief he simply keeps on going, *ad nauseum*. He piles one obscene fantasy upon another. The end result is the sexual version of the complex architectural dishes produced by post revolutionary French chefs such as Carême and his followers (Mennell, 1985: 144-157). What Sade presents us with is an excessively complex, highly organized examples of sexual behaviour. Indeed, 'there is nothing haphazard in Sadean torture' (Frappier-Mazur, 1998: 187). Rather, all sexual acts are meticulously organized and ordered. All details are given by the precise number of people involved, the positioning of various limbs, the equipment which is required, how the victims should undress, even the peculiar knots to be used. According to Horkheimer and Adorno (1944: 88) this reflects the extreme push to administer even the most intimate aspects of human life with little concern for the substantive outcome. Sade radicalizes the same desire to administer and regulate sexual activity we found amongst the medical fraternity, the educationalists and the demographers. Instead of seeking to reignite the flame of passion in sexual life, he seems to seek to ensure that orgies are excessively organized.

Hiding behind the fornication, then, is a strict regulatory scheme. We notice that in many of his works Sade systematically numbers each act. For instance, *The 120 days of Sodom* strictly catalogues and lists the extreme acts that are described. What we are presented is a kind of carefully prepared shopping list of sexual extremism. It seems that these numbers are designed for easy cataloguing and consultation by the literary critic. Indeed, even within reports of Sade's earlier sexual antics accountancy seems to play a central role. In one instance in his earlier years, 'he had himself whipped, but every couple of minutes he would dash to the mantelpiece and, with a knife, would inscribe on the chimney flue the number of lashes he had just received' (Beauviour, 1966: 27). This hyper-rational framework seems strange given the fact that such extreme acts are being described. Here we perhaps should note Foucault's condemnation of Sade: 'he bores us. He's a disciplinarian, a sargent of sex, an accountant of the ass and its equivalents' (Foucault, 1996: 186). Similarly, Deleuze comments that 'Rationalism is not grafted onto the work of Sade; it is rather by an internal necessity that he evolves the idea of a delusion, an exorbitance specific to reason' (1991: 27). This reminds us how Sade attempts to rationalise and calculate even the most outlandish sexual acts. It seems that Sade does not take the pleasure from the act itself. Instead, he seems to enjoy fitting them into a neatly ordered balance-sheet. Not only does he provide us with a carefully organized apparatus for undertaking wild sexuality, but this apparatus is carefully accounted for.

Part of this desire to account for sexual acts is Sade's desire to account for *every possible kind* of sexual act. One of the most excessive things about Sade's work is his willingness and

desire to 'say everything'. For Sade 'the first of all freedoms is the freedom to say everything. That is how he interpreted the basic requirement – in the form of a demand which, for him, was henceforth inseparable from a true republic' (Blanchot, 1967: 50). He takes this demand of the republic for everything to be said and brought out into public discourse to the extreme. Even the crudest of sexual acts should not be passed over in silence. Rather, it should be allowed to appear in public discourse. According to some commentators (Blanchot, 1967; Keenan, 1998), this points to a deeper political commitment to a kind of radical republicanism whereby Sade sought to take seriously the promises of the revolution. In particular, we notice that Sade attempts to take seriously the claim for liberty and saw this as only achievable through a consistent and through-going process of republicanism. Sade

says that to be a republican it is not enough to live in a republic; nor is a constitution enough to make a republic; nor, finally, is having laws enough for that creative power, that constituent act, to resist and keep us in a state of permanent constitution. An effort must be made, yet another effort, always – there lies the invisible irony. Whence the conclusion – barely hinted at – that the revolutionary era is just beginning. But what kind of effort will have to be made? Who will ask us to make it? Sade calls it *insurrection*, which is *the permanent state of the republic*. In other words the republic can never possibly be a state, but only a movement. (Blanchot, 1967: 53)

By taking the claim to liberty seriously, it appears that the demand that Sade puts forth is not only for the ability to unsettle the institutions which regulate sexuality and impose a new set of more rational and organized institutions (as the medical fraternity demanded for instance). Rather, Sade demanded a continued state of change and flux around sexuality. He did this by advocating a continued unsettling of any established forms of sexuality. Through his extreme shock-tactics, Sade sought to so unsettle the dominant discourses around sexuality that it would be impossible for it to re-anchor. He aimed to create a permanent movement in sexualities rather than an institutional freezing. This movement would be akin to the gale of creative destruction the entrepreneur consistent blows up (Schumpeter, 1944: 81-86). This is a demand for what we might call 'positive freedom' which involves not just the demand not to be interfered with others (see Berlin, 1969). It involves the recognition that laws are made by humans and that we are able to recreate laws for ourselves (Keenan, 1998). This involves a demand for the ability to continually create new rules and laws around sexuality and have these rules applied to his own sexual behaviour. More than anything, Sade seems to demand absolute freedom where any combination and constitution of sexuality becomes possible.

In taking this call to absolute freedom seriously results in possibly the most striking aspect of Sade's text – the existence of untrammelled violence. Indeed, for some literary critics this is the central aspect of Sade's writings is precisely this violence (Frappier-Mazur, 1996). We should be clear that the kind of violence which we find in Sade is not the kind of violence committed in the heat of passion which subsides when the attendant passion subsides. Rather, it is a kind of coldly and rationally executed violence. According to Beauvoir 'he never for an instant loses himself in his animal nature; he remains so lucid, so cerebral, that philosophical discourse, far from depleting his ardour, acts as an aphrodisiac' (1966: 21). Indeed in many of the lengthy philosophical dialogues which punctuate the orgies in Sade's work, we find that his characters are simply taking the demands of the revolution at its word and demands absolute liberty. They seek to justify their acts to themselves in the terms of liberty and sovereignty. Sade demands a kind of unconditional sovereignty – the ability to decide for oneself, without any external interference. Indeed he rejects all submission to any externally imposed strictures and opts for a stringent sovereignty of the individual:

Sade said over and over again in different ways that we are born alone, there are not links between one man and another. The only rule of conduct then is that I prefer those things which affect me pleasurablely and set at nought the undesirable effects of my preferences on other people. The greatest suffering of others always counts for less than my own pleasure. What matter if I must purchase my most trivial satisfaction through a fantastic accumulation of wrong-doing? For my satisfaction gives me pleasure, it exists in myself, but the consequences of the crime do not touch me, they are outside me. (Blanchot cited in Bataille, 2001: 168)

What Blanchot makes us all too aware of here is how Sade pushes the logic of liberty and individual sovereignty to the extreme. Sade's own sexual pleasures are the only thing considered. This means that any violence visited against others is simply a trivial means to the greater and more rationally sustained end of individual liberty, and in this case the liberty to enjoy. This radical individual liberty results in violence and pain being routinely inflicted upon others. Indeed, by taking the liberty of others through turning them into objects for satisfying his own pleasures, Sade seeks to add to his own liberty, his own sovereignty. Little matter if this involves the violent disregard of the other's wants and needs, or if it ends with the extermination of the other through the most extreme and horrific means.

This pure drive towards sexual liberty with absolute no regard for the others involved reminds us that Sade's characters remain terminally closed. They are condemned to have a pathological self-interest. Indeed, it has been noted that Sade suffered a kind of autism, and that this 'prevented him from ever forgetting himself or being genuinely aware of the reality of the other person' (Beauvoir, 1966: 23). Sade's libertines are not in any way able to open themselves up to the other people they sexual engage with. Instead the Other is reduced to a mere object who must be transcended. Because they are unable to recognise the Other, they show no capacity for shame. Any act they undertake is not considered to be shameful because there is no-one they recognise in order to be ashamed in front of. Second, because they cannot recognise the Other, there is no possibility for an equality of enjoyment. Instead, enjoyment is something which must be jealously guarded. It is not something which can be shared. The Sadean does not engage in moments of swooning or abandon. They are always in possession of themselves and never possessed by others. Indeed, we find that Simone de Beauvoir notes that for Sade 'any enjoyment is mechanical enjoyment when shared' (1966: 33, 35). Because the Sadist is not able to recognise the Other, they are also not able to express remorse to the Other. Nor are they able to abandon themselves to loving another person. Rather, loving another person is seen as the utter failure and opposite of what it means to be a Libertine. This is because by loving we not only recognize that there is another, but also that Other has a decisive power over us. To love is to diminish one's ability to coldly and rationally control, and this is to escape the Sadian power game (Cusset, 1998). This inability to recognise the Other means that Sade's failures are met with a kind of self-obsessed sulking: 'When faced with adversity, he would whine and get upset and become completely distraught' (1966: 9). Ultimately what this shows is the sadist has a fear of commonality. Indeed, Beauvoir (1966: 4) points out that what is so striking about Sade is the fact that he is trying to communicate that which is incommunicable, the impossibility of communication. He is writing about a world where we do not recognise the Other, let alone attempt to communicate with them. We just give them orders.

### **Why Sade is not an Entrepreneur**

If anything, Sade's efforts to reframe sexuality during the revolution were extreme. We find within his literary output a significant break from the sexual institutions of his day. He seems to have picked up many of the efforts of institutional reform which exploded during the revolution and have ruthlessly applied them to sexuality. He followed the revolutionary injunction to replace what were considered to be institutions founded upon superstitions. In their place he sought to erect rationally devised and highly ordered sexual systems. This is notable in his obsession with highly organized mass sexual pursuits and his obsession with maintaining a strict accounting around these acts. This relentless drive toward the rational and utopian organization of social systems found in Sade is also found in many of the other efforts of institutional entrepreneurship which appeared following the revolution. Sade also seems to take seriously the espoused goals of liberty and individual sovereignty associated with the revolution. In fact, he takes this claim to liberty to its logical extreme by advocating an absolute liberation of sexuality and the extreme sovereignty of the individual to pursue their sexual pleasure. Sade takes this claim to its absolute extreme. In doing so he shows how this desire for sovereignty results in an absolute disregard for other people. Indeed, others simply become objects to be given orders and dominated. This unflinching attitude inevitably terminates in the cruel and bloody orgies that appear in his work.

Sade's attempts to reconstruct the institution of sexuality obviously failed. But why did a libertine such as Sade fail as an institutional entrepreneur when other characters such as the demographers, medics, and educators succeed? The first and perhaps most obvious answer is that Sade's project was only every designed to failed. Perhaps his literary output was simply an attempt to imagine an alternative sexual institution rather than a serious attempt to reform existing institutions. Indeed, Sade's own personal debauchery was mild and comparatively limited when compared to the outlandish acts described in his books. Even when he was in a position of power, he did not make any serious efforts to push for sexual reform of the kind suggested by his literary works. It therefore appears that his writing was first and foremost a matter of saying what could happen. It was about taking pleasure in the description rather in the act which was so central to Sade's efforts. Indeed, 'It was by means of his imagination that he escaped from space, time, prison, and the police, the void of absence, opaque presences, the conflict of existence, death, life, and all contradictions. It was not murder that fulfilled Sade's erotic nature: it was literature' (Beauviour, 1555/1966: 33). The only kinds of interventions which Sade therefore intended were interventions into the imagination. He certainly may have achieved a profound change and self recognition in this sense (Bataille, 2001), but nonetheless he was not able to materialise these flights of fancy. Unlike the medic he was not able to establish clinics, training courses, public events and so on. He certainly imagined these establishments in his books (an erotic education for instance), but no serious efforts were made to construct these institutions. Therefore, we say that perhaps the first reason that Sade failed as an entrepreneur was that he was not able to materialize his imaginary world.

Perhaps one of the central reasons that Sade was not able to materialize his narratives was that he did not have access to the economic resources which were required. This was largely because of Sade's place in economic relations as part of the declining aristocracy. To be clear he was not a successful business person, which is to say, he was not *economically* successful – in fact he was an economic disaster. This might remind us that when we appraise entrepreneurship we should never forget that entrepreneurship is an economic category. There has been a widespread tendency to treat the entrepreneur as anything but an economic category, and contemporary readings of entrepreneurship as part of a network of social

relations seems to further exacerbate the problem. When entrepreneurs are presented in the media and television, for example, there is a persistent fascination in their seemingly unique personality, life, or sociocultural context. Anything but their economic calculations. This is mirrored in entrepreneurship research, which equally seems to both assume but disavow the place of economics in the designation of the category of 'entrepreneurship'. This is directly correlative, although in inverted form, to the problem of commodity fetishism. While commodity fetishism, following Marx, is a matter of seeing relations between people in the fantastic form of relations between things, in contemporary social analysis today we find exactly the opposite: the treatment of relations between things in the fantastic form of a relation between people. Thus Slavoj Žižek calls on the need to reverse Marx's formula, and argues that:

in contemporary capitalism, *the objective market 'relations between things' tend to assume the phantasmagorical form of pseudo-personalised 'relations between people'*. No, Bill Gates is no genius, good or bad, he is just an opportunist who knew how to seize the moment and, as such, the result of the capitalist system run amok. (1999: 349-350).

Indeed it was Sade's position within the economic structure that allowed him to engage in imaginary flights of fancy but never to materialize them. Unlike the successful institutional entrepreneurs who did manage to reform sexuality, Sade did not have access to the necessary resources to pursue his plans. He was thereby cursed to forever remain in the realms of his own devious imagination

Perhaps the final, and most obvious reason that we Sade is not widely placed within the pantheon of entrepreneurs is that he was ethically repugnant. When we first presented a draft of this chapter at an academic entrepreneurship conference, many in the audience were so morally outraged by our title that they failed to notice that we were arguing that there are good reasons for which Sade is *not* an entrepreneur. This is perhaps proof of the good moral intentions of entrepreneurship researchers, even if it scores them low marks for listening. Nevertheless, if we are to dismiss Sade on moral criteria, we need to be quite clear about why it is that Sade is indeed so ethically objectionable. Certainly he violates just about every common law which western societies have (rape, murder, paedophilia to name a few). However, what is it that is the deeper ethical lack which so abhors us about Sade's behaviour? For us, the abhorrence at the heart of Sade is his patent inability and even unwillingness to recognise the Other. That is, his drive towards absolute self-sovereignty is done in utter disregard of the other person. Indeed, as we have seen Sade assumed that to be utterly sovereign, the pains of the Other must be completely disregarded. Indeed they only are important to the extent that they increased Sade's own enjoyment. This of course violates perhaps one of the central ethical maxims – 'love thy neighbour'. Indeed Sade seems bent on establishing an absolutely negative relationship with other people (Klossowski, 1965/1966:69). By establishing this negative relationship he seems to be bent on absolutely obliterating the wishes of the other. It is from this attitude that many of the cruel acts described within Sade's work flow. Following this claim, we suggest that Sade is unethical because he is not able to recognise the Other.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter we have seen that during the French Revolution there were wide-spread attempts to reform most central institutions in French Society ranging from the sewerage system to education. This led to the appearance of a range of entrepreneurs who all jostled to

develop new institutions based on the principles of rationality and liberty. Perhaps one of the most contentious areas of reform was around the institutions regulating sexuality. We have seen that the reformers replace pre-modern institutions of sexuality with rational regulated schemes. Alongside the attempts of medics, educator and demographers to change sexual institutions were also the efforts of the libertines. Chief amongst these characters was the Marquis de Sade. We have seen that the framework introduced by Sade bore a striking resemblance with the efforts of other institutional entrepreneurs of his time. In particular we noticed that his commitment to quantification, organization, and individual liberty were similar themes shared by many post-revolution entrepreneurs. But what made Sade so notable was how he unflinchingly applied these principles to his chosen institution. The result was a kind of imaginary world of murderous hyper-individualism. But unlike many of Sade's contemporaries, his efforts at institutional changes never got off the ground. Here we have argued that Sade failed as an entrepreneur for three reasons – he was unable to materialise his innovations, he did not have sufficient economic resources to do so, and these innovations were patently unethical because they did not take into account the will of the other.

The case of Sade may today seem like a museum piece of the horrors of revolutionary excesses. However, he offers the study of entrepreneurship some profound lessons. First and perhaps most importantly he reminds us that entrepreneurship is not something simply limited to the astute businessman. His efforts to imagine other worlds are certainly entrepreneurial, even if they did, and should, fail. Second, with the case of Sade we find some of the aspects which are some central to contemporary entrepreneurship taken to their logic extreme. For instance, we find that a commitment to individual liberty and absolute sovereignty is taken to its logic and disturbing extreme. Sade gives us an indication of what the dire consequences would be of a world ruled only by the logic of utter and unflinching self-interest. Critically, many entrepreneurs, and many entrepreneurship researchers, have explicitly or implicitly assumed exactly the same concept of self-interest that we find in the Marquis de Sade. Finally, Sade's own failures provides us with some of the indication of some of the other disregarded characteristics which an entrepreneur must have – that is the ability to materialise their inventions, access to necessary resources to do so, and finally being considered at least minimally ethical – that is, being able to recognize and account for the needs and desires of the Other. Perhaps it is by heeding these warnings from such an extreme figure that we can develop more comprehensive and ethically sensitive accounts of the politics and aesthetics of entrepreneurship.



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**SCOS 2006 Conference**  
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**Title:**

***Travelling to heaven, landing in hell:  
Organisational attempts at managing diversity.***

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## **Abstract**

In this paper, the rhetoric and reality of diversity management initiatives are explored through a longitudinal study conducted in a UK retail organisation. This work takes forward previous research by the author (stage 1 of the longitudinal study, 2000-2) by presenting detailed findings from this first stage and preliminary findings from the second stage (2003-4) of the UK study.

Strategic themes within Human Resource Management (HRM) suggest an organisational commitment towards the full deployment of all employees as a means of achieving organisational goals and objectives (e.g. Fombrun *et al.* 1984; Guest 1989). Over the past decade, the discourse and practice of HRM has been the subject of critical analysis from a number of sources (e.g., Legge 1995; Storey 2001; Townley 1994), and the issue of equality of opportunity has formed part of such critique (e.g., Rothwell 1995; Brewster 1995). The rhetoric of an inclusive and caring organisational culture for all employees, who are committed and can contribute to the organisation's strategic aims and performance (organisations as angels), is placed against the common reality of organisations focusing primarily on bottom line but also operating within a system of political games and prejudice (organisations as demons).

The focus in this paper is placed on the long term impact of the company's diversity policies and initiatives on organisational performance and on the career experiences of white and minority employees. This tracks changes from the author's initial research (2000-2) and the second stage which took place between 2003 and 2004. The original research suggested a lack of effective communication and involvement of all staff in the implementation of diversity initiatives. Typically, the white staff felt that they were "left behind" and were quite resentful of these initiatives and hence, of their ethnic minority colleagues. At the same time, the ethnic minority staff was quite apprehensive of the initiatives, worrying that they would be perceived as tokens and their positions and credibility would be compromised. The second part of this field research which is now completed, revealed that the retail company withdrew a number of their initial diversity initiatives in their store, due to the backlash and resentment it caused, mainly stemming from white customers. This paper explores the perceptions of managers and staff in the retail store and analyses how the diversity policies and initiatives still in place are perceived. The author also investigates the views of staff on the company's decision to withdraw what were perceived as the more "radical" diversity initiatives, such as product and food signs in different languages (such as Urdu and Punjabi) and Pakistani greeters in traditional Muslim clothing in the entrance of the store. Through this paper, issues around whether real organisational commitment to employees, regardless of race, gender, disability etc. is a reality are explored against the backdrop of a focus on bottom line and performance. Can organisations stick to their angelic public image in tense times, or do they always revert to their demonic status of primarily caring for their own well-being?

## **Introduction**

It is now a commonplace statement that people are the most valuable organisational asset and that they can offer a competitive advantage to their organisation (Dickens, 1994):

The adoption of an HRM approach which emphasises valuing and developing people in pursuit of organisational goals and which stresses the role of the individual and the importance of involvement, opens the way for arguments about valuing all people - and valuing diversity - and enables the promotion of equality to be linked to achievement of business goals (Dickens, 1998: 23).

However, as Dickens (1994; 1998) has argued consistently, HRM may in reality be at odds with the promotion of equal opportunities. Discrimination in the workplace on grounds of sex, 'race', disability and other factors and a lack of equality of opportunity in employment prevails regardless of legislation (Equal Pay Act, 1975; Sex Discrimination Act, 1975; Race Relations Act, 1976; Disability Act, 1995) and arguments around the moral issues or the 'business case' of promoting equal opportunities. The 'rhetoric' of HRM, which is illustrated by the normative model (Guest, 1987; 1989), claims that a number of coherent policies deliver the goals of strategic integration, flexibility, quality and commitment, which are consequently said to improve overall organisational performance. The normative model portrays HRM as unitarist and as moving responsibility for HR issues down to line managers and away from personnel/HR experts. In relation to equal opportunities more explicitly, Sisson's (1994) model of the 'HRM organisation' cites equal opportunities as a key personnel policy, but as Dickens (1998: 23) has argued, in relation to gender equality, "the gender equality assumption in the HRM model is part of the rhetoric rather than the reality".

However, the issue of equal opportunity has typically merely nodded at the inclusion of race and ethnicity in such a category, most commentators having focused on the issue of gender equality (Kamenou and Fearfull, 2003; Kamenou and Fearfull, 2006; Fearfull and Kamenou, forthcoming). Using original research, the author seeks to extend the critique by examining the experiences of ethnic minority staff in white dominated organisations.

The research on which this paper is based, examines the effectiveness of equal opportunity and diversity policies in a large British retail company, hereafter named RetailCo. RetailCo. has a reputation and, publicises itself, as a “Leader in Diversity”. At the initial time of the research (stage 1, 2000-2) RetailCo. was attempting to expand its diversity initiatives and policies, predominantly with regard to ethnic minority staff and, partly to women. By the time of the second stage of the research, which took place between 2003-4, the organisation made some changes to its equality policies and initiatives and it made a decision to withdraw some key diversity initiatives from the Store in which the research was conducted. In this paper, the issues and concerns facing management, ethnic minority and white staff are discussed with an emphasis on participants’ views on the organisation’s diversity initiatives. These initiatives included positive action<sup>1</sup>, targets for increasing ethnic minority and women representation at senior levels and exclusive training for ethnic minority staff.

Within this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with ethnic minority and white employees (both male and female) and managers in RetailCo. Research was conducted in both the RetailCo. Head Office and a RetailCo. Store, both based in the North of England. For the purposes of this paper, the main focus will be placed on the experiences of management and staff in the RetailCo. Store.

Each interview was audio-taped and subsequently transcribed. One objective of this approach was to ‘give voice’ (Kyriacou, 2000) to the participants, particularly those not working at managerial levels.

Before proceeding with the findings and analysis, it is important to give a brief background to RetailCo.

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<sup>1</sup> Positive Action: Positive measures, although not legally required, are allowed under the 1976 UK Race Relations Act to encourage employees and potential employees and to provide training for employees who are members of particular racial groups which have been underrepresented in particular work (Race Relations Code of Practice, Commission for Racial Equality, 1996).

**RetailCo.**

RetailCo. is a large private retail (food and clothing) organisation, with its Head Office based in the North of England. It employs approximately 100,000 staff in a range of jobs, from shopfloor to director level. Of those employees, approximately 73,000 are part-time and 27,000 are full-time (RetailCo. documentation).

RetailCo. has detailed formal policies on equal opportunities, performance appraisal and training. The organisation is a member of the Work Life Balance Alliance, prides itself in being a leader in flexible working practices and has received an award for its practices to help staff balance work and home commitments (RetailCo. documentation).

RetailCo. strongly advocates its commitment to equality through policies which are circulated to every employee during induction and also through being a member in a number of UK equality initiatives, for example Race for Opportunity, Leadership Challenge, the Equality Exchange (where large retailers share best practice) and the Employers' Forum on Disability.

RetailCo. provides positive action schemes for women and ethnic minorities, in the form of targets for improving representation of women and ethnic minorities at management level, specifically Store manager level, advertising in ethnic minority newspapers and attending cultural and religious fairs where RetailCo.'s staff provide information on the opportunities within the organisation. With regard to increasing female representation at Store manager level, RetailCo. launched a programme to encourage female managers to put themselves forward to be "Store managers of the future" (RetailCo. documentation).

The RetailCo. Store (hereafter called 'the Store'), opened in 2000 and RetailCo. claimed it was Britain's first multi-lingual Store. At the time of opening it featured customer service signs and announcements in three languages (English, Punjabi and Urdu). The Store focuses on meeting the needs of the local community, with a high Asian population, by selling products and providing services appropriate for local people. There have been concentrated efforts by RetailCo. for the Store to employ

staff who would reflect the local population profile and at the time of opening, 47% of the Store's employees were from an Asian background.

At the early stages of this research, the ethnic breakdown in terms of numbers of employees in the RetailCo. Store was as follows:

**Table 1: Ethnic breakdown in RetailCo. Store, stage 1 (200-2)**

	UK/EUROPEAN/IRISH	ASIAN	OTHER EUROPEAN	OTHER ETHNIC
<b>MALE</b>	64	42	1	1
<b>FEMALE</b>	211	18	0	0

As a total, at the time of stage 1 of the research, 19% of the Store's employees were from an ethnic minority background, in an area where the number of ethnic minorities living within 10 minutes drive from work were 15-16%<sup>2</sup>. This indicates a dramatic fall from the 47% Asian staff initially recruited in the Store. At the time this data was collected (November 2000), only one Asian female was at supervisory level but a few months later an Asian female became the Store Manager and the existing Store Manager moved to a different Store. Two Asian males were in middle management positions. In total, there were twenty-five managers within the Store. Table 1 indicates there were no African or Afro-Caribbean staff in the RetailCo. Store at the time of this research.

Within RetailCo.'s Head Office approximately 3% of staff was of an ethnic minority background. A simple breakdown of this is given below:

**Table 2: Ethnic breakdown in RetailCo. Head Office, stage 1 (2000-2)**

AFRICAN	ASIAN	CARIBBEAN	OTHERS	UK/EUROPEAN
3	24	2	5	1292

During the second stage of the research (2003-4), the author requested a detailed breakdown of staff by ethnicity and gender in RetailCo Head Office and Store. Information was only given on the Store after a number of requests and this information was less informative than the one provided in stage 1 of the research:

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<sup>2</sup> Retail Co. stated that this figure were based on the 1991 UK Census



**Table 3: Ethnic breakdown in RetailCo. Store, Stage 2 (2003-4)**

	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>UK EUROPEAN/IRISH</b>	<b>OTHERS</b>
<b>Male</b>	160	93	67
<b>Female</b>	255	206	49

Interestingly, no information was provided on the ‘Others’ category and therefore it was difficult to draw conclusions on different minority groups within the Store.

## **Perceptions and experiences of managers and staff**

### **Equality and Diversity Initiatives**

#### ***Stage 1, 2000-2***

The central aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of equality and diversity policies and initiatives in RetailCo. and to present the views and perceptions of the organisation’s management and staff. A criterion for selecting RetailCo. as a case study organisation was its formal commitment to equality and its extensive policies and initiatives for increasing representation of ethnic minorities and women.

This paper investigates diversity initiatives in stage 1 and stage 2 of the research and discusses how RetailCo. has been developing these initiatives from 2000 onwards. The data presented here from the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage is based on a preliminary pilot study as the data analysis of this stage is ongoing.

A central finding within this study, was the fact that there were two opposite ‘camps’ regarding attitudes on diversity initiatives and, specifically positive action and exclusive training for ethnic minorities and women. RetailCo. has been faced with a huge dilemma as it acknowledged that some drastic changes, such as positive action had to be adopted, but at the same time, this was faced with resistance from some managers and staff.

Irrespective of whether the ethnic minority participants would want to be part of a positive action programme themselves, the majority of them believed that training for

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ethnic minorities which focuses on skills and strategies to help them move ahead and progress, might be necessary in order for them to understand the politics of organisations, the culture and the appropriate behavioural skills (Kamenou and Fearfull, 2001; forthcoming).

Some ethnic minority women believed that as females from minority groups, they were “missing out” on opportunities to network and “learn the ropes” on how to approach people, ask for opportunities and push themselves forward. Balvinder, an Indian male manager in RetailCo., contended that the Asian culture is quite different to the white organisational culture and believed that this is an issue that would affect their networking skills:

If you look at the people who are successful they probably concentrate their networking so as to help their career and do their job. And probably [there is] a cultural imbalance... my imbalance is that to me I think that should not be necessary. I don't feel comfortable doing it [networking]. There is a cultural issue [pause] How do you make ethnic minorities more assertive? (Balvinder, Indian, Process Improvement Manager, RetailCo. HO, 48)

With regard to providing exclusive training to ethnic minority groups in terms of on the job training or training on their management skills or assertiveness, some of the managers in RetailCo. acknowledged that this can backfire in that it may create the perception that ethnic minorities need extra help to succeed and also, it may create resentment among white staff. This view on ethnic minorities being seen as requiring ‘special treatment’ was illustrated well by Finola’s quote:

[T]his [exclusive training] is still being debated actually. There is an in-house view, amongst a number of our ethnic minority staff and managers, that they are very much against that. Their view is [that] they wouldn't want to be part of a programme for special people, [be] singled out (Finola, HR project manager on diversity, RetailCo. HO, White, 40)

However, the managers’ opinions on positive action, exclusive training and applying targets for increasing representation of women and ethnic minorities varied. Some managers felt that positive action, at least in the short-term, was a necessity:

For me, the only way we got the female Store managers [increasing] was by setting targets. In the short term, the only way to get this off the ground, is to have the targets. Until you get the numbers in the Stores, in the organisation, nothing will happen (Ashwin, Deputy Retail Managing Director, RetailCo. HO, Indian, 30s)

Ashwin believed that positive action is needed in order to improve the careers and positions of under-represented groups within organisations and that it is important to “get the numbers in” to facilitate future development and progression.

Finola argued that it is important for RetailCo. to promote themselves as a company who values diversity and to actively attempt to recruit staff from ethnic minority communities. She stated that there are misconceptions about RetailCo. and it is up to the organisation to ‘break the ice’, by attending religious and cultural festivals of ethnic minority communities, where they can talk to members of ethnic minority communities and discuss with them their opportunities within RetailCo.:

I don’t have a problem with positive action [...] the interesting thing that I’ve learned is that if you don’t do it, if you don’t take positive action, what actually happens is you leave huge groups of people to their own assumptions. [A commissioned researcher from RetailCo.] went out and talked to a number of people in the [Asian Muslim] community in [the city where the Store is located], and there were some nice things they said about RetailCo., but there were some real shockers, about perceptions, about what it’s like to work for RetailCo.. Things like ‘you have to be white to work there’, or ‘there’s only jobs at the check-out for you anyway’, ‘you are not allowed to wear your hijab’, [...] ‘you have to handle meat and alcohol whether you like it or not’. And none of that it’s true! But unless you actually go out ... because we’ve never actually gone out and said this is what it’s actually like to work for RetailCo., the information is probably based on bad experiences of people that they know (Finola, HR project manager on diversity, RetailCo. HO, White, 40)

Some of the ethnic minority participants argued that, although they could see the benefits and the need for positive action, they would not want to be part of it, as they were afraid they would be seen as having “special needs” and “needing a push”. Such a perception, it was argued, would diminish their credibility in terms of their job performance:

I would fail to see what would be the need. Ultimately if we recruited somebody into [RetailCo.], then the view is that they have the same skills as everybody else, so it would almost be insulting in my view, for them to have specific courses, like saying ‘you are not up to the right level’ [...] It’s like being in school and going to dumb class! [laughs] (Yasmin, Pakistani, Training Advisor, RetailCo. HO, 28)

A main concern of ethnic minority staff stemming from the interview data was that they believed that positive action can cause resentment from white staff in their organisation who may feel that ethnic minorities benefited from reverse

discrimination, incorporating career strategy support, leading to more opportunities for development and advancement than the white staff.

The ethnic minority staff had to deal with racism from white customers, but white staff also appeared resentful of the opportunities given to ethnic minority staff:

I don't think there's a problem in the first place, I don't think it's a need [for positive action] ... they employ ethnic minorities in the first place. When we first opened, it was at local news, they've got Asian signs, I can understand that. But they had Asian greeters, speaking in their language and it really didn't go down very well with the customers... At the end of the day we speak English, we are in England and we've got a lot of British customers and it was frustrating because they were talking ... [pause] They stopped it after a while because they were so many complaints (Anita, White, Produce Assistant, RetailCo. Store, 22)

Anita contradicted herself by going on to argue that she could understand the need for some of the initiatives, but cautioned on "how far we go" with them:

... from what I understand a lot of the Asian women don't speak English and I can understand it from their point of view. But the Asian greeters didn't speak to English people ... so it goes both ways. We have to be careful how far we go, don't we? Equality includes everybody (Anita, White, Produce Assistant, RetailCo. Store, 22)

Anita argued that white customers were sometimes excluded from these initiatives and this could have increased the level of resentment from white staff. Simon, a white manager in the Store argued that there were problems with the implementation of the diversity initiatives:

"...they should pick the right person for the job. On their ability, not on ethnic ...I don't think we should positively discriminate [...] I don't feel left behind but I don't want to be... I can see it going down that road more and more. People should be given opportunities because of their ability not because of anything else. But looking into the future, I can see positive discrimination happening [...] Not necessarily without having the abilities but there might be other people with more abilities [pause] it might get a bit political" (Simon, White, Produce Manager, RetailCo. Store, 30)

Simon and Anita felt that discrimination does exist in RetailCo., but it is positive in favour of ethnic minorities. They seemed frustrated, "left behind" in some ways from the organisation, where the focus, in their eyes, was merely on ethnic minority advancement:

I don't think we would ever discriminate [against ethnic minorities]. I think [RetailCo.] is so terrified of seen to be racist that they are going the other way... instead of going down the middle they are going the other way (Simon, White, Produce Manager, RetailCo. Store, 30)

... we've always worked with Indians, Asians, ethnics and the foreign people but since this store's opened, I think they've gone a little bit too far. I think they are trying to make a point of it and I don't think there's any reason to make a point of it. I think they are almost scared to do anything about it (Anita, White, Produce Assistant, RetailCo. Store, 22)

Anita's views indicate the ignorance of white staff with regard to ethnic minority individuals, which can be inferred merely from her description of ethnic minority staff as "ethnics and all the foreign people". At the same time however, this lack of awareness demonstrates an even deeper problem of organisations not going about introducing diversity the right way. White staff in RetailCo. was not given detailed information on the positive action schemes and were felt excluded and "left behind". These inadequacies at organisational level, may have intensified feelings of resentment and frustration of white staff.

It is important to note, however, that not all white staff was against positive action. Three out of the eight white women participants said they were neutral and argued that they could not comment or have strong views on positive action as they were not from an ethnic minority community and therefore could not know "how it's like". Two white male participants believed that positive action is needed acknowledging the history of discrimination. Andrew, discussed the tensions with positive action schemes in the RetailCo. Store:

[RetailCo.] is big on it. There are two groups: one that likes it [positive action] and one that doesn't [...] People might think that if you are Asian you can do it. But I think there is a need to show Asian people that they can make it. [...] White customers weren't happy. They didn't want to shop here but you can't exclude Asian people. We have to accept everyone. If white customers stop shopping [here], that's fine! (Andrew, White, Trainee Meat Manager, RetailCo. Store, 30)

As an employee, Andrew, was of the view that customers should be welcomed regardless of their ethnicity, culture or religion and white customers' racist views should not be taken on board by RetailCo.. However, the empirical data has indicated that there are clear tensions for management, which attempts to initiate change and

promote diversity but at the same time, it focuses on bottom line and is desperate not to lose any customers.

RetailCo. has been seen as a leader in diversity issues and is often quoted in equality research conducted by consulting bodies and the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), for positively promoting diversity. There was great tension however, within the Store, which adopted a number of initiatives such as multi-lingual signs and greeters and a wide range of ethnic minority products and services.

Joanne, the Customer Service Manager in the Store, discussed some pertinent, and yet disappointing, issues in relation to their commitment to diversity as a Store. The Store was considered by RetailCo. as a big success on promoting diversity initiatives. It became clear early on however, a number of white customers were quite unhappy with the multi-cultural nature of the Store, which forced RetailCo. to withdraw some of their initiatives. Joanne and David stated that the Store's ethnic minority staff reduced from 47% to 19% within the first five months of opening, and a reason behind some of them leaving was that they faced overt racism from customers. Joanne's following quote is indicative of the tensions and problems:

It has been a struggle with diversity [seemed frustrated] [...] it's difficult [...] because our customer base is a racist base of people and having moved into [the city] especially for this job, I was surprised by the reaction from the customers. We opened a multi-cultural Store, we had multi-lingual operators, greeters and we had so many objections that we had to scale it down. And I had five Asian ladies who worked at the front of the Store, greeting customers and they were subjected to so much racism from the customers, that they've all left their jobs [...] I was surprised that for an area that has a high population of non-white people, I was surprised that the racism was so strong here. [...] I think, if we worked in an area that was more affluent, where the white population wasn't 33% unemployed, then I think the racism wouldn't be a problem. But because of high unemployment, you go to narrow minded white people, where they think that ethnic minority people have taken their jobs which isn't the case, but that's the perception and that's where the root of racism is (Joanne, Customer Service Manager, RetailCo. Store, White, 44)

The area in which the Store is located is considered to be a major determinant of racial tension and discrimination. Joanne acknowledges that the fact that there is a very high level of unemployment creates more tensions and discontent among different ethnic groups. It is surprising therefore, when she goes on to argue that a major reason why Asian staff have left the Store was their lack of commitment:

We have targets [for the Store]. And we've achieved the target for this Store when opening here. For my department I had to have thirty-two ethnic minority people out of the total. I actually started with thirty-seven from which now I've got 18 left. There was a high turnover because we sacked some for theft, some for poor attendance, we didn't renew the contracts for other people who didn't work well. [...] a lot of the ... particularly the young Asian lads, they didn't understand our disciplines, even if they were fully trained and inducted into the company [...] We have a set policy and we recruit on ability not ethnic origin.[...] But where managers can become concerned with diversity is that they had a lot of ethnic minority staff who've let them down. [...] We all have to take people on merits or ability or references. We have to give them a chance. Often the chance is a waste of time... I don't know if there's something with the Asian population that don't seem to have that commitment (Joanne, Customer Service Manager, RetailCo. Store, White, 44)

Joanne had a distinct experience of working with young Asian staff in a disadvantaged area, which may have been negative, but she nevertheless makes a huge generalisation to the whole Asian population. David, the Store manager also acknowledged that the Store had lost a number of its Asian staff but he based this on a variety of reasons and stated:

No more of [a problem of retention] that would be normally. The issue is that we've recruited a lot of ethnic minority people in our first twelve weeks and a lot of the temporary workers would leave [...] They left for different reasons, some were here as temporary, some didn't feel it's what they wanted (David, Store Manager, RetailCo. Store, White, 30s)

A prominent issue emerging from the research in the RetailCo. Store is the fact that although RetailCo. invested a lot of resources into improving diversity and increasing the representation of ethnic minorities in the Head Office and in its Stores, the 'bottom line' was the main focus. As the situation in the Store indicated, managers removed the majority of the diversity initiatives in place to attract ethnic minority staff and customers, from fear that they were losing white customers, who formed the majority in their total customer base. Joanne stated that the Store had to scale down a number of initiatives and multi-cultural events they were planning, because of the objections of their white customers. Her statement below about their customers, illustrates very clearly that if RetailCo.'s aims of being committed to diversity and providing products and services which reflect the local population, are not in line with profits, the 'bottom line' would typically win:

We have to keep them happy, we don't have to agree with them (Joanne, Customer Service Manager, RetailCo. Store, White, 44)

It is pertinent however, to argue that no hard evidence was given to the author by management, of the number of white customers raising complaints about the Store and threatening to shop elsewhere.

### ***Stage 2, 2003-4***

As stated earlier, data analysis of the second stage is ongoing at the moment. Therefore this section focuses on some preliminary data based on a pilot. Nevertheless, some pertinent issues seem to be arising from this second stage and these are discussed here.

The author gained access to examine any progress made in regard to equality policies and diversity initiatives. She managed to gain access both to the Head office and the Store of RetailCo. It was clear that the situation in the Store was quite different from the initial research as the majority of the initiatives withdrawn at the end of the first stage were never re-introduced. It was a very different store from the one visited during the first stage as all multi-cultural signs were removed (with the exception of some in the parking place) and the Asian greeters were also not present. Although it was relatively easy to gain access, it was perceived that management was not as forthcoming as during the first stage. A key gate keeper who helped a great deal with access and setting up interviews in stage 1, in her role as Diversity Manager, had moved on to a different area. Data was not readily available and it was not broken down in sufficient detail, as discussed earlier.

Jeniffer, the new diversity manager, discussed the issues with a number of positive action initiatives put in place at the beginning of stage 1 of this research:

“Open days [with focus on ethnic minority recruitment] raised awareness... It was a great piece of positive action ... but it did not deliver... It did not increase recruitment” (Jennifer, Diversity Manager, RetailCo. Head Office, White)

Jennifer therefore stated that although in theory open days for minority groups was a good idea, in reality it did not change recruitment from minority communities in



RetailCo. When asked how promotion is monitored in the organisation in order to identify whether there were any issues with ethnic minority groups, Jennifer openly stated that this does not happen:

“There is a problem... We don’t have no system to capture this ... It wouldn’t get signed off [approved]”

Interviews were conducted with ethnic minority and white staff in the Store and most minority staff were disappointed with the lack of diversity initiatives and with what they perceived as the problem of obvious lack of representation of minority groups in managerial levels:

“There are no Asian managers [...] there is something ... they prefer their white colleagues to be pushed forward [...] There is something wrong with the store at shopfloor level” (Tranum, Checkout Operator, Pakistani, 47)

“I would like to progress, but not sure if I can ... there are no Asian [...] department managers, no Asian key colleagues [...] all the workforce is Asian apart from that sort of level [...] it just makes us [Asians] sit down still [...] at this moment in time there is no Asians on the upper workforce then you look at it differently, you probably think oh no I’ve got to just stay where I am at the minute” (Tahira, Checkout Operator, Pakistani, 29).

Both white and ethnic minority staff commented on positive action initiatives and a diversity of views was evident. Lack of communication from management was also apparent. The following quotes illustrate these points:

“They need a kick start, a jump [to increase ethnic minority representation], if they let it happen in their own time it would happen in the next ten or twenty years [...] but they need a kick start they need awareness for Asians to come into the management levels as it is not recognised as an issue [...] When I came for the interview, they made it out that there is equal opportunities for women to go up the ladder as well as men as well from ethnic minority [groups], but once you get to the workforce and you have been here for a while, a year or two and you see that it is totally a load of rubbish, nothing is happening, they wanted people at that time because I came in as a Christmas temp and then I got to keep the job permanently, but basically when you come for the interview they say there is a need for [more] ethnic minorities but there isn’t really” (Tahira, Checkout operator, Pakistani, 29)

“When this store first opened, the [white] customers complained a lot at first you know with the signs [...] we were the checkout operators and they used to talk to us as we were serving them [and say] ‘why have they go that one up there and not one of these?’, there was a lot of you know, moans and groans [...] I don’t know what happened, like one minute they were there and the next minute they were replaced with something else [not multi-lingual]” (Kathreen, Bakery Assistant, White, 38)

“I can remember [when the store opened] people complaining... I can’t see what the harm is in it [having multi-lingual signs], because everywhere else you go, to the doctors, they have signs in different languages [...] The signs are not there now [...] I was thinking the other day, after a talk on diversity in the store, we have a high number of ethnic minority colleagues, and I thought considering there are so many ethnic minority staff there are none on management or supervisory level [reflecting] Things are calmer now, but we have no ethnic minority managers...” (Charlotte, White, training co-ordinator, 30)

“The [positive action] initiative was a big mistake. They were forcing it down people’s throats... It didn’t do good to [CSA], customers kept leaving [pause] When they took the signs down, things started getting better... Maybe at slower pace. Now it’s more integrated, we also have Polish staff, Yugoslavians, Chinese... Diversity can be very nice but it can create problems” (Mick, White, Warehouse, 59)

Although the data for stage 2 is limited in comparison to the stage 1 material, some key issues are clearly emerging. Although the overall numbers of ethnic minority staff were higher in stage 2 than in stage 1, there were no minority managers; all non-white staff occupied shop floor level jobs. There was clear demotivation and apprehension felt by non-white staff, who did not have faith that they would make it to the top of RetailCo. They consistently argued that there were no role models for them within the organisation and no non-white mentors to push them forward. There was a feeling of uncomfortable calmness in the Store, where the tension felt during Stage 1, with minority and white staff often clashing, together with the racial riots in the area was no longer there. However, a feeling of passive anger and disappointment was present among the ethnic minority shopfloor level staff. RetailCo. adopted the view that it was better for them “to do things slowly”, with a number of white managers stating that initiatives “shouldn’t be too radical” and that perhaps “we went too far” in the past. These may be valid points and there are a number of debates on whether a more radical approach results in antagonism and resentment. However, the main concern was that no strategy seemed to be in place to move things forward.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The findings presented in this paper suggest important implications for HR practice within organisations which aim to create a diverse organisational environment of fairness and appreciation of its staff.

The empirical findings have suggested that the business case may not always be in line with equality, as was apparently the case in RetailCo. Nevertheless, organisations should look for hard evidence when deciding whether a policy is non-profitable for their organisation before panic sets in and it hurriedly reverts to the previous *status quo*. If organisations are to claim to be equal opportunity employers and they adopt a number of diversity initiatives, they need to realise that genuine, sustained commitment and patience is crucial for the successful implementation of these initiatives. It is not sufficient to formulate these policies and initiatives and be seen to be doing enough; well-planned actions and strategies are important for long term success (Kamenou, 20003).

In situations where equal opportunities have proven to be conflicting with an organisation's business case, organisations need to decide if they are willing to forego short term profits for long term benefits, by building a reputation for being genuinely committed to their ostensible philosophy of equality and hence, attracting more ethnic minority customers and staff in the long run. Not to do so suggests that their stance in this regard is rhetoric rather than reality. In today's organisations, with changing demographics, where more and more women and ethnic minorities are within the working age population, organisations will soon not be able to afford to restrict their employee, and customer, base to white males. There is a pursuit for the best people and talent should become the primary concern for organisational survival. Therefore, a more strategic, long term approach is necessary for their success. The public relations image organisations build today is crucial for their own successful and profitable development (Kamenou, 2003).

Empirical findings, specifically in relation to diversity initiatives and positive action have also indicated a need for organisations to implement policies that are beneficial to all its members, rather than excluding some in favour of others. This is not to argue that positive action is not necessary in certain circumstances, but there is an urgent need for including all staff when implementing these policies, by providing sufficient information and consulting with all groups before and during implementation for their views and concerns. A useful strategy for organisations may be to offer a number of general courses which all members of staff can attend, regardless of ethnicity and gender, rather than segregating people and ascribing to them stereotypical needs and

characteristics. For example, it may be better to have assertiveness training open to everyone and organisational members who are lacking in assertiveness and confidence can then have access to it, rather than presenting this as “women’s training” or “ethnic minorities’ training”. Some women and ethnic minorities may not need assertiveness training, in the same manner that men and white staff may find this beneficial. Another suggestion would be to assign a mentor to each employee and then everyone can identify and address their own personal strengths and shortcomings in a more private and secure environment (Ibid.). Therefore, this takes us back to the idea that organisations need to develop good policies for all rather than excluding certain groups and creating feelings of inadequacy or resentment.

However, it is not the argument here that social group differences do not matter. Differences based on social groups are important in that they are *seen* as important by organisations and society (Kamenou 2002; 2003). It is not therefore, argued that positive action should be abolished; nevertheless, organisations may need to weigh the costs and benefits of implementing positive action initiatives and they need to accept that in specific circumstances, positive action is necessary, for example, where groups who have been disadvantaged, would want to address their concerns within the security of their own group. However, it may be useful for organisations to conduct attitude surveys in order to assess whether a positive action scheme would cause resentments and divisions among social groups, which may outweigh the benefits of such a programme. In addition, as suggested above, there are situations where organisational schemes which focus on individuals rather than social groups, are more useful and more acceptable to organisational members.

This paper has engaged with the issues and concerns a UK retail organisation faced when attempting to implement and extend their diversity initiatives and strategies. Data was presented from two stages of a longitudinal study in RetailCo. Although RetailCo. advocated commitment to equality and the diversity initiatives were strongly supported from senior management, their implementation fell short of expectations. As illustrated through the empirical work, positive action initiatives, is a very sensitive area to implement which needs careful planning and continuous communication with all staff. The empirical data has demonstrated that there were problems with resentment, resistance and accusations of tokenism. White staff felt

excluded from these initiatives and by not receiving adequate information on the schemes, adopted a resistance to them viewing them as positive discrimination rather than positive action (Kamenou, 2003).

Some of the managers acknowledged that it is difficult to change attitudes or values of employees and the focus was therefore placed on controlling behaviour at work. Although, it was realistic to assume that people's values are very difficult to challenge, RetailCo. did not seem to realise that any initiatives they would implement would fail if their staff were not well informed and advised. There was a lack of in-depth understanding of the problems and issues created by organisational attempts to manipulate organisational culture.

If organisations realise the positive effects of employing ethnic minorities and women, especially due to demographic changes, the business case and positive public image, and the negative sanctions of breaking the law, they may be ready to acknowledge that they are the ones who have to change instead of expecting organisational members to work within a discriminatory organisational culture.

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## **When Craving Goodness Becomes Bad: A Critical Conception of Ethics and Aesthetics in Organizations**

Draft of Paper to be presented at the 2006 Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism  
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### **Introduction**

The SCOS 2006 Call for Papers “The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Organizations and Demons” aptly coincides with a time when we are confronted with a veritable flood of demons in political and organizational life. The lines between what is good and what is bad are increasingly blurred: one person’s demon is another person’s angel, law appears to stand in the way of saving the nation, and the nature and structure of social and political reality itself is continually contested. In this paper, I seek to provide a useful understanding of both current events and the questions posed by the SCOS call, employing the lens of critical aesthetics. The paper is part of a larger project on organizational aesthetics, loosely called “the beautiful organization”. This project seeks to critically examine how we construct notions of *beauty, truth and ethics* in contemporary organizations, the implications of the modern organizational aesthetic for the quality of human (work) life, and the possibility of (re-)constructing an alternative aesthetic.

Aesthetics – in theory and experience- is fundamentally shaped by its social, political and historical context. Our ideas of what is beautiful, true and good are bound by time and place. They usually serve political and ideological functions. They are closely connected to issues of identity formation and social control and they often reflect class, race, gender, and cultural positioning and biases. While most aesthetic theory downplays the vivid emotional, symbolic, political and ideological backdrop of organizational aesthetics, some effectively highlight it. Kateb’s (2000) notion of *aesthetic craving* for instance explores the extent to which our sense of “rightness” in the world is infused with displaced aesthetic desire. Rather than seeking aesthetic satisfaction in art, we become convinced that the world around us must look a particular way and one way only; that only one narrative is and can be true; and that the pattern in our world and in our identity is not only right and beautiful but also forms the very condition for our survival.

Kateb’s idea of craving points to the role that organizational aesthetics plays in creating and maintaining reality and to our emotional and psychological attachments to these constructions. Without our sense of what is right and proper and true, our world and indeed our sense of self is “at risk”. Aesthetic cravings “are satisfied only when we are convinced that the world is one way rather than any other, is beautiful rather than not” (Kateb, p.16) and a world that does not conform to our specifications must be changed to fit our ideal of beauty, often at any cost. Aesthetic cravings are also often intense and unconscious, driving people to possess, order and control, often with disastrous consequences.

This paper uses the ideas of organizational aesthetics and aesthetic cravings to explore organizational life. The paper shows how we can effectively use these concepts to understand the way in which our sense of what is good, bad, beautiful and ugly is shaped and its consequences for our quality of life in the organization. Furthermore, the paper explores the pragmatic and theoretical value of Kateb’s suggestion of democratic aestheticism – the idea that the moral sense can be cultivated through searching for aesthetic value in all things and people, while continually and consciously appealing and engaging the aesthetic self. Not all things are beautiful, nor are all beautiful things equally beautiful, he notes, but “everyone and everything deserves patient attention, a look, a gaze, but not to be followed by an attempt to remedy or control or make over” (p. 31).

### **A Critical Perspective on Beauty, Morality and Truth**

In order to provide a backdrop for the discussion of organizational aesthetics, we need to briefly explore three main themes addressed by aesthetic theory: the question of aesthetic value, the relationship between the aesthetic object and the observer, and the relations between aesthetics, ethics and science. Rather than trying all of existing thought in these areas, I want to identify the major questions and sketch out what I see as a critical perspective on the issues.

Beginning with *aesthetic value*, we must recognize that there are many things in life that can have aesthetic value, ranging from formal art in its many and varied forms to any and all aspects of the world around us, including nature in its given or altered form, humanly made products, and the social world including culture, the nature of human relationships, human interaction and human experience itself. But what constitutes aesthetic value? What is it we look for that creates the feeling

of an aesthetic experience? Or more narrowly, what leads us to say that we like a particular work of art or see something in the world around us that strikes us as beautiful or "artful"? Many people, including Kant, Burke, Kierkegaard, Hegel, Emerson, Nietzsche, Santayana, Heidegger, Adorno, Marcuse, Habermas, and Foucault have attempted to answer this question with equally numerous and varied responses. Kant, considered by many to be the founder of modern aesthetics, suggested that beauty and sublimity are the two key factors that create aesthetic value in physical or imaginative objects or experiences. Burke added that beauty creates the passion or feeling of pleasure while astonishment is the passion created by sublimity<sup>i</sup>.

Beauty remains hard to define. Many people have cautioned against narrow interpretations like those that equate beauty with pleasantness and some have gone so far as to suggest that beauty is a meaningless and oppressive construct. Aquinas defined beauty as "that which pleases in the very apprehension of it" (Janaway, 1995a). This may still be a useful definition in that it captures both the experience of pleasure that beauty creates in the beholder and the idea that the aesthetic experience involves mental, interpretive, contemplative activity on the part of the beholder. Furthermore, if loosely interpreted, this definition could apply to a wide range of phenomena, including art, social forms, nature or mathematical proofs. Finally, it accommodates the idea often found in aesthetic theory, that the aesthetic has its own existence, found in contemplation. Thus, aesthetic value is often contrasted with the purely utilitarian, the instrumental, the habitual or the primitively sensory value.

A second theme in aesthetic theory concerns the relationship between the aesthetic object and the observer. An objectivist, realist perspective would argue that aesthetic value resides in the independent, objective properties of the object itself and aesthetic judgment must therefore be objectively true or false, regardless of the observer. Things in and of themselves are objectively beautiful and the primary task is to develop the standards and criteria that will determine beauty, or more generally, aesthetic value. Subjectivists, on the other hand, argue that aesthetic value is found in the subjective nature of the experience. Through experiencing the object we develop feelings of pleasure or satisfaction that lead us to evaluate the object aesthetically, i.e. disinterestedly and for its own value and worth rather than for some instrumental purpose<sup>ii</sup>.

A third theme is the relationship between aesthetics, ethics and science, or, put differently, the relationship between beauty, morality and truth. Many philosophers have argued that aesthetics, ethics and science are inherently related and going back as far as Plato and Aristotle, we find discussions about the relationship between beauty and truth, and the social role of art<sup>iii</sup>. The connection between reason, rationality and emotion is a related theme. Is art about form or content? Should art reflect reality, should it shape reality or is art about a different reality all together, one that is created in the relationship between the work and the observer? Can we have universal, clearly delineated and reasoned criteria for evaluating art, or is beauty merely in the idea of the beholder, a social construction which that is culturally shaped and influenced? <sup>iv</sup>

All kinds of positions have been suggested over the centuries, ranging from "what is beautiful is by necessity also moral and truthful", and "truth and justice are beautiful", to the idea that morality must mediate aesthetics through rationality, to the idea that aesthetics and morality can, are or have been subjugated to rationality, to an entire disconnect between the three, claiming that they are, should be, or cannot be but separate spheres of reality. Critical theorists have provided useful insight into the relationship between the three spheres as they exist in the world today. In particular, they have explored the social disconnect that is considered to be one of the key features of the 'modernist project'.

Starting in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this project sought to establish "objective science, universal morality and law and autonomous art, according to their *inner logic*" (Habermas, 1981a, p. 9; Reed, 1993). The modernity project was not only supposed to entail liberation from pre-Enlightenment tradition and constraints, freeing up each of the spheres to develop their own knowledge and insights. It was also supposed to provide a way of utilizing these specialized spheres for the "*rational organization of everyday social life*" (p.9).

This rationalization process and its long-term consequences were explored by Weber<sup>v</sup> who argued that modernity's cultural and societal rationalization of society necessarily leads to a loss of freedom and meaning. "Commitment to an aesthetic or moral value for its own sake implies... a commitment to a specific meaning or goal which cannot be captured in terms of general procedure" (Ingram, 1990, p. 184), that is, formalizable, abstract, *rational* procedure. Reasoning about values becomes a subjective matter and without an objective basis for moral reasoning, people stop thinking about themselves as moral agents and all values become meaningless. While the Enlightenment saw a tension between individual and society, science and morality, freedom and necessity and so forth, to Weber rationalization and moral idealism were simply incompatible. This problem, he argued, was "further compounded by the fact that the various orders of life, which gravitate around the distinct value spheres of truth, justice and aesthetic pleasure, come into



conflict with each other” (Ingram, 1990, p. 185), leading ultimately to a domination of instrumental rationality and hedonism.

While Habermas generally agrees with Weber on the characteristics of modern society, he disagrees on the cause. Rationalization, he argues, is not a force in and of itself but rather is caused by the dynamics of capitalism and its impact on the world<sup>vi</sup>. Loss of meaning, freedom and identity are caused by capitalism’s colonization of everyday life, a theme that has been taken up extensively by many critical theorists. Gramsci’s notion of hegemony for instance addresses the ways in which capitalist economic interests come to structure all other elements of life, including religion, education, culture, family values and of course art. Ideology critique features as a central theme for many critical theorists since it seeks to address the varied ways in which ideology infuses the social life-world, shaping culture, identity, interests, interaction and communication to serve ideological functions of control. Adorno and Horkheimer argued that reason becomes the instrument of social conformity, eliminating both freedom and individuality through its domination of all spheres, including the aesthetic sphere in its popular and popularized form. Through commodification, art loses its autonomy and ennobling purpose and becomes deceptive and controlling. This imposes a mass identity on the individual and relegates the role of art to entertainment and freedom from boredom<sup>vii</sup>.

Weber already addressed the problem of conflicting spheres of rationality, suggesting that such collisions are likely to result in one sphere eclipsing the other - most notably, critical theorists have argued this has resulted in the dominance of science over morality and aesthetics. Habermas similarly notes that in capitalist societies “cognitive-instrumental rationality established itself at the cost of practical rationality” but uses the concept of selective rationalization. This addresses not only the functioning of the spheres but also the unbalanced institutional embodiment of the spheres, including law.

Much of Habermas’ work is devoted to the development of his vision of rationality based on the ideal speech situation, a model of rationality that, unlike Weber’s, includes a grounding in values, specifically truth, rightness, and truthfulness and seeks to accomplish, ultimately, an emancipatory interest. However, ultimately this may or may not be sufficient. Habermas notes that:

If we do not want altogether to relinquish standards by which a form of life might be judged to be more or less failed, deformed, unhappy or alienated, we can look if need be to the model of sickness and health. We tacitly judge life forms and life histories according to standards of normality that do not permit an approximation to ideal limit values. Perhaps we should talk instead of a balance among non-self-sufficient moments, an equilibrated interplay of the cognitive with the moral and the aesthetic-practical” (1981b, pp. 73-74)

Ingram (1990) notes that “the dialectic of specialized trivialization and fragmentation” generated by rationalization must thus be countered by “generating tendencies toward reunification and popularization” (pp. 187-188), a possibility or movement that is often discussed in the context of the role of art and aesthetics. The problematic here lies in the notion that art and aesthetics is placed in one of two positions. Either it is regarded as belonging to an isolated, subjective, privatized sphere, disconnected from the rest of society, a “disinterested experience. Or, alternatively, it is linked to “social and cultural reality, but only, and specifically, as the matter of art’s institutional/ideological status and functioning”, whether in opposition to or consolidation of the existing order (Ziarek, 1998).

BuckMorss (1992) provides an additional insight here in suggesting that modern aesthetics functions as a form of *anesthetization*. Historically, she argues, aesthetics, has to do not with art, but with sensory perception of reality. Not only is the human corporeal response manipulated by the political regime and social organization of modernity; aesthetics itself has become “acculturated, colonized by reason, and.. associated with the contemplation of beauty and art” (Efimova, 1997, p. 75). Thus, aesthetics, along with a host of other addictions and compulsions including phantasmagorias (“a narcotic made of reality itself”, BuckMorss, 1992, p. 22)) function to anesthetize, numb and protect a humanity ambushed by the overwhelming effects of war or industrialization.

Heidegger and others have suggested that art (and aesthetics) may also function quite differently noting that “(a)ll art, as the letting happen of the advent of the truth of beings, is as such, in essence, poetry. The essence of art... is the setting-itself-into-work of truth” (1993, p. 17). Art can thus function as the emergence of being, the unconcealment of truth, and the creation of reality<sup>viii</sup>. Of course, the transformative and revelatory capacity of art is a idea(l) that has echoed throughout history and in all cultures. It can be found in such widely ranging versions as Li Zehou’s aesthetic theory (see Cauvel, 1999), the close connection between life, art and ethics found in indigenous art (see e.g. Leuthold, 1996); and even in such basic definitions of aesthetic value that describe aesthetic experience as “other worldliness” (see, e.g. Goldman 1995, Fenner, 1999).<sup>ix</sup>

Using the critical perspective as our general lens for looking at organizations aesthetics, we see then three things. One is a recognition of the interconnectedness between aesthetics, morality and science: the way in which our sense of what is beautiful and right is shaped by "truth" and the way in which truth in turn is shaped by instrumental rationality and the dominance of the economic sphere. Following from this is a warning, that what appears to us as beauty is always contextual and often ideological. Ideology fundamentally shapes our ideas of what is real, beautiful, desirable and possible (Therborn, 1980). It acts as both a focus and a filter in our interpretation of the world, shaping our consciousness, identity, hopes and desires as well as behaviors that support and complement existing structures of power and control. And while we must therefore examine constructions of beauty and art with a critical eye, with "suspicion" perhaps, we must also be alert to the potential of the aesthetic in the transformation of social life, and this then is the possibility sketched out by critical theory: that art and the aesthetic can potentially serve in changing, enriching and liberating human potential.

## Aesthetics, Aesthetic Craving and Everyday Life

To understand aesthetics from a critical perspective makes us particularly alert to the different ways in which we, as members of a society and as members of organizations, can become controlled by aesthetics – through the way it shapes our desires, our sense of identity and self, and our notions of what is good, proper and right. Aesthetics in this sense actively impact our everyday life and Kateb (2000) makes an interesting argument regarding the nature of this process. In his article "Aestheticism and morality" (2000), Kateb suggests that the human desire for aesthetic satisfaction, or more precisely, *aesthetic craving*, explains much of human history, good and bad. While the search for beauty is basic to human life, he notes:

"Art should be the site where the most intense aesthetic satisfactions are found... But for all of us, art (literary or other) is not enough; art is not enough art, not enough of a good thing. We all crave that the world give us and do for us what art gives and does -- indeed, that the world be even more fully, more overpoweringly, what art promises to be. The much greater aesthetic urgency is directed to life, not to art. When aesthetic desires are directed not toward art but rather toward social reality, they tend to become cravings. The transaction becomes vastly more serious. If most people do not live for art, then they do live for aesthetic satisfaction and seek it mostly outside of art. But it takes unrelenting exertion in either perception or action to wring aesthetic satisfaction from life 'as it goes along'. (p. 14).

Kateb offers concrete examples of aesthetic cravings in western Christian and Hebrew constructions of God that simultaneously attribute capricious and arbitrary characteristics to God and allow religion to be used as a moral tool in justifying warfare. The tendency on the part of people to raise one culture above the other, to impose one's own culture on that of others, and to readily destroy the cultures of others is another example, and one that continues to permeate human history. A third one is preserving and advancing a distinctive group identity, be this a tribe, race or nation and finally, politics is an example when it becomes an end in and of itself. Kateb clearly differentiates here between 1) deliberate everyday aestheticism that pertains to the way in which we consciously and appreciatively relate to activities and objects designed to elicit aesthetic attitudes and feelings (the beauty we seek in clothes, fashion, furniture, ceremony, music and so forth); and 2) unconscious aestheticism applied to social reality in general.

In all these instances people seek satisfaction of aesthetic cravings, in that they create a sense of beauty - form, style and colorfulness- culminating in certainties of meaningfulness:

First, (these certainties) are found in the conviction that the appearance of persons and the appearance of social occasions and situations is suitable and is as it should be. The right style exists. Second, they are found in the conviction that one's own experience or the experience of one's group has form-- the form of a story, pattern, or properly unfolding narrative. Each incident or component is intelligibly connectable to all others, and all of them together compose a whole. Third, they are found in the conviction that one's identity or the identity of one's groups has a distinctive shape or form and that all the traits and qualities fit together and result in a unique or ever superior style...Fourth, they are found in the conviction that society's rituals and procedures, customs and practices, and institutions and arrangements all are shapely and well formed, and all help to comprise a way of life, and hence that confusion, disorder, or rapid unpatterned change, or brute immediacy has been overcome.

These certainties provide us not only with pleasure, with a sense of beauty; they are sensations that are *craved* passionately, offering immense satisfaction when they exist and being pursued

relentlessly and mercilessly when they don't. Aesthetic cravings are problematic, Kateb argues, on a number of accounts.

One, when applied to social reality aesthetic cravings "are satisfied only when we are convinced that the world is one way rather than any other, is beautiful rather than not" (p.16). And of course, if the world does not conform to our specifications, we insist that it must be changed to fit our ideal of beauty, often at any cost. Two, aesthetic cravings are often intense and unconscious. Not only is the aesthetic craving not recognized *as* aesthetic, i.e. as the desire for form, coherence, etc. It is also often presented and therefore justified as something else, be that tradition, the common good, the search for truth, the will of God or the mandates of nature. Three, unconscious aestheticism is divorced from the aesthetic attitudes of contemplation, reflection, distance and detachment. Such an attitude is reflected among others in Kant's statement that: "The beautiful prepares us to love disinterestedly something, even nature itself; the sublime prepares us to esteem something highly even in opposition to our own (sensible) interest." (1966, p.108). Aesthetic cravings by contrast are obsessive- they drive people to possess, to order and control, often with disastrous consequences. Guillen (1997) makes a similar argument when he observes that "people seem to yearn for beauty as intensely as they pursue instrumental methods and morally acceptable conditions" (p.700).

The only way to manage aesthetic cravings, Kateb argues, is to make explicit their aesthetic nature and to develop the aesthetic attitude as a way of moderating the cravings. He cites a number of theorists, most notably those with an activist, philosophical aesthetic bend in suggesting that aestheticism and morality ideally complement and perfect one another in the shaping of society, but he also notes the dangers that exist when these positions lack or deny the possibility of a universalist morality. "Democratic aestheticism" provides one way of accomplishing the balance:

As practiced by Emerson, Whitman, Thoreau, and others, democratic aestheticism tries hard to show that nearly everyone and everything is worthy of aesthetic attitudes and feelings. They try to show, first, that there is far more beauty and sublimity in the world than either conventional opinion allows or aristocratic or elitist canons of taste countenance. A revised but richer aesthetic sense reduces both cravings and discrimination. Second, these writers move in the direction of saying that many things and conditions, even if they are finally not interpretable as beautiful or sublime in any plausible sense, are nevertheless worthy of attention and also worthy of the aesthetic feelings that may grow by means of attention.

Democratic aestheticism, Kateb argues, cultivates the moral sense through searching for aesthetic value in all things and people, while continually and consciously appeasing and engaging the aesthetic self. Not all things are beautiful, nor are all beautiful things equally beautiful, the argument goes, but "everyone and everything deserves patient attention, a look, a gaze, but not to be followed by an attempt to remedy or control or make over" (p. 31).

Having introduced the general framework, I will now turn to the organizational context to explore issues of aesthetics, beginning with the question of organizational aesthetics in general: Are organizations beautiful? If so, how and according to whom? Then I will turn to the question of whether organizational aesthetics can be considered problematic. Specifically, what can we learn from using Kateb's notion of aesthetic cravings as a way of thinking about people's constructions of and need for beauty in the organization. Finally, I will explore the role of arts and aesthetics in organizations with a particular view to their potential transformative role in changing organizations and changing work.

## **Art and Aesthetics in the organization**

People have often used the term "art" to describe all or part of their discipline. We see terms like the "art of public administration", "communication arts", "the art of strategic management" and "the art of leadership". Often the term is also used in combination with the term "science", as in the "art and science of management". While this alludes to a possible discourse or interplay between science and aesthetics along the lines discussed above, such a discourse is really only imagined. Thus, in Drucker's (1969) and Barnard's (1972) work as well as that of many others we find the idea that management is an art, without a definition of either what is meant by art in this context, or what is artistic about management. As to the relationship with science, the notion of art is used more in juxtaposition to, than in dialogue with science, suggesting usually that the artful is that which pertains to intuitive, feeling, or "gut-level" kinds of responses not amenable to scientific testing or evaluation of any kind.

In both the management and the public administration field, there have been a number of attempts to make linkages with art, literature in particular. One type of linkage has been from a pedagogical, *content* perspective: what insights do these pieces of literature provide about the practice of management? One recent book for instance argues that we can learn important lessons about

management from the writings of Shakespeare. Another, broader kind of linkage has been more *form* oriented, including ideas like reading the organization as text or drama, applying techniques of narrative analysis and reading to the organizational setting, and examining the impact of linguistic form and style on organizational action.

While these efforts have been interesting and informative, Strati's (1999) *Organizations and Aesthetics* takes a much more direct approach to organizational aesthetics that seeks to grasp the "lived experience of people as they act" (p.7). Strati sees aesthetics as an essential, driving force in the organizing process, "not a *maquillage* of the organization" (p. 42). Aesthetics is thus fully integrated into the daily lives of people in organizations involving "continuous processes of symbolic construction, deconstruction and reconstruction" (p. 43), including refined, negotiated, social and collective interpretive activity. Strati argues that aesthetic judgment is made continuously and by everyone in the organization. People evaluate the relative beauty, elegance, tastefulness, ugliness, or unpleasantness of the things they encounter in the organization, and these judgments become part of the *negotiated* cultural construction that exists in the organization:

However little power is available to them in their relations with others, all participants in organizational life are able to pass aesthetic judgment and they are all equally entitled to make aesthetic evaluations. Aesthetic judgment does not exert its influence on organizational life by virtue of its objective truth, but by virtue of the negotiative dynamics conducted so that it takes one form rather than another, so that the organization's products respond to some canons rather than others; in short, so that some aesthetics affirm themselves as 'dominant' with respect to a given organizational artefact, while others are marginalized or even eliminated (Strati, 2000, p. 103).

This last idea is both interesting and useful, because it places aesthetic judgment at the heart of everyone's life, without negating the structural power relations in the organization that attempt to shape, censor, alter and mutilate such judgment. Thus, he notes that "organizations endeavour explicitly or implicitly to inhibit beauty, thereby living up to the ideal of the rational control of even the exotic. However, this does not mean that individuals always comply or that beauty has been erased from organizational life." (p. 130).

Strati continues by suggesting that individual aesthetic judgment - such as someone saying that the organization is beautiful- should not be taken to mean that the organization is indeed objectively beautiful or that it should be considered as universally beautiful. It also does not mean that the organization is only made beautiful because the observer arbitrarily projected his or her mental state, emotions, experiences or constructs unto the organization. Rather, Strati suggests, the judgment expresses how the person "represents the organization to him/herself" (p/ 120). In other words, the construction of beauty is found neither in the object nor in the subject, but rather in the nature of the *representation*, and as such presents its own truth and reality. For Strati, the relevant question becomes "how is the organization represented in the aesthetic judgment?"

Strati's research into organizational aesthetics is interesting, partially because of its simplicity. The interviews he conducted used some variant of the following two questions: "Do you do beautiful things?" and "What is beautiful about (your organization) as a company?" People's responses to these questions seemed to follow two different patterns. First, their sense of beauty seemed rather individual, pertaining to their perceptions of their own work, and their individual constructions about what was beautiful about their work, what they did or how they did it. Second, those constructions did not appear to be very connected with a formal organizational construct regarding beauty. They might construct the nature of their relations within the organizations as beautiful, particularly if they involved long term associations, but that is very different from connecting with the "official" organizational aesthetic, if there even is such a thing. In other words, does the organization have aesthetic value? The sense one gets from Strati is yes, individuals construct certain things in the organization as beautiful and may even construct the organization as beautiful, but the construction remains an individual one. People construct their own sense of beauty, but the process of negotiation, collective construction, marginalization and so forth Strati discussed earlier remain unclear.

Other people are much more explicit about the notion of an organizational (as opposed to an individual) aesthetic. Frederickson (2000) for instance argues that we can go beyond merely linking art and organizations, claiming that bureaucracy itself is a form of beauty and that management can be beautiful. He develops this argument, first, by suggesting that art and organization are both aesthetic phenomena and share 3 key characteristics, form, design, and experience. Form, he notes, "is basic to both art and organization". , tends to be used in much the same way in art and organization, . . . can be rigid or flexible . . . can take virtually any shape. . . . and in art and organization (form) is often drawn from nature (p. 48). Design is also essential to organization and art and both are products of human creation. Unlike most art, organizations are collective rather than singular, and instrumental rather than an end in and of themselves. Like art,

though, organizational design involves changes and adaptations in form developed through experimentation and innovation, activities that could be constructed as art-like in nature. Finally, art and organization are both based on experience and among other things, it is the nature of this experience that determines its aesthetic quality. Quoting research on the use of stories and metaphors in organizations, Frederickson suggests that the art of language in organizations - the system of shared meanings, collective sense-making, metaphors and rituals - provides a particular aesthetic for modern day organizations: "behavior in organizations can best be described as a system of shared meanings and processes of sense-making guided by an artistic grammar and the art of stories, rituals and metaphors" (p. 7).

The key question to be answered in this context, of course, is what is the nature of modern day organizational aesthetics, how is it constructed and how does it function? Put differently, can we see the modern organization as beautiful, and if so, how is "beauty" constructed in that context?

## The Beautiful Organization

The concept of the *beautiful* organization strikes many people as odd or incongruent. We are not used to thinking of organizations as beautiful. Organizations are functional, ordered, regulated and structured; they are about efficiency and effectiveness, quality and productivity, profit and production - they are about many things but not about beauty. Not only do we think that organizations do not *need* to be beautiful, we often assume that they *should* not be beautiful. Our image of the hard-working shop floor is one that is kind of dirty and unappealing and the office of the busy person is a messy office, cluttered with things that say "there is a hard-working person in here". We are also used to thinking of art and aesthetics as having their own, *separate* place in society that is away from our places of work. Publicly, art lives in museums, theatres and concert halls and our private aesthetics are applied to our homes or personal clothing. If we find aesthetics in the workplace at all, its uses are instrumental: to make the reception area of a customer service organization more pleasant, to soothe the patient and visitors in the hospital, to convey a particular image of the organization, or to market the company and its products.

However, there is another way to look at the organization/aesthetics relationship. Even though modern organizations are not about beauty, do not need to be about beauty and use beauty instrumentally, they do not necessarily strike us as ugly, unappealing, or unattractive. The reason why is that organizations have developed their *own* aesthetic. There is a way in which we have - individually and collectively - come to construct the organizational image of the world as "beautiful in its own way". We look at our organizational experience and evaluate it *aesthetically* using the organization's own criteria. Thus, the organization that is orderly, structured, predictable, regular, and smooth strikes us as proper, correct, "as-it-should-be", as it needs to be, and indeed, as beautiful in its own way. Not only does this suggest a unique, organizational aesthetic that is different from the aesthetic we apply to other parts of life, there is also a way in which our sense of what is good, what is right, what is true and what is beautiful, all become fused into our view of the world and organizations.

Beauty is most often seen as a subjective, cultural construction and both Hochschild (1997) and Frederickson (2000) make this argument. Beauty is culturally constructed and our culture constructs orderliness as beautiful. Therefore, it is the precision, routine, order, stability and predictability of organizational life that constitute its beauty. Hierarchy provides balance -- an aspect of beauty -- in organizations and society. And organizational profitability and efficiency continue to embody the "beautiful" ideals of our society, they suggest:

Could this shared meaning be a kind of beauty? Yes, if one agrees that precision, harmony, routine and ritual appeal to the imagination. It is this aspect of organizational life which is quite like the rhythm of music, the balance of form in architecture, the formation in ballet. There is a beauty of predictability, as in the natural passage of time from day to night from season to season. Some aspects of organizational life take on this predictability, and many in the organization expect and even welcome this order. Indeed, the recent declining strength of other institutions such as the family, the church and the neighborhood may have caused us to rely increasingly on the organizational aspects of our lives to satisfy some of our needs for the beauty of order (Hochschild, 1997) (Frederickson, 2000, p. 52).

Inside the organization, we find these expressions in the normative, aesthetic ideals put forth in organizational mission and vision statements and also in the elaborate effort, time and money that goes into formulating these statements, whether at the top or through some shared visioning and strategizing process. Employees are often selected based on perceptions of "fit" with the company mission and we evaluate people on the extent to which their work, behavior, appearance and interactions reflect the image. The recent work on emotion management and emotional labor is of particular relevance here. The organization image is also projected externally and organizations

take great care to portray the organization in an attractive fashion to the community, potential investors, or potential employees.

Finally, the material elements of the organization - architecture, interior design in particular - form an important element of organizational life and are a key aspect of organizational aesthetics. As discussed by Gagliardi (1990, 1996), organizational artifacts not only reflect the organizational culture. They are also cultural phenomena in and of themselves, meaning that they can shape, direct and influence organizational action as well as our beliefs and values (see Gagliardi, 1990, 1996; Strati, 1990; Barley, 1991; Hatch, 1990, 1997; Guillen, 1997 for good examples of the role of architecture and design in shaping organizational culture).

The nature and content of organizational aesthetics varies of course, from company to company, even though some general features are shared by most organizations. Order, predictability and structure are aesthetic expectations we have of most companies – they are the kinds of things that go into our sense of what a company is and should be. However, a commercial bank provides a different *articulation* of those ideas than a software development company. In the bank, order and structure are an inherent part of its external image, its internal control system, and its legal requirements. A software development company however may construct “order” very differently, with more flexibility and a sense of the creative or even a sense of the artful.

### **Aesthetic attitude in the organization**

The previous sections argued first, that beauty can be and in fact is constructed by people in the organization and second, that we can think of organizations themselves as creating, embodying and projecting a particular aesthetic, internally and externally. At one level, the idea of the aesthetic attitude would suggest that we can and should see beauty in all these constructions.

Gustavsson (1989) and Ramirez (1987) for instance note that the perception of the organization must be understood as an interactive process that takes place between the subject and the object. An aesthetic experience of an organization must include the observer, the observation and the observed. According to Gustavsson, the organization is not lacking in beauty and it is possible to have aesthetic experiences in relation to organizations. The most likely problem is with the observer who may not be able to perceive the organization as a form, or may have a dulled, stress-clouded level of awareness, a not uncommon condition in organizations. These factors may explain why people often describe their organizational experiences in terms of alienation: lack of connection, response or pattern. Drawing on ancient Indian philosophy, Gustavsson suggests that observers "with a highly developed consciousness would be able to appreciate the organization as fluctuations of the underlying field, the quantum field... would perceive the organization as a whole, and also act in the interest of the whole..", recognizing the spiritual, collective unity of the whole and the connectedness between the individual and the whole. For Gustavsson, the aesthetic experience becomes a spiritual and universal experience, allowing us to see the organization as a unified and potentially blissful whole.

Kateb (2000) in some ways make a similar argument. While he shows a great deal of concern for the problems and difficulties that are created by aesthetic cravings, he argues that democratic aestheticism seeks to temper these cravings with morality by fostering an aesthetic attitude that accords everything in life with the right to be viewed appreciatively, without the need or desire to alter or control. At one level this is a fine argument and one that may provide a useful guide to individual behavior in organizations and in life in general. It is also consistent with Strati's findings about the way in which individuals construct beauty in organizations, i.e. through the development of a particular representation of the organization in their own mind that constitutes beauty. Thus, I can look at my own work and construct it as beautiful, I can look at the people in the organization and see the beauty of their being and actions, and I can appreciate the artifacts in the organization as representing their own kind of particular beauty. This perspective is also echoed by Dean, Ramirez and Ottensmeyer (1997). They suggest that people make decisions about organizations on aesthetic grounds; that their sensory perceptions influence their job satisfaction; that they resist change because they see it as altering the beauty they experience in the established order, that organizational decision-making is affected by people's aesthetic preferences about how decisions should be made; that the design of the organization itself and people's responses to it are affected by a sense of proportion, flow, and rhythm, and that leadership's effectiveness is determined by the extent to which their vision captures and rallies the aesthetic sense and imagination of the organizational membership.

Should we conclude from this then that organizations are indeed beautiful and we can see this beauty if as researchers we employ the proper aesthetic perspective, and as participants, if we have the proper aesthetic attitude? I don't think so. To me, what is missed in this position is two essential issues. First is the fact that organizational aesthetics are *not* disconnected from the rest of organizational life. Aesthetics have particular consequences and the relative beauty or ugliness of

those consequences may not be readily accessible in the everyday experience of it. Even if the organization can be constructed as beautiful – and organizations certainly go through great lengths to aid us in perceiving them as beautiful, that does not mean that we should be seduced by these constructions. Often times they cover up the ugly side of work life and they come at considerable cost to the people in the organization. Second, by presenting beauty as either individually constructed or collectively negotiated, this approach denies the structural reality that exists in many organizations. While it is very useful to look at the construction of beauty in organizations, beauty must also be *deconstructed* if we are to have a full understanding of its role and functioning in the organization. This line of argument will be developed in the next and last section of this paper.

### **A Critical Perspective on Organizational Aesthetics: Beauty and the Beast**

What are the *critical implications* of how we construct beauty in the organization? And how does this relate to organizational policy making and the potential for organizational change? One way of beginning to look at this question may be by examining not only how we construct beauty in organizations, but also by how we construct ugliness -- the question of what is in fact experienced or perceived as ugly in organizations?

The first and most obvious answer to this question is ugliness that captures the opposite of the ideal of beauty -- if the beautiful organization is one that is ordered, stable and routine, then the ugly organization is one that is messy, unpredictable, volatile. This is one explanation for the repulsive sensation we often experience when we look at organizations that downsize, close plants, go bankrupt or otherwise fall apart (see, e.g., Stein, 1997). Aside from the clear economic and political issues around those events, they also violate our image of the beautiful organization and begin to speak to the complex psychodynamics and emotions that are connected with the issue of organizational change (see, e.g., Carr, 2001). Stein argues that the issue goes further than that. He suggests that while part of the repulsion comes from the violation of order, stability and predictability, another part comes from the fact that these experiences reveal an already existing but previously concealed side of organizations.

Stein studied the metaphors that people use to describe their experiences with downsizing and the like and found a preponderance of Holocaust-type images. These images were used not only for people to describe and make sense of their experience of being made "redundant" - useless, disposable- but also to describe a different side of the organization, one that abuses, eliminates, and kills people even if only in the relational sense. This side of the organization of course always exists but it is not a side that is represented to us in individual or organizational aesthetics where the preferred image is a much prettier *and* anesthetizing one, of an organization that cares, connects, orders and provides in its own peculiar but beautiful fashion. Even if we have some vague awareness of the uglier side of the organization and its consequences, this awareness is sacrificed in favor of our attachment to the aesthetic image.

It is here, I would argue, that Kateb's (2000) notion of aesthetic craving is particularly useful and relevant. To repeat, Kateb suggests that human life is not one of aesthetic attitude but of aesthetic craving, an emotional, disorderly, obsessive and attached craving that must be implemented regardless of consequences. Rather than satisfying our need for beauty through art, we impose our aesthetic preferences on the social world, making it conform to our sense of what it needs to be in order to appear beautiful, regardless of consequences.

Organization's obsession with order and control –regardless of the cultural form or articulation it takes, does *not* represent a contemplated, ethically moderated, detached and appreciative view of the world and neither does the way people are complicitous with this construction. At the individual level, it represents the suppressed fears, anxieties and dependencies we experience as part of our relationship with the organization. At the organizational level, it represents an emotionally, economically, structurally and ideologically motivated attempt to impose a particular aesthetic preference on the life world of the organization. This imposition has many consequences, few of which are beautiful.

Particular organizational aesthetics impose themselves on things - material matter, structure, resources - creating a cultural and physical expression that is problematic on many accounts. It is a force that generates selective expressions of aesthetic preferences, ideological positioning of subjects, containment of behavior and so forth. And while this may appear as beautiful to some people, it has also had the larger effect of homogenizing our organizational tastes and preferences. Expressed in the slogan "Bland, bland, bland and the rest is ugly!" its implementation has not been limited to physical artifacts.

The aesthetic is also applied to human appearance and behavior in the organization, prescribing - usually under the guise of "professionalism" and "fit" – certain physical and social behavior patterns that deprive organizational members of individuality, expressiveness and emotion. Many of

the issues raised by this are discussed in the literature on emotional labour and emotion management in organizations. However, the question of diversity shows another side to this and Madrid (1998) makes an interesting argument here. He notes that quality - an important organizational ideal - is associated with homogeneity, uniformity, standardization, order, regularity, neatness (all characteristics of the established organizational aesthetic) as well with more traditional aesthetic descriptors, like smoothness, elegance, expensiveness. Diversity on the other hand means being different:

Diversity is lack of standardization, of regularity, of orderliness, homogeneity, conformity, uniformity. Diversity introduces complications, is difficult to organize, is troublesome to manage, is problematic. Diversity is irregular, disorderly, uneven, rough. The way we use the word diversity gives us away. Something is too diverse, is extremely diverse. We want a little diversity (p. 97).

Diversity is the "natural order of things" Madrid notes, quoting Visser: "Machines like, demand, and produce uniformity. But nature loathes it: her strength lies in multiplicity and in differences. Sameness in biology means fewer possibilities and therefore weakness" (Madrid, 1998, p. 98).

Not only do machines demand uniformity; so do organizations. While this is problematic enough for the average white male in the organization, its oppressive consequences are even more serious for women and racial and ethnic minorities. For their presence to even be tolerated in the organization, they must usually be able to present themselves "as" the dominant other, an image that is already only a slice of what a real person is, and also an image that is clearly impossible to attain for some. As Young (1990) points out, a key part of the politics of difference is being constructed outside of the aesthetic - being unacceptable and ugly.

Social and organizational aesthetics in this area have obvious consequences, ranging from exclusion to marginalization to oppression to exploitation and problematization. Even if they are accepted into the organization, the behavior and appearance of marginalized groups is scrutinized on an ongoing basis on the extent to which it approximates the aesthetic ideal (see Kersten, 1990 for a more extended discussion of this argument). For all the U.S. rhetoric about pluralism and diversity, one of the major ways in which we deal with difference is by attempting to relegate it to the private sphere, effectively hiding (or requesting others to hide) anything that is deemed "unacceptable", be this sexual preference, gender issues or racial, cultural and bodily differences (Young, 1990,2000). It is here that we continue to see a clear illustration of aesthetic cravings, that things - including people - must look or must be made to look a certain way to be acceptable.

The idea of organizational aesthetics and aesthetic craving may usefully expand our understanding of the continuing struggle around issues of race relations both in the U.S. and in Europe and the way in which these issues have found expression in society and in organizations. The extent to which we are able to meaningfully include "difference" in our aesthetic vision and cultural narrative may well determine our ability to effectively grow and survive as peoples.

## **Conclusion**

I have argued in this paper that a critical perspective on organizational aesthetics must examine not only the content of organizational aesthetics. It must also examine the ideological functioning of individual and collective images of organizational beauty, in terms of their operation and consequences. Whether articulated in the form of organizational architecture, structure, or culture, existing images function in part to obscure, to justify and to rationalize existing, underlying relations of power and control. Inequality is in fact *not* seen as beautiful in that our society (by and large) does not glorify domination, exploitation or brute force. Rather, it is through the organizational aesthetic that these relations are made palatable and are provided with an interpretation or representation that portrays them as necessary and desirable.

An organizational aesthetic that centers around order and control is thus not a benign aesthetic but one that has serious consequences for the quality of physical, social and emotional life in organizations. Merely accepting this aesthetic and related individual constructions as part of a cultural or pluralist aestheticism denies the ethical issues always implicated in aesthetics. This construction connects to other micro- and macro-level relations of control through perceived relations between the ideal of order and anxieties and fears regarding the loss of order that exist socially and individually.

There are many other issues that are relevant to this question, such as the relationship between cultural and organizational constructs of beauty, in particular the historical and social ways in which the particular organizational aesthetic prevalent today has developed and the way it impacts on specific organizations and the people in them. Another issue includes the instrumental use of art in the organization as reflected in the various choices organizations make about architecture and design and the complicitous role that is played by art in this process.



This does not mean of course that art and the aesthetic does not and cannot play a different, potentially transformative role in organizations and society, as was argued by the critical theorists reviewed in earlier sections of this paper. In order for this to happen though we must remain aware always of the ways in which art and aesthetics can become implicated in control.

The idea of art and professional identity is one that deserves further exploration. If we argue, as we often do, that management is an art, then what exactly does this mean and how is it related to organizational aesthetics? Also, more fundamentally, is there a way in which we can use the image to alter our professional and scientific practices? Rehn (1997) makes an interesting argument on aesthetic methodology, using Schiller's notion of play. Schiller argues that form and matter are two opposites in life and that people are drawn either towards form or matter. The propensity towards matter is the pull of the material world, the force of our basest instincts and our tendency to become immersed in the world of matter, the world of things. The propensity towards form is the pull of the conceptual, the abstract, the disconnected world of ideas, dogmas and formalism. While both form and matter frame human life, the challenge is not to let either of the forces take over, creating the extreme of the barbarian on the one side or the bureaucrat on the other. This challenge, Schiller holds, can be met by Art which utilizes the drive to play. Through art and the drive to play, form and matter can be in harmony with each other without one dominating the other. Rehn suggests that we can apply this notion to methodology, bringing the force of play into research.

I suggest we can also apply it to conceptualize the idea of management and art. Chaos theory and related constructs begin they can provide us with different visual images of what the organization could look like. Here, we can look at the way in which contemporary art has moved away from singularity, rhythm, order, and predictability as a means to respond differently to change. It can also help us to introduce "beautiful" models of organization that are based on chaos, multiplicity, movement and change. Finally, we can reintroduce art, the artful, and the beautiful as things - ideas, issues, concerns, criteria- that can and should be fully integrated into our lives, organizations and educational institutions. As many have argued, the segregation of art and the artful into isolated spheres that are disconnected from our everyday experience has been equivalent to amputating a significant portion of ourselves, only to visit that portion in our spare time and only then, in the museum... It is time for us to reunify the human experience and restore it to its full capacity and potential. Organizational scholars can provide a particularly interesting contribution to the development of this new insight, not by promoting the "science" of their discipline, but by promoting the "art" of critical reflection.

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<sup>i</sup> If an essential part of the experience of beauty is in the apprehension of it, sublimity by contrast is defined perhaps by a lack of comprehension. Kateb (2000) suggests that "sublimity or the sublime refers to such aspects of artworks, nature and human social phenomena as the unbounded or boundless; the indefinite, indeterminate, or infinite; the transgressive; the overwhelming or overpowering; excess or extravagance; the massive; the massively ruinous; the oceanic, the abyssal; the overweening or overreaching; the awe-inspiring, wondrous, astonishing, or unexpectedly mysterious, and the uncanny" (p.6). Not all theorists find the distinction between beauty and sublimity useful, and some use the two terms interchangeably, but it serves as a good initial approximation of what aesthetic value means.

<sup>ii</sup> Janaway (1995b) outlines 3 different views within the subjectivist approach. The first, rooted in the writings of Kant, argues that aesthetic judgment is based fundamentally on one's own personal experience with the object, and requires that we 'get a look at the object with our own eyes'. While individually based, such aesthetic judgment can claim some measure of universality "if the subjective response in question is one which *any* properly equipped observer would have" (p.3). Not only is the experience important however. The task also deals with developing aesthetic judgment and Kant's writings on the disinterested, contemplative aesthetic attitude and its civilizing impact on immediate sensory emotions are important here.

If the first view suggests that the aesthetic experience develops as a function of the interaction or relationship between the object and the observer, a second view, provided by aesthetic attitude theories, suggests that the essential part of the aesthetic experience may be the mindset of the observer him/herself. The aesthetic experience requires that the observer enter into an open, receptive and liberating state of mind - a state of observation, contemplation, attention, interest and appreciation - that enables him/her to experience *anything* as aesthetically valuable. Santayana's discussion in *The Sense of Beauty* reflects this when he states that "everything is beautiful because everything is capable in some degree of being interesting and charming our attention" (p. 80).

The third view holds that aesthetics - theory as well as experience - is shaped by its social, political and historical context. This means not only that our sense of what is beautiful is context bound. Aesthetic judgment may also reflect the class structure and interests of society. Art may serve political and ideological functions. The aesthetic experience may be closely connected to issues of identity formation as well as social control. And finally, aesthetic theory itself may reflect class, race, culture and gender biases. Feminist aesthetics for instance argues that the disinterested position advocated by many aesthetic theorists may be "the product of masculine bias, involving the assumption of a position of power over the observed object, a reflection of masculine privilege, an expression of the 'male gaze' (Budd, 2000, p. 1). Developed in detail by theorists in the Marxist, critical, postmodern and feminist traditions, this third perspective has developed widely ranging insights into the nature and role of aesthetics in modern society, some of which will be discussed in a later section of the paper.

iii. Plato's mimetic view of art for instance, emphasized the relationship between art and reality, suggesting that the purpose of art is not to interpret or distort, but rather to imitate nature as closely as possible, reflecting its true and ideal form. Beauty here is seen as an abstract, universal and transcendent presence that can only be aspired to. Desirable art furthermore "was such art that praised desirable ideals and fostered moral character, that is art with a political value" (p. 103). Aristotle on the other hand developed a more pragmatic perspective, suggesting that art could present moral views of the world through creative construction, with order, magnitude and symmetry as key features of beauty. Much later, Kant introduced a third, transcendental theme that viewed the artist as mediator, producing insights that were important in their own right. In Romanticism, dominant themes that developed were art for art's sake, the artist as gifted genius, and the importance of emotion and intuition over technical skills alone.

iv Kant followed by Schiller, Hegel, and Kierkegaard argued on the side of reason. An aesthetic, detached perspective could have a civilizing impact on immediate sensual and primitive responses, thus making emotion serve reason. Others like Hume, argued that emotion itself could guide people, showing the good as beautiful and the bad as ugly (Eagleton, 1990). Reflected today in the 1980s postmodern aesthetics with its emphasis on the nondiscursive and figurative (Lash, 1990), art is about sense-level, bodily emotion rather than intellectualism, about form rather than content, and about experience rather than reality (Sontag, 1966).

v According to Weber, "(m)odernity is thus the consequence of a process of modernization, by which the social world comes under the domination of asceticism, secularization, the universalistic claims of instrumentality, the differentiation of the various spheres of the life-world, the bureaucratization of economic, political and military practices and the growing monetarization of values" (Turner, 1990, p.6). Weber's concern was especially with the way in which this development supplanted cultural, traditional norms with instrumentally rational action, action that is concerned only with finding the most effective means to a pre-established goal, institutionalized in the bureaucratic form of organization.

vi "Capitalism, Habermas notes, compels the expansion of the economy and state into areas of everyday life – family, school, culture, and so on – that are not inherently disposed toward profit maximization and efficient administration. These areas of life are responsible for socialization and the coordination of activities around shared norms. Such functions, however, are fulfilled only in *communicative* interactions in which persons try to achieve *mutual understanding*, free from sanctions and selfish inducements. Economy and state, by contrast, designate systems of strategic, success-oriented action in which persons confront one another as obstacles or mere means. Value-rational commitment to justice and truthfulness, reciprocity and freedom, structure a lifeworld constituted by communication; purposive-rational orientations, toward profitability and status (domination), drive a system mediated by money and power" (Ingram, 1990, p. 185).

vii Marcuse's notion of the 'one-dimensional man' similarly addresses the invasiveness of the technical apparatus of production and distribution into individual and social identity and experience: "In this society, the productive apparatus tends to become totalitarian to the extent that it determines not only the socially needed occupations, skills and attitudes, but also individual needs and aspirations. It thus obliterates the opposition between private and public existence, between individual and social needs. Technology serves to institute new, more effective, and more pleasant forms of social control and cohesion. , it shapes the entire universe of discourse and action, intellectual and material culture. In the medium of technology, culture, politics and the economy merge into an omnipresent system, which swallows up or repulses all alternatives". (Marcuse, 1964, pp. xv-xvi)

viii "Art does not represent being, and it certainly does not aestheticize what is 'unpoetic' in its reality, namely, a world that is simply technological and can be 'poetic' at all only in the imagination of the poets. Instead, art signifies an attempt to allow for a poetic disposition of forces, for experience to happen as poesis, but such 'poetry', is neither limited to art nor simply 'aesthetic'. Art here has to be thought not aesthetically but 'poetically' and in such a way that not all works that count as art in accordance with aesthetic categories or within the definition of art as cultural activity would count as art in terms of poesis. For what matters about art in this perspective is not its aesthetic effect or representational status but whether it 'sets into work' being as event. (Ziarek, 1998, p. 188).

ix Even Habermas who often accused others of escaping into esoteric aestheticism, more recently seems to concur with the special role and potential of art and aesthetics in life, and the need for a specifically aesthetic mode of truth (see also Adorno, 1997). Whereas he previously linked aesthetic rationalization to specialized discourse focused on pragmatic expressive claims to authenticity, he later argued that art may constitute a totally different idea of reason. The aesthetic validity of art he notes "refers to its singularly illuminating power to open our eyes to what is seemingly familiar, to disclose anew an apparently familiar reality". It represents "a *potential* for 'truth' that can be released only in the whole complexity of life-experience" and may not be related to any of the existing validity claims, thus making the existing speech act model inappropriate for assessing "the relation between the potential for truth in works of art and the transformed relations between self and world stipulated by aesthetic experience" (Habermas, 1984, p. 237). Modern art then "harbors a utopia that becomes a reality to the degree that the mimetic powers sublimated in the work of art find resonance in the mimetic relations of a balanced and undistorted subjectivity of everyday life" (1984, p. 237; 1987) Ingram (1990, 1991) notes that this conceptual change in Habermas is an important development because it restores the importance of artists and aesthetics discourse, according to its own rationality. Furthermore, it enables us to see the transformative potential of art, making it a part of (rather than isolated from) the public discourse. Finally, it re-establishes art and aesthetics as a critical and creative force.

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## **There's Good, There's Bad and then, there's Totally Crazy: Ethics and Dysfunction in Everyday Organizational Life**

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### **Introduction**

The dominant view of organizations has long held that organizations naturally embody not only ethicality, but also health, rationality and truth. Especially when an organization is successful – doing well financially and growing – we assume that it is also healthy, acts ethically, and speaks truthfully. When we look at the businesses and governments around us, however, we continually find abundant evidence that contest this view of organizations and its ideological foundations and consequences are rarely explored.

In this paper, I argue for a counterview of organizations and ethics, based on a critical understanding of organizational psychodynamics. Specifically, I will present three key concepts and ideas.:

- Organizations are fundamentally symbolic/emotional life spaces *within which* we construct ethics. While many arguments can and should be made for an ethic that goes beyond the situational, experience does not support these arguments. Organizations like Enron, Arthur Anderson and many others reinforce not only the contextual nature of ethics but also the extent to which such ethics supercede social law and individual and cultural notions of morality.
- Conventional theory does little to explain the force of situational organizational ethics. Psychodynamic theory, however, offers much more insight, especially if we explore the idea of organizational *dysfunction*. Ethics set within the context of organizational neurosis for instance can be understood as much more than presumably rational, objective choices made by educated and emotionally detached individuals. Instead, ethics can be viewed as an active part of addicted, compulsive, paranoid or otherwise dysfunctional social realities that shape individual identity and social action.
- This perspective effectively avoids the common trap of drawing easy distinctions between what is good and what is bad. Instead, it allows us to understand how well-intentioned and moral individuals can create organizations in which wrong choices come to appear as right choices, the good easily blends into the evil, saints become sinner and wrongdoers become the true heroes.

This paper argues for the importance of a critical psychodynamic perspective, not only for enhancing the quality of our understanding of organizations but also for critical intervention in organizations. Much of what we recognize as “organizational wrongdoing” only appears as such in hindsight because we failed to ask the right questions early on- both as academics and as organizational participants. All too often the absurd masquerades as the normal, and the sick as the healthy – a different framework will allow us a different and better understanding of the relationship between the two.

## Ethics in Organizations

Business school catalogs and business textbooks tell us that the study of ethics and ethical behavior is a vital and integral part of the training of today's managers. Many organizations support and continue this training by writing and enforcing their own codes of ethics (see <http://www.ethicsweb.ca/resources/business/codes.html> for a sampling of codes). Organizations like Business for Social Responsibility, the Ethics Resource Center and the Business Roundtable's Taskforce on Corporate Social Responsibility tell us that companies should achieve “commercial success in ways that honor ethical values and respect people, communities, and the natural environment” and that doing so “will have a positive impact on business economic performance” <http://www.bsr.org/CSRResources/IssueBriefDetail.cfm?DocumentID=48809> . In spite of all this, we continue to see ongoing problems with ethics.

Wal-mart for instance, is the largest employer in the United States and one of the top financially performing companies in the world. It has an elaborate code of ethics (<http://www.walmartstores.com/GlobalWMStoresWeb/navigate.do?catg=8>) but continues to be the subject of much ethical controversy. Its problems in the areas of labor management, discrimination, safety, environment and other issues of social responsibility have been the subject of 2 extensive documentaries ( “Is Wal-Mart Good for America” <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/walmart/> and “The High Cost of Low Price” <http://www.walmartmovie.com/> . In addition, “Wal-Mart's No. 2 executive, Tom Coughlin ...pleaded guilty Jan. 31 2006 to fraud and tax charges for stealing money, gift cards and merchandise. .. Wal-Mart Stores Inc. (now) plans to hire a director of global ethics, a restructured position aimed at ensuring the retailer's code of conduct is applied across a growing global network of more than 6,200 stores and 1.6 million employees in 15 countries (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/11653075/from/RSS> ).

The U.S. courts have just concluded the Enron trials, one of the largest corporate ethics scandals of the decade that resulted in guilty verdicts of its two top executives, Lay and Skilling (<http://www.chron.com/news/specials/enron/>). Enron was hailed for years as an exemplary, healthy, and financially successful company with a strong culture and an elaborate code of ethics <http://www.thesmokinggun.com/graphics/packageart/enron/enron.pdf> . Arthur Anderson of course went down right along with Enron and is well on its way to becoming a useful business ethics case study ( see <http://icmr.icfai.org/casestudies/catalogue/Business%20Ethics/BECG027.htm> )

And lest we think that ethical problems only occur in large companies, the 2005 National Business Ethics Survey (NBES) released by the Ethics Resource Center reports that “more than half of American workers have observed at least one type of ethical misconduct in the workplace, ... despite an increase in worker's awareness of formal ethics programs.... Employee reporting of misconduct they observe is also down by 10 percentage points.” The Center optimistically notes though that “despite the decrease in ethical conduct... (e)thics and compliance programs can and do make a difference. However, their impact is related to the culture in which they are situated.” (<http://www.ethics.org/nbes/nbes2005/index.html>).

It appears from this then that we need to develop an understanding of organizational ethics that differs from the conventional one. Specifically, we need a framework for organizational ethics that acknowledges the limitations of formal rules, both inside and outside the organization and instead, emphasizes the importance of how ethics are actually constructed, within the cultural and structural reality of the organization.

Just to be clear, I do not wish to advocate a relativist approach here for I am a firm believer in drawing distinctions between what is right and what is wrong. However, I want to separate those distinctions – ones that exist perhaps at a more abstract and theoretical level – from the ones that impact behavior in organizations. We often assume that merely having a code of ethics or a set of legal guidelines, and even having employees tested and trained within those codes, will guarantee that they behave in accordance with those guidelines. Experience of course tells us that this is not the case and that often times, people commit ethical violations firmly believing that what they were doing was right in some other sense. What we need to look at then are the factors and forces that shape people's sense of what is right and wrong, separate from and beyond any formal rules or codes.

## **Organizational Culture and Ethics**

What we consider to be rational, real, ethical and true is not absolute; rather it is something that we develop inside the context of specific organizations, cultures, and political systems. In one organization, we believe that creativity and adaptability is the key to success while in another, we fully understand the importance of obedience and control. In some companies production volume is everything while in another, it is only quality that counts. As new members of organizations, one of the first things we learn is to recognize what is important here, what do we see and what is ignored. Becoming a part of the way the organization "thinks and feels" is not a choice of course but a necessity if one is to stay and survive.

The cultural perspective on organizations goes a long way towards informing us in this regard (see e.g. Albrecht & Albrecht, 1987; Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Fineman, 1993; Frost, Moore, Louis, Lundberg, & Martin, 1991; Trice & Beyer, 1993). And Fineman (1993), Putnam and Mumby (1993), and Van Maanen (1991). They discuss not only cultural construction of reality but also the performance of reality in its behavioral and emotional aspects. Cultural theories tell us that organizational reality is a constructed reality, and that this reality includes within it notions about what is real and what is not, what matters and what is irrelevant, and what makes us acceptable or unacceptable members. Consciously or unconsciously, organizations work hard at making sure that a culture is in place and that organizational members become a part of that culture. One approach then to making sure that organizations become ethical is strategically develop culture (e.g. Senge, 1990; Senge et al., 1994; Watkins & Marsick, 1993, 1996; Maurer, 1996) and to "audit" existing company culture in the area of ethics and there are in fact specialized consulting companies that do just that.

Cultures however, are not always integrated or internally consistent. If we think back on the Challenger disaster for instance, another classic "business ethics" case, there was a conflict between safety considerations on the one hand – and the problems in this area were clearly identified and acknowledged by the "engineering side" of the operations – and efficiency considerations on the other: the operation had to take off within a certain time frame in order for the organization to look good, reliable and trustworthy. When a person makes the call between two conflicting perspectives and sets of interests, they do not set out to be irresponsible or unethical, but neither do they act individually or spontaneously. In most cases, the decisions are made by enacting an implicit or explicit cultural ordering of values and priorities. In this sense, the disturbing part about most ethical incidents is not the incident itself but the way in which the incident reflects standard operating practices, everyday culture, and business as usual. In the case of the Challenger, wearing the management hat rather than the engineering hat is what generated the call for lift-off readiness.

It is always tempting to look at these cases in 20/20 hindsight and be amazed at the lack of ethics, the lack of knowledge or foresight or the mere stupidity of the people involved. It is also tempting to look at the cases and view them as exceptions, as isolated



incidents, or single “bad apples”. It is much scarier to acknowledge that these cases reflect everyday life and everyday cultures. In using a cultural understanding of ethics, then, we must become particularly alert to a number of possibilities:

1. Cultures may inadvertently or unconsciously advocate and espouse particular values and priorities that lead to problematic behavior. The case of the Abu Graib prison for instance must be used as an opportunity for the U.S. army to explore the values and constructs held of the “other” and the ways in which this leads to behavior outside of the rules and regulations.
2. Many if not all organizations include “different hats” and different hats represent different perspectives and interests. Having organizational cultures and structures that preference one hat over the other through hierarchy rather than dialogue is what makes us go forward, rather than resolve our differences. In its relative neglect of attention to power relations and their impact, the cultural perspective could fall short in providing us with an adequate understanding of ethics.
3. Ethical and unethical decisions are usually made under crisis circumstances. Crises and stress do not usually promote our ability to act rationally. Rather, they tend to reinforce and enhance basic beliefs, fears and routines. In other words, in these times we act out what sits at the heart of the culture, not at the periphery which is unfortunately where codes of ethics often live. Cultural analysis then needs to pay particular attention to the connection between ethical rules and other elements of the culture, especially those that exist at the core level.
4. Finally, we need to question basic assumptions about the rationality and health of organizational cultures. Even cultures that appear at the surface to be strong, coherent and successful, especially financially, may in fact be sick in some other fashion. The literature on psychodynamics can be particularly useful in providing us with insight in this area.

## **Culture and Organizational Dysfunction**

Critical psychodynamic approaches provide us with an in-depth understanding of the way in which people function in organizations (Carr & Gabriel, 2002; Carr & Zanetti, 1999; Carr, 1998; Diamond & Adams, 1999). They are particularly useful for creating insight into existing organizational dynamics because they allow for conceptualizing and studying non-bureaucratic rationalities, making us see and hear the suppressed voices, perceptions and emotions that live in the workplace. Part of psychodynamic theory deals explicitly with the idea of the dysfunctional organization, the kinds of organizations where conflicts, contradictions, and control problems are regular occurrences, where people are addicted to rules and regulations, cultures are obsessed by domination and compelled to act out strange and uncontrolled tendencies (see e.g. Weaver, 1988; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991; Jackall, 1988; Fassel, 1990; Ruth, 2004). Outwardly, these may be very successful organizations – remember here that Enron, NASA, Arthur Anderson, Wal-Mart and many others were regularly hailed as model companies, culturally as well ethically. Internally though, these same companies harbor suppressed and problematic tensions and feelings. These may live and fester for many years until something goes wrong: major mistakes are made, violence breaks out, or the company simply collapses. Again, the hindsight is usually very clear but when we live and work in these organizations, its dysfunctionality is invisible. We construct it as normal, acceptable and sometimes even as wonderful.



There are a number of different models of organizational dysfunction. Schaefer's model is organized around the idea of the addicted organization. Schaefer in fact argues that addiction is the *primary* dysfunction of modern society and that we can find addiction at all different levels: in the individual, in the family, in organizations and in society at large (Schaefer, 1987; Schaefer & Fassel, 1988). Addiction here of course includes but is not limited to substance abuse – for instance, think of addiction to work or addiction to consumerism, practices that are generally considered “good addictions” in our society. The literature on addiction focuses not only on the problems of the addicted individual, but also on the way in which these problems affect the families in which they live. The idea of co-dependency is used to describe the psychological and behavioral pathologies that people generate, allowing them to deal with the addicted people in their lives. Part of the co-dependency pattern includes low self-esteem, an excessive need for perfection and conformity, addiction to work, and conflictual relations to authority figures (McMillan & Northern, 1995). Schaefer argues that the problems of both addiction and co-dependency actively influence today's organizations. There are many addicts and many of them have families and many of these people go to work and they do not leave their problems at the door, as we often like to think. In addition, and ironically, addiction and co-dependency don't always look problematic in the workplace. Many organizational cultures reward and encourage things like addiction to work, control and conformity compulsions and perfectionism – sounds like the model of the perfect employee! This is also the employee, however, who will take considerable risk for the company, to ensure corporate success or to make the organization look good at all costs, which are likely recipes for ethical disaster.

Another model of organizational dysfunction is presented by Cohen and Cohen (2003) who propose that organizations can display psychotic or neurotic tendencies. Psychosis occurs when organizations lose contact with reality – other people's realities that is, and begin to ignore any information that contradicts their particular view of the world. Psychotic behavior can be manic, manic depressive, paranoid or schizophrenic. Paranoid organizations for instance emphasize fear tactics and constantly monitor their workers for signs of disloyalty. Paranoid organizations will attack any real or imagined enemy, lest they themselves get attacked first. Manic organizations also get totally wrapped up in their own reality - they start highly involved, inspired, and heroic ventures with little eye to the material, ethical or psychological consequences involved.

If psychosis is caused by an environmental disconnect, neurosis is caused by internal problems, particularly self-doubt and avoidance. Neurotic organizations display symptoms like lack of self-esteem, chronic depression, obsessive compulsive disorder, intoxication, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Organizational OCD for example shows up in companies that are obsessed with reports, rules, and regulations. Confronted with difficulties, stress or crises, the organizational culture does not promote creative problem solving but clings obsessively to standard operating procedures, whether they make sense or not – again, an easy road to ethical mistakes and failures.

Kets de Vries's model (2004, 2003, 1991; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1986, 1984), - one which I have used myself repeatedly (see e.g. Kersten, 2002, 1991)– also uses the idea of neurosis. He argues that neurotic individuals become trapped in a particular pre-occupation or fantasy which makes their behavior “rigid and inappropriate . . . distorts their perceptions of people and events and strongly influences their goals.. and decision making” (Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984, p. 19). When neurotic individuals become top executives, their neurosis affects the strategy, culture, structure and relationships of the company, creating a “sick” organization. Companies may be paranoid, compulsive, dramatic, depressive or schizoid and each neurotic has its strategic, cultural, and structural strengths and weaknesses.

Persecution is the dominant fantasy of paranoid organizations. Because nothing and nobody can be trusted, the organization develops extensive processes to monitor

what happens inside and outside of the organization. Everything is watched, everything is measured and everything is accounted for. Because the organization is ruled by fear, paranoid organizations do not take extensive risks, relying instead on reactive and incrementalist strategies. Compulsive organizations also have elaborate monitoring systems but their fantasy and fear is to lose control. Everything inside the compulsive organization is aimed at containment and control so they have rules, regulations, plans, budgets, schedules and rituals for everything. The dramatic organization is much closer to Cohen and Cohen's manic culture in that the dramatic strategy constantly seeks change. It tends to be uninhibited, risk-taking and aimed to impress and perform. If the dramatic organization truly believes in its own story, the schizophrenic one tends to go back and forth between stories, often unable to make up its mind on the proper direction, strategy and structure. Finally, the depressive organization is plagued by worry, insecurity and inaction.

## Understanding Dysfunctional Ethics

The dysfunctional perspective is essential, I think, in developing an understanding of ethical problems in the workplace. Because we do not assume here that the organization is a healthy and rational entity, we are alert to seeing ways in which the very culture of the company, in its dysfunctional form, can create internal problems and contradictions.

For instance, I would argue that Enron was a classic case of a dramatic organization. It was a company that was firmly convinced of its own value and continually embarked on new ventures, often with great risks and uncertainties. Even in court, the executives maintained that they did not know about any wrongdoing or any unduly risky management decisions. At one level, an unlikely scenario but at another level, a story that would fit with the dramatic culture because there is no perceived need for concern, criticism or undue worry - the story is so great, the company so wonderful, and the history so successful. We have made a similar argument with regard to the Bush administration's military operations in Iraq. These are operations that continue to be plagued with human rights violations and charges of serious wrongdoing but again, the dramatic neurosis that typifies this administration resists reflection, caution, accounting or responsibility.

In the case of Wal-Mart, the compulsive profile would seem to fit better, even though its culture also displays dramatic characteristics. Excessive pre-occupation with control features centrally in Wal-Mart's strategy though and goes a long way towards explaining its positioning in local markets, its relationships with suppliers, and the nature of its employment policies, all of which appear to be designed around the creation and maintenance of dominance. Also, Wal-Mart is held very tightly internally and operates with extensive monitoring, accounting and control processes.

One of the things that are particularly interesting about these and other examples of corporate neurosis is that the neurotic features create success as well as failure. As Kets de Vries and Miller point out, the same elements that make for a strong strategy and an effective structure and culture can also create serious liabilities for the company. This has certainly been the case in the unfortunate outcome of the risky ventures engaged in by Enron and the Bush administration. In the case of Wal-Mart, its domination and control strategy is currently causing major uproar, not only among local communities that resist Wal-Mart stores opening in their areas, but also among employees, labor groups and finally, even government.

Second, the dysfunctional perspective as well as psychodynamic theory in general potentially gives us deeper insight into the processes affecting individual perception and decision-making. Rather than singling out individuals as isolated ethical bad apples, this approach points to the way in which individuals become an inherent part of the sick cultures of which they are a part. Kets de Vries for instance argues that

we don't really have a choice in the matter – if we wish to survive in the organization, we *must* participate in its neurotic construction of reality, or be constructed as the enemy. The literature on addiction points out that we develop co-dependent reality and relationship constructions not out of choice but in order to cope and in order to survive. Once constructed, it becomes difficult if not impossible to separate these realities from other ones and at that point, we only see the options, choices and behaviors that are consistent with the dysfunction. This does not excuse the individual actor of course from any wrongdoing. However, it does make the organization and its leadership accountable for what happens in organizations and it provides us with a more thorough understanding of how and why individuals come to the choices and decisions that they do.

Can we then prevent such problems from happening? Perhaps but it is not likely I think. The literature on dysfunctional organizations tells us that the first step towards change is an acknowledgement of the existence of dysfunctionality which requires critical reflection and a de-construction of what appears to be rational, normal and right. Some organizations may be forced into therapeutic treatment because of crisis – ethical or otherwise, but without this internally generated change is unlikely. This does not mean though that we cannot, as scholars and as consultants, alert organizations to dysfunction and its implications for ethical and other crises. Critical research and writing has an important role to play in identifying the demons in the organization, and more importantly, in showing how the angels and the demons may not be separate entities at all.

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# **Mastering the organisational demon**

Article from Alexander Kiehne and Dr. Louis Klein, Systemic Consulting® Group – Independent Think Tank for Social Design and Organisational Excellence in Berlin, for the

## **SCOS XXIV**

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Organisations and Demons

Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands, 12-15 July, 2006

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### **1. Case for action I: Emergence**

Emergence might be the term that describes what happens beyond control. Emergence is the surplus to which the whole is more than the sum of its parts, it might be unexpected and unpredictable. It might be an invisible hand, unintended and uninfluenced by decision or will. It might be daemons (in case of negative effects) or angels (in a positive sense). Nevertheless, emergence leaves us alone with the feeling of the restricted ability of action, decision and will. There is something beyond our control. Out there threatening sometimes, promising at others. However we tend to forget that in the end all these daemons, all these emergence of social systems is men-made. It is us who carry the reinforcement of social emergence. It is us who actualise all the very daemons. And they can be controlled.

To remain able to control, to decide and act the need for an overall perspective is inevitable. Especially in these days, characterised by rising complexity, contingencies and insecurities. We will be able to change his destiny in terms of being a decision-makers instead of being victims of the circumstances. If one is going to answer this challenge by gaining an authentic picture of himself, his situation and possibilities, an overlook so to say, he will be able to turn demons into angels. The solution is self-recognition and self-creation. The acceptance that the world we live in, is not a divine order, but men-made and therefore changeable by will and decision – if we want so or not- shall guide us to the insight that we cannot not change the world. If we want to tame the emerging daemons of social systems the answer is social design.

## 2. Case for action II: Social Design

The observable present enlargement of the understanding of design<sup>1</sup> shades a radical different light on the organisation and construction of the social world. Regard the prominent description in the observations of Berger/Luckmann in 1966 as far as a sociological perspective and the interaction between society and the individual was concerned, until nowadays' perception.

The inevitability of the other being one of the two major concerns of human being, next to the inevitability of the self, leads processes of organising.<sup>2</sup> First of all to the organisation of the self and second to the organisation of the relations to others, i.e. the individual's recognisable environment, might it be

- on the level of interaction (a conversation of present attendances of communication),
- the level of organisation (a set of communication, differentiated by membership) or consequently
- on the level of society (the whole of all reachable communication – which nowadays therefore has to be the entire world<sup>3</sup>, differentiated by functional sub-systems' communication).<sup>4</sup>

But this is not so new. What is new nowadays is the individual fact of contingency of post-modernity. This is the experience that everything that is, could be otherwise, what poses the question of sense and orientation. Not only the grand systems explaining the world, religion and science, fail to grant orientation and meaning. It is the very, leading discourses of modern society, politics and economy, which cannot provide stability any longer. After the experiences of the 1980/90s, when the individual had to face a drastic shift concerning risks and responsibilities from the collective towards the individual<sup>5</sup>, what followed in the beginning 21<sup>st</sup> century, was a phenomenon described as a drift.<sup>6</sup> The individual now is 'drifting' in its search for meaning and orientation. And no save harbour comes in sight. Traditional models of life and career fail. Leading one's live becomes an art.<sup>7</sup> And like an image of depression it is not the great challenges of ethics and philosophy, questioning where from and where to, live and death. It is the small, daily questions that set the trap: What do I do today, when do I get up, what shall I eat? What do I need to know, how do I raise my children, how do I treat my neighbour? How do I sort out a conflict? Within a cacophony of multiple and different answers the individual needs to decide anew, from moment to moment. And there is no catechism, neither shared nor reliable, to turn to. Those times, if they ever had been, are over now. The single individual needs to explain the world all by itself. It is challenged and in the end bound to fail. The "exhausted self"<sup>8</sup> falls into depression and as it seems the western hemisphere falls in an "multi-optional society".<sup>9</sup>

But in focus of our argumentation are aspects of the organisations concerning social design. Even the mighty organisations of modernism, schools, enterprises, political parties and their like, render them-

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<sup>1</sup> Mau 2004.

<sup>2</sup> Weick, 1969, 1979, 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Luhmann, 1971.

<sup>4</sup> Luhmann 1984.

<sup>5</sup> Beck 1986

<sup>6</sup> Sennet, 1998.

<sup>7</sup> Schmidt, 1998.

<sup>8</sup> Ehrenberg, 2004.

<sup>9</sup> Gross, 1994.

selves clue- and helpless to the individual's post-modern experience<sup>10</sup>. Even worse, facing post-modern contingency they grow as a problem for themselves. They themselves need to enter the quest for orientation and meaning. The organisation of the organisation<sup>11</sup>, being men-made, becomes disposable and needs explanation. The idea of a "Viable System Model"<sup>12</sup> seems inevitable in a situation where the leading discourses of society, politics and economy become more and more short-sighted. Optimizing the systems leads towards visions of cyclopaedic one-eyedness: the next elections are just around the corner and the stock market considers quarterly results as referring to an exceedingly long time period. Opening a future perspective seems to be important, yet not pressing enough to bundle resources. Sustainability is not a structural element of the post-modern organisation. Sustainability – also understood as an orientation for the individual organisation's members – needs to be artificially re-entered as an issue.

But organisations are organised. They are men made, not divine. They are the outcome of will and decision. They are design. They are social design. Exploring this notion opens up a universe of possibilities but also responsibilities that have changed under the influences of post-modernity. Organisations and social systems are men made, be it for the good or for the bad. The implications will fall back on us. And this is where a notion of morality and ethics come in. How do we gain access to the possibility of taking on responsibility for organising organisations and what they do to the world and first of all their members? But organisations do not act and decide in a vacuum. This is where complexity, linkages and maybe the organisational demons appear on the stage.

### **3. Reflection: The ambivalent nature of social systems - a two step approach to the organisational demon?**

#### **a) the linkage of organisations to the one-eyedness of societal sub-systems**

Helmut Willke's trilogy gave a wonderful illustration of the inner dynamics and ambivalent nature of social systems. Following Luhmann's systems theory it approaches the distinct emergence of operationally closed systems.<sup>13</sup> On the one hand it shows the angel's side of the markets invisible hand creating wealth. On the other hand it explores the one-eyedness of the ever accelerating dynamics of the functional systems of society such as politics or economics. The one-eyedness describes the exclusive orientation on the basal distinctions of a societal sub-system, structuring recognisable communication. For instance, the economic sub-system only recognises communication differentiated by the distinction "payment | non-payment" Other communication is only available via structural couplings to other sub-systems. The place for such couplings is the organisation. But first of all, societal sub-systems are strongly focussed on their basal distinctions, all other communication remains as noise in the environment. On this basis they disintegrate of local optima which of course are dysfunctional for the overall whole of society.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Beyes, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Weick, 1969, 1979, 1998; Baecker, 1999.

<sup>12</sup> Beer, 1972, 1979.

<sup>13</sup> Hahn 1987, Kieserling 2004, Nassehi 2003.

<sup>14</sup> Beer, 1972 and Beer, 1979.



## **b) the linkage of organisations to their symbolic systems – out of control**

Moreover societal sub-systems are confronted with the fact that they cannot influence the inner-dynamics of their symbolical systems<sup>15</sup> any longer, i.e. for instance their symbolically generated communication media. Under the circumstances of post-modernity they show a self-dynamic out of control that they cannot affect. Neither their own, nor the symbolic systems of the other societal sub-systems. Again for the case of the economic system this is ‘money’ that develops its own dynamics influencing all economic actors without having the chance of steering its direction. For the political system this is “power”, for the juridical system, it is “justice” etc. So what is remaining, is the opportunity of an “ironic observer” of own actions that takes into account, that everything could be different, even basal decisions, developments and beliefs that in the past have been taken for granted:

*“For the ironic the unavoidable distance between the systems opens up the opportunity of according contingencies, if he is aware that this cannot be realised from the point of view of a superior or higher rationality (of which observer or actor so ever), but only from the reflection of the outer distance in an inner distance of the systems to themselves, which allows them to take the ironic position to play with their own contingencies.”<sup>16</sup>*

Willke’s ideas relate directly to the dark side of organisations being tight to and structurally coupled with the functional sub-systems of society. The emergence of organisations seem to be beyond control. Serving the functional one-eyedness and the inner dynamics of symbol systems they show their demons.

However Paulo de Coelho in his description of the Jacob pilgrim<sup>17</sup> brought forward an interesting notion of the understanding of demons. They are forces beyond our direct access. They might be savage enemies, they might be friendly allies. They are driving forces we do not understand yet we have to cope with. We might suffer from them. We might utilise their immense power. It is at the very heart of the secret behind those organisations which went from good to great.<sup>18</sup> They knew their demons / angels, faced and decided for or against them.

So guiding thesis of a reflection on social innovation and post-modern organisation is the core competence of post-modern times is a process competence in oscillation between the two poles of self-recognition and self-creation. This might be the conclusion to cope with the organisational demons.

## **4. Conclusion: Taming the demons. From Personal to Organisational Mastery**

The leading thesis for the post-modern organisation is fed from the successes of personal mastery and organisational development.<sup>19</sup> This is how the demons might be tamed.

An analysis of the self-help classics describes that it is the two principles, self-recognition and self-

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<sup>15</sup> for the following, see: Willke, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Willke, 2005, p. 334, (own translation).

<sup>17</sup> Coelho, 2001.

<sup>18</sup> Collins 2001.

<sup>19</sup> Schein, 1969; Ten Have/Ten Have/Stevens/Van der Elst, 2003; Trebesch, 2000.

creation, which generate solutions.<sup>20</sup> This needs to be acknowledged on the basis of the success of personal mastery. This is on the so to speak quantitative side the market success and on the qualitative side the felt and subjectively ascribed benefit. In this respect coaching can be seen as the professionalism of this self-recognising and self-creating practice. It might be worth a closer look what actually happens in successful coaching. A praxeology of coaching seems to be inevitable. Focus on this should be on the actual processes of coaching and the methodologies and practices. An excursion to the considerations of the right way in the different religions of the world opens up the perspective on the practice of self-observation, like in a diary for example. It is a systematic and reflective self-description and it can be shown what implication the self-description has for the writer. It can be shown how the observation changes the observer<sup>21</sup>. Here at the latest will be realised how close this is to a theory of observation and how close this is to the feedback-loops of the calculus of form and cybernetics. The intention is to derive from thorough consideration of the personal mastery a blueprint for a meaningful orientation from a contingent nothing and it is a goal to draw the awareness and attention towards the aspects of self-observation and self-creation.

The key here is Organisational Mastery. Similar to Personal Mastery it describes the competence, first, to recognise yourself to find ways through post-modern contingency and complexity. “Gnóthi seautón” reads the imprint above the entrance of the ancient Greek Oracle of Delphi as the basic advice to retain the ability to act. This is exploring an organisation’s possibilities, opportunities, its identity and culture. Similar to the individual’s approach this is done by self-descriptions and -observation. This is how organisations generate meaning and attribute sense.<sup>22</sup> Self-recognitions bring an organisation back into contact with itself, not only with its present identity, but also with its contingencies that have to be decided. This names the second step.

Organisational Mastery, second, is the competence to create yourself. Will and decisions are the very foundation of self-creation.<sup>23</sup> Decisions create an organisation.<sup>24</sup> This is what an organisation actually does: processing decisions. They give shape to processes and structures. Thus, decisions organise an organisation. And they create the organisation for itself, being an organisation in its own world. But – again – from social science’s systems theory perspective, an organisation does this first of all without a recognition of its environment’s operations. And even more: “Autopoiesis means blindness concerning the operations of the system’s outer world. Operational closeness means deafness concerning the siren’s singing of the system’s environment.”<sup>25</sup>

Therefore organisations tend to produce a lot of blind spots: doors for demons to enter the organisation, stressing the one-eyed-ness-phenomenon and giving power to the symbol systems. On the other hand, an organisation that is aware of this fact and follows the oscillating two-step of self-recognition and self-creation will be empowered to cope with its demons and maybe turn them into angels. And this would not only for the organisation’s benefit, but also for its members – this is the second oscillation or interdependence – to deal with post-modernity’s challenges.

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<sup>20</sup> Butler-Bowdon, 2003.

<sup>21</sup> Hahn, 1987.

<sup>22</sup> Weick 1969, 1979, 1998.

<sup>23</sup> Luhmann 2000.

<sup>24</sup> Luhmann 1984, Handy 1976.

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**Rodrigo Ladeira**

## **Endomarketing as a Value Generation Source for the External Customer and the Achievement of a Competitive Advantage in the Perspective of the Organization and Its Employees**

### **Abstract**

The objective of this study is to identify and analyze the internal exchange values between a banking finance institution and its corporate account managers. The impact of this exchange in the sense of strengthening the relationship between the parties, the Bank and its employees, generating value for the external customers and consequently generating organizational competitive advantages is also within the scope of this study. This survey used the competitive advantage, value, relationship marketing and endomarketing concepts as a starting point and it used the descriptive quantitative research. The results indicate that there is a strong alignment between what the bank proposes as value for its account managers and the latter's perception of the same, in the sense of preparing them and motivating them towards better customer service. The results also show the predominance of similarities between what the organization expects institutionally as value from its account managers and its executives' practical perception/vision, in the sense of strengthening relationships with the customer, generating business and gaining competitive advantage, indicating that the organization seems to be heading towards a holistic management process in tune with the endomarketing approach by ensuring that every employee is prepared and motivated to act in a service oriented manner.

### **1 Introduction**

This study is part of a relevant statement by Grönroos: “an internal exchange between the organization and the teams of employees should be effective before the company can be successful in achieving its external market related goals” (Grönroos, 1993, p. 279). Within this study we make a brief theoretical review of the Competitive Advantage, Value, Relationship Marketing, Banking Relationship Marketing and Endomarketing concepts. Then, we introduce a banking financial institution's relationship model, which is the object of this study. This institution operates on the corporate retail market, serving micro and small companies. We then emphasize the identification of behaviors and attitudes that are corporately required of its account managers in exercising their functions, which can be considered as value by the organization, in the sense of strengthening the relationship with external customers and the generation of business.

After, using the quantitative research results, founded on the information raised in the same study during a previous phase in an exploratory qualitative manner involving account managers, we intend to verify the latter's perception of the degree of importance of the values considered relevant to motivate these same managers. Other issues taken into consideration include training and preparation and what affects their performance as value offerors to the external customer.

Finally, we check if there is an alignment between what the bank proposes as value for its account managers, in the sense of preparing them and motivating them towards better customer service, and how this is perceived by the managers themselves. Starting from this premise, the possible impacts of the observed results were analyzed for an effective relation of internal exchanges, within the scope of endomarketing and the possible leading to gains in sustainable competitive advantages.

## 1.1 Determination of the Problem

What would the expected values be for a banking financial institution? What are the values that should be generated by the account managers in the sense of generating value for the corporate market, strengthening the relationship with them, and generating more business? And on the other hand, in the view of these account managers, what policies/actions provided by the organization have more value in the sense of preparing and motivating them to achieve the best performance in relations with the customer and in the generation of business? Is there any alignment/coherence in the view of the account managers as well as the Bank as to what both consider being value?

## 2 Theoretical Reference

One of the main concerns of this study is to verify relevant aspects to achieve sustainable competitive advantage through the relationship of corporate account managers and the banking organization. We begin by studying the concepts related to organizational competitive advantage.

### 2.1 Organizational Competitive Advantage

An organization has a sustainable competitive advantage when it is able to implement value creation strategies, rarely copied by current or potential competitors (Barney, 1991; Lado and Wilson, 1994). According to Pfeffer (1994), the mutable characteristic of the competitive advantage puts the institution on a privileged strategic level, and therefore, the people and the way they are managed becomes a good option for differentiation. In this sense, the importance of understanding people management as a source of sustainable competitive advantage is underscored (Pfeffer, 1994), supported by a resource-based view strategic approach, whose focus resides in the choice of strategic assets that provide the sustainability for the competitive advantage, and which include the human asset (Amit & Schoemaker apud Hanashiro, 2001).

Thus, the competitive advantage in people underscores the delivery of value idea, which goes beyond the efficient management of their functions, since it is associated with the service offer to customers that contributes to their perception of the company's differences with regard to the competition in the competitive environment.

It behooves us to understand the most used concepts today related to value for the customer.

### 2.2 The Concept of Value

According to Silveira (2203), the concept of value has been investigated and conceptualized in different areas of knowledge. A brief review of these concepts becomes necessary before we begin to address value from the customer's point of view and the internal customer's point of view, especially when considering the relevant approaches of this concept with regard to discussions about sustainable competitive advantages, as we have seen above.

In Marketing, for a long time, the concept of value mainly assumed the context from economics in which the relationship between costs and benefits perceived by the customer predominates (Shugan apud Silveira, 2003; Zeithmal apud Silveira, 2003; Aurier and Evrard apud Silveira, 2003). Overby introduces a taxonomy of value theories starting with Sinha (apud Silveira, 2002), which is reproduced in Box 1:

Box 1

Theory	Definition of Value	Articles
Transaction Specific	Value is perceived as the savings derived from a transaction (reference price minus given price).	Szybillo and Jacoby (1974); Berkowitz and Walton (1980); Urbany <i>et al.</i> (1988)
Quality adjusted to price	Value is the quality conditioned to the price (value = quality/price).	Monroe (1990); Dodds, Monroe, and Grewel (1991); Gale (1994)
Geared towards utility	Value depends on product utility or	Krishnamurti (1982); Thaler

	the utility conditional upon the sacrifice made (value = transaction utility + acquisition utility).	(1985); Hauser and Urban (1986); Zeithaml (1988)
Experience driven	Value is an interactive experience or a subjective notion derived from experience. Value is highly influenced by the situation.	Holbrook and Hirshman (1982); Holbrook and Corfman (1985); Holbrook (1994); Aurier e Evard (1997) Aurier, Evard, and N'Goala (1998, 2000), Evard and Aurier, 1995 and 1996.

Source: Adapted from Overby and Wade, apud Silveira 2002. **The Impact of National Culture upon the Customer Value Hierarchy: a Comparison between French and American Consumers.** 2000. Thesis (Doctorate) – The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

For the purposes of this text, we considered the perspective of value as a set of offered benefits (obtained results and process quality) in relation to the acquisition effort (price and access cost) (Heskett, Sasser e Schlesinger apud Novelli, 2002).

### **2.3 Value on the Services Market**

The essence of the value in services idea associates corporate success with customer relations. Although diverse, the ways the term value is addressed in literature indicate that value only exists if it is perceived by the customer (Goldstein apud Novelli, 2002).

The focus of customer expectations that one wishes to attract and retain is an essential characteristic in service rendering companies. In any business, it is necessary to decide which segment you intend to serve and then get organized to best serve it (Schneider and Bowen apud Novelli, 2002). This improved service is made possible by supplying something of value to the customer and it is the basic aspect for building the organization's sustainable competitive advantages.

### **2.4 Value for the Customer**

In market geared as well as in value for the customer literature, the concern for the consideration of the latter's needs and wishes, and the expectations that are generated and ascertained or not in the perception of service customers is very clear (Silveira, 2003).

Many of the definitions associate value for the customer to the use of a product or service, something that is perceived by the customer and not objectively determined by the seller. There is an idea of trade-off between what the person offers to acquire a product or service and what that person receives from it (Woodruff, 1997). Still within this view, some authors affirm that value is the perception of the customers as to what they wanted to happen (consequences) in a specific use situation with the help of a product or service offer, in the sense of satisfying a specific objective (Woodruff and Gardial apud Silveira, 2002).

Every organization should have maximization of value for the customer as its first objective and strive to continuously increase it, which reveals the importance of understanding what the customers perceive as value (Naumann apud Silveira, 2002).

In the study of consumer behavior, the greatest emphasis in literature is given to values for customers that can be related to the objectives they seek in life, called terminal values. Those related to standards of behavior, or the means through which we achieve these objectives, are called instrumental values (Sheth *et al* apud Silveira, 2002). In strategic marketing, with its focus more geared towards competitive advantages (Porter apud Silveira, 2002), many of the studies address the value chain. More recently, this concept has been extended towards the collaboration of customers to aggregating value to the product or service, notably in relationship marketing situations from which the idea of customers for a lifetime emerges (Rust, Zeithaml e Lemon apud Silveira, 2002). Since we seek a competitive advantage based on people and on serving customers that are highly valued by the company, we should concern ourselves with the perception, satisfaction, motivation and preparation of these agents, the corporate account managers, since they are responsible for delivering value in direct contact with these customers.

## **2.5 Value for the Internal Customer**

Moving now to a Human Resource point of view, value can be achieved through systems and practices that bring benefits to the internal customer, the external customer and the result achieved by the organization for the shareholder (Ulrich, 1998). The change and focus on processes/tasks (best use of HR practices) to results (emphasis on HR created effects and values), although less seductive for being more difficult to quantify, proves to be more complete (Ulrich, 2000) due to moving from product logic to service logic.

Furthermore, according to some authors (Lawler; O'Reilly III and Pfeffer; Wall apud Novelli 2002), the company's best performance is associated with the involvement of people with corporate strategies rather than having the latter be restricted to the scope of business goals. The main issue goes beyond demonstrating that talents intensify an organization's results. It is necessary to understand the management process that permits this to happen.

## **2.6 Relationship Marketing**

When dealing with Relationship Marketing, it is essential to understand the evolutionary perspective of marketing schools of thought. Sheth, Gardner & Garrett (1988) introduce a historical analysis and a dynamic of this evolution can be perceived, where marketing theory constantly migrated its perspective and focused on certain specific areas.

During the first four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, approximately, the emergence of the Commodity, Functional, Institutional, Regional, Functionalist and Managerial (administrative) schools can be observed, as mentioned by Sheth, Gardner & Garrett (1988). These schools were basically focused on relationships between suppliers and consumers, including the necessary activities to execute the marketing transactions. In other words, the schools of Marketing thought are currently governed by a principle, or perhaps, a dominating paradigm, which is the transaction.

In the beginning of the 1950s, with the Buyer Behavior School, Sheth, Gardner & Garrett (1988) state that the theory broke away from the strict relationship between the supplier and the consumer and moved towards a perspective geared to the practice of Marketing, including consumers and society. Its concern was directed at the social determinants that influenced human behavior. However, by the end of the 1950s, dominated by the Organizational Dynamics school, marketing thought took a step backwards in its perspective and began to address the interactions between the consumers and the members of the distribution chain again. At that time, the marketing mix paradigm and the 4Ps reigned absolute until the beginning of the 1960s, as pointed out by Grönroos (1994), not only in the United States, but in most of the world.

Grönroos (1994) underscores that around 1960, the marketing mix approach with the 4Ps model dominated marketing literature, research and practice, and was considered Marketing's dominating paradigm over the past decades. The marketing mix concept and marketing's 4Ps – product, price, place and promotion – quickly became Marketing's basic theory, outshining other models and previous approaches. Marketing became the management of a set of tools rather than a true exploration of the nature of companies' market relationships, and indeed, taking care of customers' needs and wishes (Grönroos, 1994).

According to Gummesson (1998), in transaction marketing, every strategy spins about the marketing mix and eventual future exchanges between those involved and the consumer, which is an anonymous person to the company. However, this author underscores the need to see marketing more as a process than a function; and the focus becomes the building and maintaining of relationships rather than isolated transactions. Thus, constant interaction between suppliers and consumers is needed, and this kind of situation is especially favored in the service sector.

In terms of concept, Morgan and Hunt (1994, p.22) propose that “[...] relationship marketing refers to all directed marketing activities to establish, develop and maintain relationship exchanges”.

This is a move towards marketing that focuses on the mid and long term, where maintaining highly satisfied customers becomes an institution’s main objective, which would lead to a sustainable competitive differential.

### **2.6.1 Banking Relationship Marketing**

According to Gosling (2002), information technology supported companies are able to offer customized products and services to keep their customers satisfied through their effort. Another aspect that must be emphasized, according to this author, is that since interactions are important moments for the creation and/or the development of a relationship with the customer, those companies that are constantly sought out by these customers have great opportunities to strengthen their ties. It is in this context that banking institutions are introduced.

Several authors, such as Barnes and Howlett(1998); Bejou(1998), explain that, in a way, some conditions are favorable for establishing relations and they believe they are present in the case of financial services (Gosling 2002). They are: (a) it seems that the involvement of customers with more complex and longer term services is greater; (b) consumers are more apt to establish relationships as they perceive the service involves greater risks; (c) consumers are extremely dependent on the other party’s specific skills, that is, for the most part, they are laypersons when it comes to the service or product they are about to consume; (d) the environment where the relationship is played out is dynamic and it can affect future demands/offers.

According to Barnes *et al.* (1998), when compared to other industries, financial service suppliers have the advantages of relationship marketing due to the fact that many consumers want to give shape to the relationships. However, whether the financial service suppliers are still equipped to capture these opportunities is questionable.

Thus, the behavior and performance of the entire team of employees that has contact with the customer can have a significant influence on the quality of the relationship with the customer through the impact perceived in service quality. Bejou *et al.* (1998) believe that in practice, in many service companies, the most important interactions take place with sales personnel. In the case of financial services, the customers can have little reason to contact other employees except for the company’s relationship manager since the latter’s function is often to communicate with customers about operational issues. Thus, the responsibility for the relationship to succeed or fail can weigh heavily on the individual who controls a specific relationship, that is, the account manager (Bejou *et al.* 1998).

### **2.7 Endomarketing**

Endomarketing is one of the newest areas in administration and marketing and seeks to adapt traditional marketing strategies and elements, normally used by companies for addressing the market, to be used in the organization’s internal environment. We will use a definition by Bekin to define Endomarketing. “...Marketing actions for the internal public – employees – of companies and organizations” (Bekin, 1995).

Endomarketing considers the people and the manner they are managed a privileged strategic differential, so that motivation and preparation for customer orientation and a performance aware of the services becomes indispensable underscores Grönroos (1993). Thus, we explore this concept with the intention of discussing its contribution to the generation of sustainable competitive advantages, through its strategic operation in the creation of value for external customers through its internal public, and at the same time test the concept in the perspective of this target public, the employees.



Heskett (1997) also addresses this phenomenon, observing that successful service companies reached this position by directing the strategic perspective of services to within. These authors focused on key groups of employees and customers instead of just customers.

Endomarketing is considered a prerequisite for a successful external marketing performance (Compton *et al.* Apud Grönroos 1993), and it is a management strategy. The focus is on how to develop customer awareness in the employees. The products and services must be sold to employees before they are placed on the market. And in this sense, “every company or any organization has an internal market of employees that must receive first attention” (Grönroos, 1993, p.279).

According to Grönroos, (1993) internal marketing functions like a “holistic management” process to integrate multiple functions of the company in two ways: first, be sure that every employee understands and experiences the business, its activities and campaigns, in an environmental context, that support the relative awareness of customers. Second, be sure that every employee is prepared and motivated to act in a manner geared towards services.

Endomarketing’s premise is that “an internal exchange between the organization and the teams of employees should be effective before the company can be successful in achieving its external market related goals” (Grönroos, 1993, p. 279).

#### **2.7.1 Endomarketing to retain and create customer loyalty**

According to Grönroos (1993), these people’s skills, orientation towards the customer and awareness of services are critical factors in the perception the customer has of the company and in the preference that could be given to this company in the future. Such an approach strengthens the discussion that the employee is an important source of value generation for the customer and company, and that it leads towards achieving organizational competitive advantages.

According to Bekin (1995), the use of modern marketing tools directed towards the organization’s internal public permits the identification of needs and wishes starting with the internal customer. It serves as a starting point in the search for action and stimuli that generate value for them and that stimulate them to participate in building an environment of well-being, committed to high performance, external customer satisfaction, customer retention, customer loyalty and the constant improvement of the organization’s results.

#### **2.7.2 Proposal of Value to Employees**

To have the external market respond in a positive and continuous manner, the company needs products and service that are perceived as being differentiated and superior to the competition’s. Of course, the same applies to endomarketing. A customer oriented performance, and therefore, good interactive marketing, cannot occur unless the organization has something to offer its employees in return (Grönroos, 1993). These statements further strengthen endomarketing's premise, which presupposes the existence of an internal exchange of values relationship;

It becomes obvious that all of this depends, among other things, on management methods, human resource policies and the very nature of the work, as well as of planning and execution processes (Grönroos, 1993). Therefore, the internal product or value for the employees must be very carefully developed, in a market oriented manner, with external products and services, thus requiring strategic decisions by management.

### **3 Method**

#### **3.1 The Company Researched**

It is a banking financial institution with national and international operations. However, the research limits itself to operations on the small and micro company retail market in the state of Minas Gerais.

#### **3.2 Research Method**

This is a quantitative descriptive study since the object of investigation, the internal system for exchanging values between the organization and the account manager, in the perception of the involved internal players, is partially known and the objective is to map it, that is, describe the characteristics of this phenomenon starting with a determined population and establishing the relationships between the variables. We will use the quantitative research methodology to map the exchange of values relationship for the account manager public.

However, we will use the qualitative / exploratory research, involving in-depth personal interviews and document studies for the executive public, which represents the Bank's public, as well as for raising secondary data.

### **3.2.1 - Exploratory phase:**

#### **Step 1 – Document Studies**

a) Through document studies, we identified the required corporate attitudes and behaviors for account managers responsible for serving micro and small companies that could be considered essential organizational values for the creation and maintenance of value for external customers and the strengthening of business relationships.

b) In this step, we also sought to identify the Bank's policies and practices, HR programs and activities, communication and business support, directed to or that affect account managers in order to prepare and motivate them to achieve the best performance in relation to the customer.

#### **Step 2 – In-depth Interviews**

The primary data were collected with the objective of consistently characterizing the values expected by the organization and by the Bank executives responsible for determining the Bank's internal policies. Thus, it will be possible for us to confirm and/or rectify the information collected in the document study, as per the previous item, that is, suggest the inclusion of new items and/or the modification of existing items. Such information subsidized the elaboration of a quantitative research questionnaire with the account managers. The in-depth interviews were carried out as follows:

a) Interviews with organization executives in the state of Minas Gerais: one state market manager, one regional superintendent for retail business, one branch manager focused on corporate service. They were chosen for being the most directly involved in the relationship and the generation of business with the PJ market (micro and small companies) and with the leadership of the group of professionals involved in the study. With this same purpose, we interviewed the regional manager for People Management, responsible for the state of Minas Gerais. However, we also asked the latter for information to confirm and/or rectify the document study that was carried out, referring to the organization's identified policies and actions in order to motivate and prepare account managers.

b) Interviews with account managers – The criteria chosen for those interviewed were of the simple random sampling type, taken from the universe of account managers operating in the retail business market in Belo Horizonte. Two account managers from level 1 branches, two from level 2 branches and one from a level branch were chosen by random drawing for a total of five interviewees. The respective branches at each level were indicated by the State Superintendence due to its greater business involvement with the micro and small company market. For expediency, we explain that the classification of branch levels is mainly derived from their business volume and potential.

### **3.2.2 - Quantitative Phase**

Considering the size of the Account Manager public universe and the nature of the problem being investigated, we decided that for the account manager public, the appropriate research method would be the survey, which, in general, is characterized as a broad geographic and superficial study (in the sense of addressing few topics) to obtain data that

permit the elaboration of reference tables and formulate hypotheses to be used later in more in-depth research; (Abramo, 1979).

#### a) – Research Universe and Sample

The universe of the research is comprised of **453** financial institution account managers encompassing the entire state of Minas Gerais.

The calculated sample size was 208 respondents, considering the following parameters: desired confidence level of 95% (1.96), the commonly used in research of this kind, according to Gil (1999); permitted sampling error was 5%, which is within the most commonly accepted for social research, which varies from 3% to 5% (Gil 1999). The chosen sample counted on 211 respondents, which when stratified, was representative of the following categories: branch level; time at bank; and location (interior/capital), as shown in the table below:

**Table 1**

Categories and variables		Composition of population and sample			Control of sample effectiveness		
		Population	%	Sample Foreseen	Received Qty.	Received %	% effectiveness of sample
Branch level	Level 1	102	22.52 %	<b>47</b>	44	21%	93 %
	Level 2	187	41.28%	<b>86</b>	89	42%	103%
	Level 3	124	27.37%	<b>57</b>	58	28%	101%
	Level 4	39	8.61%	<b>18</b>	20	9 %	111%
	Level 5	1	0.22%	<b>0</b>	0	0	0
	TOTAL.	453	100 %	<b>208</b>	211	100%	101%
Time at bank	Up to 5 years	105	23.18%	<b>48</b>	59	28 %	123 %
	From 6 to 15 years	27	5.96%	<b>12</b>	17	8 %	141 %
	From 16 to 25 years	288	63.58%	<b>133</b>	114	54 %	86 %
	Over 25 years	33	7.28%	<b>15</b>	19	9 %	127 %
	Ns/nr				02	1 %	0
	TOTAL.	453	100%	<b>208</b>	211	100%	101 %
Location	Interior	378	83.44 %	<b>174</b>	174	82 %	100%
	Capital	75	16.56 %	<b>34</b>	37	18 %	108%
	TOTAL.	453	100 %	208	211	100%	101 %

#### b) Questionnaire

The elaboration of the questionnaire was based on data obtained through exploratory research, primary and secondary data, as mentioned above, followed by the execution of a pre-test with the target public, which permitted us to promote improvements in content and form. The adopted scale was based on the ALPERT scale, which according to Oliveira (2001), is part of the group of Attitude Measurement scales, and is specifically a list of items/attributes that is evaluated according to three dimensions: importance, satisfaction and difference of the attribute among the objects being evaluated. For the purposes of our questionnaire, we will only use the ‘importance’ and the ‘satisfaction’ dimensions. Each dimension will be attributed a score of 1 to 5, with 1 meaning ‘no importance’ and 5 meaning ‘completely important’. However, for the purposes of this article, we will only consider the importance dimension in our analysis.

## 4 Introduction and Analysis of Results

**4.1 - Financial institution orientation policies for the market of small and micro companies:** Below, we will analyze the results obtained in the collection of primary data compared to what the Bank considers in its internal policies.

**4.1.2 Means of Service:**

Target Public: micro and small companies with earnings of up to R\$ 5 million/year;

Premises: strengthening of the partnership between the financial institution and the customer; transforming the financial institution into the main relationship bank for the company-customer;

Main interlocutor with customers: Account managers – to manage the relationship and originate business; knowledge of the company-customer's consumption habits and needs; visits to intensify the relationship; directing to electronic service channels; standardized products with high technology;

Service principles for credit: agility in availability, simplification, customer access according to needs; assisted/oriented credit; maintenance of job and income and increase in productivity and competitiveness of the companies.

Segment characteristics: aspects valued by customers, (according to the institution): know the bank employee and personal contact; partnership; location; automated service solutions; clear and safe information; variety of services offered; solidity of financial institution.

**4.2 Introduction of the Results from the Quantitative Phase The Account Manager's Perspective**

The results of this quantitative phase will be introduced with the intention of facilitating visualization and understanding of the data in order to provide consistency in the analysis of this study. Along these lines, the data were organized in two parts, the first being called "Value for the Account Manager", where the perspective of the account manager is introduced in relation to the degree of importance for the diverse items that represent the organization's policies and practices made available in order to motivate and prepare them to improve the relationship with the customer and generate business. In the second part, called "Value for the Bank", the perspective of the account manager is introduced considering what the Bank feels to be relevant values, in relation to the degree of importance for the diverse items that represent its own actions, behaviors and attitudes, also in order to improve the relationship with the customer and generate business.

**4.2.1 Value for the Account Manager**

(Degree of Importance – Simple Analysis - averages, standard deviations and ranking of the indicators by the average scores)

In general, we can observe that according to Table 01, the items reveal a high degree of importance, almost in their entirety, that is, 97.22% of the average scores are above 4, with 83.33% above 4.5, therefore, very near the maximum score of 5, which represents complete importance in the perception of those being researched.

Only one item – "internal communication vehicles for company TV – journalistic content" – show an average score below 4, that is 3.98; However, this average is very near 4. Therefore, there are no great variations between the average scores in relation to the items evaluated. The standard deviation is low in all items.

Thus, we can say that all items, without exception, were considered to be of high relevance/value for the observation/researched units.

The most relevant items that stand out are 35 (Remuneration Compatible with Position), 28 (Conditions Provided by Company for Account Manager Autonomy), 12 (Support Systems for Relationships with Customers and Business Generation), 1 (Technical and Transparent Material for Professional Growth), 19 (Be Communicated in Advance about New Product/Service Launches), 13 (Support Systems for Service and Operations Processing, 14

(Electronic Channel for Relationship with Customer) and 10 (Scholarships for Bachelor's/Specialization/Master's), as per table 1.1. Notice that the items that received the highest scores were: remuneration; organizational environment; support tools and systems, as per table 1.1; However, care must be taken to not permit the ranking of averages to obscure the perception of importance observed for all items and categories.

Thus, with the present result, we understand, albeit in a preliminary manner, that the **research indicates there is a strong alignment between the perspective of the organization – Bank and its account managers – in relation to what is of value/important in order to** prepare and motivate the accounts director to strengthen the relationship with the customer and generate business.

**Table 1.1 – Items of greatest importance – value for the account manager**

ITEMS*	Average	SD	RANK
35 – REMUNERATION COMPATIBLE WITH POSITION	4.82	.51	1
29 – CONDITIONS PROVIDED BY COMPANY FOR ACCOUNT MANAGER AUTONOMY	4.79	.48	2°
12 – SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR RELATIONSHIP WITH CUSTOMERS AND GENERATION OF BUSINESS	4.78	.49	3°
01 – TECHNICAL AND TRANSPARENT CRITERIA FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH	4.77	.56	4°
19 – BE COMMUNICATED IN ADVANCE ABOUT NEW PRODUCT/SERVICE LAUNCHES	4.77	.50	4°
13 – SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR PROCESSING SERVICES AND OPERATIONS	4.77	.51	4°
14 – ELECTRONIC CHANNEL FOR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CUSTOMER	4.77	.53	4°
10 – SCHOLARSHIPS FOR BACHELOR'S/SPECIALIZATION/ MASTER'S	4.76	.53	5°

**Table 1.2 – Categories of greatest importance**

CATEGORIES	Average	SD	RANK
REMUNERATION	4.82	.51	1°
ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT	4.71	.65	2°
SUPPORT TOOLS AND SYSTEMS	4.70	.58	3°

**Table 1.3 – General classification of importance** (averages, standard deviations and ranking of items by averages scores)

1.3.1 Average scores given to <b>degree of importance</b> of items for <b>professional growth</b>			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
TECHNICAL AND TRANSPARENT CRITERIA FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH	4.77	.56	4°
CLEAR SIGNALS OF PATHS FOR PROMOTIONS TO THE DIVERSE POSITIONS IN THE BANK	4.71	.60	9°
MAKING PERSONAL INTERESTS COMPATIBLE WITH THOSE OF THE COMPANY	4.61	.62	15°
POSITION AND SALARY PLAN THAT IS CLEAR AND WELL DEFINED	4.68	.63	12°
TAOI SYSTEM – TALENTS MODULE	4.48	.69	20°
TAOII SYSTEM – OPPORTUNITIES MODULE	4.55	.70	19°
TOTAL.	4.63	.63	
1.3.2 Average scores given to degree of <b>importance</b> of items for <b>professional development</b>			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
CAREER PLANNING WITH POSSIBILITY OF DESIGNING OWN PATH	4.67	.61	13°

PRESENCE REQUIRED COURSES OFFERED BY THE CORPORATE			
UNIVERSITY	4.70	.55	10°
SELF-INSTRUCTION COURSES - DISTANCE	4.60	.62	16°
UNIBB AS PORTAL FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	4.55	.68	19°
SCHOLARSHIPS FOR BACHELOR'S/SPECIALIZATION/MASTER'S	4.76	.53	5°
TOTAL.	4.66	.60	

1.3.3 Average scores given to degree of <b>importance</b> of <b>relationship support tools and systems</b>			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
SERVICE ROUTINES AND BUSINESS MANUAL			
STANDARDIZED AND AVAILABLE ON-LINE	4,75	,51	6°
SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR RELATIONSHIP WITH CUSTOMERS AND			
BUSINESS GENERATION	4,78	,49	3°
SUPPORT SYSTEMS FOR PROCESSING SERVICES AND			
OPERATIONS	4,77	,51	4°
ELECTRONIC CHANNEL FOR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CUSTOMER	4,77	,53	4°
SUPER STATE SUPPORT – PJ NUCLEUS	4,60	,77	16°
AVAILABILITY OF CURRENT INFORMATION AS TO			
PRACTICES BY THE COMPETITION	4,55	,68	19°
TOTAL.	4,70	,58	

1.3.4 Average scores given to degree of <b>importance</b> of items for <b>professional development</b> management - GDP			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
WORK AGREEMENT ELABORATED WITH THE HIGHER			
HIERARCHY	4.59	.71	17°
ACCOMPANYING OF PERFORMANCE WITH SPECIFIC			
ORIENTATIONS FROM EVALUATOR	4.55	.75	19°
TOTAL.	4.57	.73	

1.3.5 Average scores given to degree of <b>importance</b> of items for <b>internal communication</b>			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
BE COMMUNICATED IN ADVANCE ABOUT NEW			
PRODUCT/SERVICE LAUNCHES	4.77	.50	4°
BE COMMUNICATED IN ADVANCE ABOUT NEW			
ADVERTISING CAMPAIGNS	4.56	.74	18°
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION VEHICLES VIA SISBB: NEWS			
AGENCY	4.73	.49	7°
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION VEHICLES VIA SISBB: MAIL			
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION VEHICLES: MAGAZINE:			
BB WITH YOU	4.13	.97	24°
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION VEHICLES –TV BB - JOURNALISTIC			
CONTENT	<b>3.98</b>	1.10	25°
POSSIBILITY TO REGISTER CRITICISM AND SUGGESTIONS			
VIA SISBB.....	4.44	.79	21°
AVAILABILITY OF OPEN CHANNEL TO OMBUDSMAN			
IN HR	4.56	.70	18°
SHARING AT WORK PLACE OF			
PLANNING INFORMATION	4.69	.53	11°
TOTAL.	4.51	.70	

1.3.6 Average scores given to degree of <b>importance</b> of items for <b>organizational environment</b>			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
CONDITIONS PROVIDED BY THE COMPANY FOR AUTONOMY			
OF ACCOUNT MANAGER	4.79	.48	2°

ENCOURAGEMENT AND CONDITIONS PROVIDED BY THE BANK	4.68	.54	12°
MANAGEMENT STYLE OF HIGHER HIERARCHY TO			
INFLUENCE BEHAVIOR	4.71	.53	9°
RECOGNITION OF MY CONTRIBUTIONS IN MY			
WORK PLACE	4.75	.46	6°
FUNDS FOR INTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS TO COVER			
EXPENSES	4.64	.65	14°
TOTAL.	4.71	.65	

1.3.7 Average scores given to degree of <b>importance</b> of items for <b>social actions</b>			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
BANK INCENTIVE AND SUPPORT FOR PARTICIPATION IN			
VOLUNTEER ACTIONS	4.38	.91	22°
SYSTEM TO FACILITATE REGISTRATION OF			
INTENTIONS IN VOLUNTEER ACTIONS	4.24	.96	23°
TOTAL.	4.31	.94	

1.3.8 Average scores given to degree of <b>importance</b> of items for <b>remuneration</b>			
	AVERAGE*	SD	
RANK*			
REMUNERATION COMPATIBLE WITH POSITION	4.82	.51	1
TOTAL.	4.82	.51	

\* Averages refer to an Alpert scale ranging from 1 to 5.

\* Relative position in descending order of average scores observed in sample or 211 respondents

Notice that once again the remuneration aspect is again viewed by employees as a relevant factor for motivation and satisfaction of the internal public.

### 4.2.3 Value for the Bank in the Perspective of the Account Manager

(Degree of Importance – Univariate analysis -averages, standard deviations and ranking of indicators by average scores)

These analyses verify the alignment between what the Bank considers as relevant and what the account managers see as such. In general, we can observe that according to table 21, the items in their entirety show a high degree of importance, that is, 100% of the average scores are above 4, 94.12% above 4.5, and therefore very near the maximum of 5, which represents maximum importance in the opinion of those being researched.

Therefore, there are no great variations between average scores in relation to the evaluated items. The standard deviation index is low in all items

Thus, we can say that all items, without exception, were considered to be of high relevance/value for the observation/researched units.

The most relevant are items 02, 19, 16, 10 and 12, according to table 2.1, and three categories of items received average scores that were very close and high significance, above 4.70. They are: Relationships and business generation, 4.71; Portfolio management, 4.77; and Management/Performance References, 4.81, respectively. Therefore, care must be taken to not permit the ranking of averages to obscure the perception of importance observed in all items and categories.

**Table 2 – Importance – General Ranking (averages, standard deviations and ranking of items by average scores)**

2.1 Average scores given to degree of importance of <b>relationship and business generation</b> items			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
1 – OPERATION OF MANAGER AS INTERLOCUTOR IN RELATIONSHIP			
WITH CUSTOMER	4.79	.48	6

2 – QUALIFIED SERVICE AND ORIENTATIONS FOR THE CUSTOMER			
AS PER NEEDS	4.89	.34	1
3 – BE PROACTIVE AND ALWAYS SURPRISE THE CUSTOMER	4.77	.47	7
5 – CARRY OUT BUSINESS THAT SATISFIES THE NEEDS			
OF THE CUSTOMERS	4.75	.47	8
6—PROVIDE FINANCIAL CONSULTING FOR THE CUSTOMER	4.47	.68	13
7 – TRANSFORM ALL CONTACT WITH THE CUSTOMER INTO			
BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES	4.61	.68	12
8 – CONTINUOUS EFFORT TO TRANSFORM THE BANK INTO THE			
MAIN RELATIONSHIP FOR THE CUSTOMER	4.77	.48	7
9 – CONTINUOUS ORIENTATION FOR CUSTOMERS ABOUT THE			
BENEFITS IN USING ELECTRONIC CHANNELS			
TOTAL.	4.71	.60	

2.2 Average scores given to degree of <b>importance</b> of items for portfolio management			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
SAFETY AND AGILITY IN RECEIVING			
DOCUMENTATION	4.82	.42	4
VERIFICATION OF FIDELITY AND AUTHENTICITY OF THE			
INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE CUSTOMER	4.79	.47	6
ESTABLISHING CREDIT LIMITS FOR			
CUSTOMERS	4.81	.44	5
CONTINUOUS PROSPECTION OF COMPANIES THAT STILL DO NOT			
HAVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE BANK	4.66	.61	10
CONTINUOUS SEARCH TO IMPROVE INDICATORS TO			
EVALUATE THE PORTFOLIO	4.75	.52	8
TOTAL.	4.77	.49	

2.3 Average scores given to degree of <b>importance</b> of items for <b>management/performance references</b>			
	AVERAGE	SD	
RANK			
LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOR	4.86	.42	3
EVALUATION OF BUSINESS RISK AND POTENTIAL	4.74	.49	9
HAVE UPDATED KNOWLEDGE OF THE MARKET IN WHICH YOU OPERATE			
AND OF YOUR COMPETITION	4.75	.50	8
TIMELINESS IN SATISFYING THE DEMANDS OF			
CUSTOMERS AND SOLVING THEIR PROBLEMS	4.87	.40	2
TOTAL.	4.81	.45	

As can be noticed in the series of tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3, the items considered important by the bank as well as the institution's managers and executives, would be, respectively:

The operation of the manager as an interlocutor in relations with the customer, qualified service and orientation, considering that they are highly qualified and well-trained professionals, and in turn, are also very demanding when it comes to professional satisfaction and motivation; the establishing of credit limits for the customers, which once again demands preparation and qualification on the part of decision making employees; leadership behavior and parsimony in service, equilibrium and moderation when dealing with Bank users. All of these aspects are differentiating elements that are difficult to clone, since they are based on the quality of the people and the interaction with consumers, which will guarantee a sustainable advantage to the referred to bank over the mid and long terms.

## 5 Conclusion and Final Considerations

With regard to the mapping of values in the exchange relationship, that is, the identification of what is considered value by the Bank and what is value for the account manager, within the context of this study, we should take into account the following:



When considering the values held by the Bank as relevant, related to account manager behavior and attitudes, and what was raised in in-depth interviews of the same account managers, we concluded that, indeed, the most significant values for the Bank are very similar to those perceived as such by its managers. Thus, we understand that a true alignment between what is expected from the bank and what is perceived as relevant by its executives in the in-depth interviews, has been ratified and confirmed, in the sense of generating value for its customers – corporate market - and the consequent strengthening of the relationship with these same customers, generating more business.

In this context, we recognize the items on the questionnaire used in the quantitative research with account managers as the values that comprise the relationship of an internal exchange. The research results reinforce our understanding since they indicate a high degree of importance perceived by the account managers to all evaluated items, as shown below. With regard to an alignment of perspective concerning what is of value to the account manager, in general, we can observe that according to Table 01, the items reveal a high degree of importance, almost in their entirety, that is, 97.22% of the average scores are above 4 with 83.33% above 4,5, therefore, very near the maximum score of 5, which represents complete importance in the perception of those being researched.

We also understand that with the quantitative research, with a significant sample of account managers throughout the entire state, the results found in the qualitative research with the executives and what is expected by the organization, suggest the existence of a high degree of alignment. This hypothesis stands out since the items that comprise the research questionnaire are the same items (behaviors and attitudes) identified in the document study and defined by the bank executives, according to the interviews (exploratory phase), as being the values for the Bank, taking into consideration the operation of the account manager. To that, also add the consideration that in the results presented in the quantitative research with the account managers, in general, we can observe that according to table 2.1, the items in their entirety show a high degree of importance, that is, 100% of the average scores are above 4, 94.12% above 4.5, and therefore very near the maximum of 5, which represents maximum importance in the opinion of those being researched. Therefore, there are no great variations between average scores in relation to the evaluated items. The standard deviation index is low in all items. Thus, we can say that all items, without exception, were considered to be of high relevance/value for the account manager.

Thus, we understand that the organization, by focusing on the customer, on the relationship and coherence between the Bank's formal strategy and the practical perspective of its executives including the perspective of its account managers, facilitates the holistic management process proposed in the endomarketing approach (Grönroos, 1995). In order to ensure that all employees understand and experience the business and its activities and campaigns in an environmental, social and corporate context, the institution should always ascertain the coherence between the proposed and the perceived, which will actually become the delivery of value to the customers. On the other hand, and still within the referred to author's approach, it should ensure that all employees are prepared and motivated to act in a manner geared towards services.

In this sense, we also understand that the organization seems to be heading towards this orientation, with possibilities of achieving it, since the research suggests strong alignment between the parties.

From these observations and analyses, we can see a strong possibility for external customer retention and loyalty, since these people's skills, orientation towards the customer and awareness of services are critical factors in the perception the customer has of the company and in the preference that could be given to this company in the future (Grönroos, 1993). Such approaches strengthen the discussion that the account manager is an important

source of value generation for the customer and the company, with a strong impact on achieving sustainable competitive advantages.

However, as argued by Grönroos (1995), when addressing the premise of endomarketing, the relationship of internal exchange has to take place in an effective manner in order to have the possibility of aggregating value for the external customer and consequently achieve sustainable competitive advantages. Therefore, it is not enough to simply know what each of the involved parties considers being of value.

In this context, it becomes obvious, according to Grönroos (1993), that it all depends among other things, on management methods, human resource policies and the nature of the work itself, as well as on the planning and execution processes. In this sense, we see the importance of endomarketing as a means to understand and systematize people management, as a source of sustainable competitive advantage, supported by a *resource-based view* strategic approach, where Pfeffer (1994) underscores that the mutable characteristic of the competitive advantage puts people and the manner in which they are managed on a privileged strategic level.

Finally, we recognize the limits of this research, which are: the scope of the interviews being limited to the state of Minas Gerais; we also feel the need to move ahead in this study and analyze the satisfaction of the involved internal players with regard to the delivery itself, as well as extend the study to the external customer. A future research in that direction with a national scope would provide us with contributions to analyze the effectiveness of the internal exchange relationship of values in a more consistent manner, as well as the possible contributions of endomarketing for improved effectiveness.

Since this study deals with a highly qualified and demanding public, it would be interesting to repeat the study with different situations where the employees would have lower education levels and a lower level of demands, in order to check this alignment, which is so important between the parties.

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# **CELEBRITY EDORSEMENT AS DRAMATURGICAL PRODUCT SIGNALING:**

## **THE CASE OF THE PERFUMES INDUSTRY**

**Abstract submitted to:**

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### **Introduction**

Organisations that launch products that serve primarily psychological or aesthetic needs must convey the intangible and difficult to define qualities to consumers. Objective communication of qualities and properties cannot distil the promised experience. Instead, organisations often build links that are based on the consumer's own emotional and social landscape. The use of celebrity endorsement, often as part of a wider tactical repertoire, is increasingly the key element in launching new products.

Celebrities come with their own narratives which have been built and reinforced over a long period of repeated public performance, and to which consumers identify and feel familiar with. Thus the endorsement process makes available individuals charged with detailed and powerful meanings. They embody meanings which allude to distinction in lifestyle, class, gender, age, status, and personality types.

Endorsement succeeds when there is a clear association between the cultural meanings which a particular celebrity embodies and the endorsed product. Differently put, over the course of their public career celebrities acquire cultural capital. Celebrity endorsement thus represents the lending of this capital by the celebrity for a fee. When this clear association is deliberately made, this cultural capital transfer acts as an amplifier to product signalling, helping products overcome the information cacophony in markets characterised by rapid entry and exit of products.

Our case study focuses on the perfume industry, a 15 billion dollar industry a year; which at first sight seems as a business like any other. Closer examination however, suggests that the unique characteristics of perfume as a product will have important consequences on industry practices.

Smell is the only sense of modality that remains in the subcortical portions of the brain. Reactions to perfumes are therefore emotional and subconscious, a fact that shapes marketing practices in the perfume industry. By the same token however, these reactions also influence the manner in which the product is presented to its target audience. Celebrity endorsers are valuable external reputational resources, which can be deployed to communicate with the consumer on an emotional level, and by transferring the cultural and symbolic meanings which they personify.

Drawing on Pierre Bourdieu's views on cultural and symbolic capital, this case study aims to examine the convergence between celebrity and product.

This case study will be analysing a historical set of celebrity endorsements employed by a single product, namely Chanel N°5 perfume, since the 1950's until the present day. The dynamics of these endorsements will be analysed closely in line with the notion of cultural capital transfer. Cultural capital is broken down into seven different categories, namely: aesthetic capital, capital by association, capital through artistic performance, capital through historic events, capital through international recognition, capital through social actions, and capital through multidimensionality of the endorser.

### **Cultural Capital as a System and a Resource**

In an effort to reveal the underlying modes of class in capitalist societies, Bourdieu reinterpreted the concept of capital to include not only the economic but also the social and the cultural. The rationale behind this move is that it is impossible to account for the structure and functioning of social world on the basis of ownership of economic assets alone, and that different types of capital can be transformed into one another. Thus, economic capital can be transformed into cultural capital, and cultural capital can be transformed into social capital. Bourdieu's main thesis is that the dominant class does not dominate overtly by forcing the dominated class to conform to its will through pure market relations. Rather the dominant class in a capitalist society is the beneficiary of economic, social, and symbolic power, which is embodied in economic and cultural capital and which is present throughout society's institutions and practices and reproduced by these institutions.

For Bourdieu the interaction between individuals and cultural capital spans the micro macro social system divide. Cultural capital is created in the macro context of a symbol creation system. The entire range of symbolic production – music, film, paintings, scientific and philosophical ideas – constitutes a system with its own distribution, marketing, and publicity dynamics. Most individuals participate in this as consumers and observers. Their consumption of products from this system, and their knowledge of this system, generates cultural capital that is used as a resource that is used to further their economic and social positions. Thus having certain books on the coffee table, mixing in the right cultural events, or displaying familiarity with recent scientific and philosophical ideas are all means of signalling possession of cultural capital. Investing heavily in these activities with a view to increasing one's cultural capital is likewise part

of the effort to improve the individual's position in the social and economic system. Knowing which cultural capital should be acquired and how it should be used represent wider capabilities that are developed through class membership or through assiduous analysis of the social milieu.

Bourdieu's analysis is essentially sociological, and it focuses on individuals, groups, and classes. In this paper we argue that the same theoretical framework can be used to explain how firms pursue strategies that likewise access the cultural capital system with a view to transforming cultural capital into economic advantages. cursory observation shows that firms in general seek cultural capital: Firms use well known musical compositions in their corporate advertising, hang famous paintings in their headquarters, and sponsor prestigious cultural events. This tapping of the cultural capital system is a generalised strategic behaviour that is meant to improve the status of the corporation vis-à-vis its competitors. Consistent with this, but in a more targeted manner, is the use of celebrities as endorsement for products.

There are two levels at which celebrities are used to endorse products. At one level employing celebrities to promote products is part and parcel of the standard advertising repertoire which aims at attracting attention and gaining visibility. At another level celebrities perform the additional function of linking products to the cultural capital system. This linking confers on products dimensions that are external to the economic world of commodities where products are judged by their utilitarian value, their price/performance ratio, or their availability.

Linking products to the cultural capital system allows firms to embed the products in the social status interplay that is often central to human identity. From a cultural capital perspective, people's relationship to products is not only utilitarian and subject to rational value analysis, but is part of the complex enactment of identity which weaves together a life space made up of relationships and objects.

Firms would like individuals to embed their products in their life space as part of their identity enactment. This is a straightforward strategic imperative that can be categorised under the rubric of product differentiation, but it is clearly more complex and nuanced than the standard marketing and advertising process would imply.

As Lampel (2001) suggests, direct communication that attempts to persuade individuals that they should adopt innovations on rational grounds often fail because individuals screen these communications as they are intended: as factual communications that must be carefully scrutinised. Put differently, the catch-22 of any direct communications is that it is processed via cognitive systems that are designed for analysing direct communications. By contrast, indirect or mediated communications can bypass these screening. The firm stages an event such in which an exotic background is used to re-contextualise the product. These events can be an elaborate theatrical production, a feat of technological strength, or a gala party in which the product takes pride of place. The purpose of these events is to take the product out of its familiar setting and associations; to place it in a context where it can form other associations, and then use these associations to move the product into a different consumption space.

These events can be said to mediate the communication between the producer and the consumer. The mediating events have their own logic in terms of organisation and

display, but they are limited in time if not in space. Celebrities perform the same mediating function, but they are more strategically flexible in that they can be conveniently deployed in a variety of media in a more systematic fashion. The mediating function of celebrities, however, consists in a dual affiliation: Their affiliation with the source of their celebrity, and their affiliation with the product. Both types of affiliations have their own logic, and for the mediating role to function, these logics must synchronise.

Let us first look at the first logic: the relationship between the celebrity and the domains to which they owe their fame. Bourdieu (1988) was cognisant that the cultural capital system has its own celebrities. But the traditional perspective of the cultural capital system sees celebrities through the prism of canonisation. Such canonisation creates a hierarchy of major and minor stars based on restrictive criteria of accomplishment and awards. A traditional celebrity derived his or her fame from the position of their domain in the hierarchy to begin with and only secondarily from their own position in the field. A wider perspective on the position of celebrities in the cultural capital system adopts a less restrictive view of their hierarchy. More specifically, while celebrities in the traditional view of cultural capital are closely associated with the prestige of certain fields relative to others (e.g. fiction writing over travel writing, classical music over punk rock), in the new system of cultural capital fields have no intrinsic status. Their status is attained via the mass media, and fluctuates accordingly. By extension, while celebrities derive their position in the cultural capital system from the prestige of their fields, this position will also fluctuate depending on how contemporary prestige of their field, sub-field, or even the specific project within the field with which they are associated.

The last is an important consideration when it comes to looking at the second logic: the relationship between the product and the celebrity. From a strategic point of view there are two considerations that drive the matching of celebrity and product. The first is the nature of the product, and the second the nature of celebrity. A famous racing car champion endorsing a car represents an obvious strategic choice, and likewise a well-known musician endorsing a sound system, or well-known film director endorsing a camcorder. When we turn to intangible products such as perfumes, the choice of celebrity becomes less straightforward.

A perfume is a product with a functional purpose, but without obvious performance criteria. The function of the perfume is clearly to have a desirable olfactory impact, but evaluating this impact is a subjective process which is ultimately ambiguous and open to multiple interpretations. This multiplicity of interpretations is both a problem and opportunity. It is a problem in as far as producers cannot rely on direct communications to convey 'objective' properties of the perfume, but it is also an opportunity in as much as it opens the way to a strategy of bypassing rational screening. More to the point, the intrinsically ambiguous character of perfume as a product allows producers to engage in moving the perfume away from its economic context towards the context of identity construction. In this context it is easier to link the properties of the perfume with that of the celebrity, allowing the celebrity attributes to inform the perception of the perfume as a product that is part of the life space of the consumer.

### Chanel and the Use of Celebrities

To illustrate and explore our main thesis we have selected what is probably the best known perfume in the world: Chanel No. 5. The choice is dictated by two main considerations. First, Chanel is the first perfume house to consciously and systematically use celebrity endorsement as means of positioning their products in general, and their star product Chanel No. 5 in particular. Second, being the first, they provide sufficient data for analysis.

Gabrielle Bonheur "Coco" Chanel (August 19, 1883 – January 10, 1971) was a pioneering French couturier; arguably the most important figure in the 20th-century fashion design. Her influence on haute couture was such that she was the only person in the field to be named on TIME Magazine's 100 most influential people of the 20th century.

Popularly known as "Coco" or "Mademoiselle" by her inner circle, she was born in the small city of Saumur, France in 1883. Her mother died when Chanel was six, and shortly afterward her father abandoned her and her four siblings; the Chanel children were then placed in the care of relatives and spent some time in an orphanage. After affairs with a number of wealthy men, she was able to open a shop in Paris in 1910 selling ladies' hats, and within a year moved the business to the fashionable Rue Cambon.

Chanel was set up in business by lover, Étienne Balsan, a French textile heir, and her love affairs with the artist Paul Iribe, the Duke of Westminster, Grand Duke Dmitri of Russia, and British sportsman Boy Capel all had a considerable influence on the stylistic evolution of her often male-inspired fashions. She never married. She almost married the Duke of Westminster but declined, noting *"There are a lot of duchesses, but only one Coco Chanel."*

For more than 30 years, Gabrielle Chanel made the Hôtel Ritz in Paris her home. She maintained an apartment above her Rue Cambon establishment and also owned Villa La Pausa in the town of Roquebrune on the French Riviera. However, she spent her latter years in Lausanne, Switzerland and is buried there in a tomb surrounded by five stone lions.

One of her most widely quoted aphorisms is: *"Fashion is not simply a matter of clothes. Fashion is in the air, born upon the wind. One intuits it. It is in the sky and on the road."*

As the first perfume to be sold world wide, Chanel N°5 is the first fragrance from Parisian couturier, Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel, which was launched in May 1921. It was the first perfume to heavily rely on synthetic floral aldehydes as a top note and remains one of the best known perfumes in the world. Before synthetics, perfume either had to be applied very heavily before going out to ensure that the fragrance would last, or frequently through out the night.

In an effort to ensure the scent's unchanging timelessness, the house of Chanel has become the main grower of May rose and jasmine in Grasse.

The name is said to be based on Chanel's lucky number. Multiple perfume samples were mixed for Coco's approval, and were labelled No. 1, No. 2 etc. It was bottle No. 5 that



was to Chanel's liking and became the chosen formula. She introduced it on the fifth day of May, the fifth month.

Over the years the product has been endorsed by a number of celebrities from the film industry. The first celebrity who acted as a spokeswoman for the perfume with no cost to the organisation was Marilyn Monroe who famously stated to a journalist that all she wore to bed was a few drops of Chanel N°5. Besides Marilyn Monroe, other endorsers included Suzie Parker, Candice Bergen, Catherine Deneuve, Ali MacGraw, Carole Bouquet, Estella Warren and Nicole Kidman. The most recent advertising campaign, a three minute film starring Nicole Kidman; has been quoted as a revolutionary advertising campaign. Chanel president Françoise Montenay stated:

*“It’s more than a perfume, it’s an icon. That’s why we need iconic women — and Kidman is an icon. We’ve been dreaming of her for many years. For us, she is the most iconic person you could ever find. She is really an actress. She can convey her emotions in half a second. With just one move of her face, she can make you feel something.”* (WWD, 2004)

The organisation stated that the commercial is designed to reignite consumers’ emotional attachment to No.5 and express perfume’s sensual essence; and Kidman’s seductive powers, as expressed in “Moulin Rouge,” convinced Chanel that she was the perfect celebrity to represent No.5.

The next section will closely look at the background of each of these endorsers with the view of establishing the categories of cultural capital which they represent.

### **Chanel N°5 historical Celebrity Endorsers**

#### *1. Marilyn Monroe:*

Monroe’s endorsement of Chanel N°5 was a coincidence when in 1954 she famously stated to a journalist that all she wore to bed was few drops of Chanel N°5. Following that the sales of the perfume increased considerably.

Nicknamed “The Blonde Bombshell”, Marilyn Monroe remains a legend. She was named the “Number One Sex Star” of the 20th Century by *Playboy magazine* in 1999, and was chosen by *Empire magazine* as one of the 100 Sexiest Stars in film history with second ranking.

Marilyn Monroe was born Norma Jean Mortenson on June 1, 1926. Prior to her birth, Monroe's father abandoned the family in Los Angeles; she grew up not knowing the identity of her father.

Her background was rather turbulent. Monroe’s mother was widowed and insane. She was abandoned to a sequence of foster homes; was almost smothered to death at two, and sexually abused at six. At nine the LA Orphans' Home paid her a nickel a month for kitchen work while taking back a penny every Sunday for church. At sixteen she worked in an aircraft plant. While her husband was sent to fight in World War II she did some modelling work. She owned 200 books

(including Tolstoy, Whitman, and Milton), listened to Beethoven records, studied acting at the Actors' lab in Hollywood, and took literature courses at UCLA.

In 1948 Columbia offered her a six-month contract, and featured her in "Ladies of the Chorus" for which she sang two numbers. Joseph Mankiewicz saw her in a small part in *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950) and featured her in "All About Eve". As a result, 20th Century re-signed her to a seven-year contract. *Niagara* (1953) and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953) launched her as a sex symbol superstar.

Monroe then attempted to replace her image with a more serious one, so after her role in "Itch" she went to New York's Actors Studio, and worked with director Lee Strasberg and also underwent psychoanalysis to learn more about herself. Critics praised her transformation in *Bus Stop* (1956). Following this, she travelled to England to film "The Prince and the Showgirl" with Lawrence Olivier, while fighting with him and falling further prey to alcohol and pills. Work on her last picture *The Misfits* (1961), written for her by departing husband Miller was interrupted by exhaustion. She was dropped from "Something's Got to Give" due to chronic lateness and drug dependency. Four months later she was found dead in her Brentwood home of a drug overdose, adjudged suicide.

Monroe made only 30 films in her lifetime. She was voted 'Sexiest Woman of the Century' by *People Magazine*. [1999] She ranked number 8 in *Empire* (UK) magazine's "The Top 100 Movie Stars of All Time" list. [October 1997]. Monroe was also voted *Empire's* (UK) "sexiest female movie star of all time" in 1995.

On May 29, 1962 she performed for President John F. Kennedy at his 45th birthday tribute in his honour at Madison Square Garden. She sang "Happy Birthday". It was claimed that they were involved in a love affair.

When she died in 1962 at age 36, she left an estate valued at \$1.6 million. In her will, Monroe bequeathed 75% of that estate to Lee Strasberg, her acting coach, and 25% to Dr. Marianne Kris, her psychoanalyst. A trust fund provided her mother, Gladys Baker Eley, with \$5,000 a year. When Dr. Kris died in 1980, she passed her 25% on to the Anna Freud Centre, a children's psychiatric institute in London. Since Strasberg's death in 1982, his 75% has been administered by his widow, Anna, and her lawyer, Irving Seidman. The licensing of Monroe's name and likeness, handled world-wide by Curtis Management Group, reportedly nets the Monroe estate about \$2 million a year.

## 2. *Suzie Parker:*

The face of Chanel N°5 between 1957- the year which accurately coincides with her rising fame and acting debut- and the early 1960s, model-actress Suzy Parker, was one of the most recognizable faces of the 1950s. (CBS news May 2003) At the height of her popularity, she was known as the most photographed woman in the world. Her fame was such that the Beatles recorded a song about her.

She was an American model and actress who was born on the 28<sup>th</sup> of October 1932 in Long Island, New York, USA, and grew up and went to school in

Highland Park, New Jersey. She died on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 2003 in Montecito, California, USA. Her birth name was Cecilia Ann Renee Parker.

Suzy Parker was once said to be the highest-paid model in the world, earning more than \$60,000 a year in the 1950s; she later embarked on a brief career as an actress in Hollywood.

At one point, she briefly gave up her cover girl career for several years to become a photographer. Her older sister, model 'Dorian Leigh', introduced Suzy to a well known modelling agent when she was 15. She was the first model to make more than \$100 an hour and \$100,000 a year. She was a favourite of designer Coco Chanel and photographer Richard Avedon. Before her, most models were smaller but Suzy was 5'10" by age 14. She was a successful model during the 1950s and was the 'signature face' for Coco Chanel during much of that period. She is often called the 'original supermodel'.

She was the spouse of Bradford Dillman, a well known actor of his time, between the 20th of April 1963 and the 3rd of May 2003 with whom she had three children. She was previously married twice. She took her third husband's name and was known as Suzy Parker Dillman after she retired from celebrity life.

She was known for her open and sincere remarks and rather relaxed character off camera. She publicly condemned drinking and smoking and said marriage killed romance. But despite that she was known to be one of the most elegant women of her time.

Her acting debut was in the 1957 film "Funny Face" with Fred Astaire and Audrey Hepburn. She was nominated for the Golden Laurel award for Top New Female Personality 5th place in 1958.

Films she was in that won awards included:

"Night Gallery", nominated one Emmy award; "It Takes a Thief", nominated one Golden Globe award, "Bob Hope Presents the Chrysler Theatre": Won 7 Emmy awards; "The Rogues": Won golden Globe award, "Dr. Kildare", Nominated for Golden Globe award; won the America Cinema Editors award; "The Twilight Zone": Won 3 Emmy awards,

"Burke's Law": Won 2 Golden Globe awards; "The Interns", nominated for golden globe award and a Laurel award; "The Best of Everything", nominated for 2 Oscar awards;

"Ten North Frederic", won the Golden Sail award; "Playhouse 90", won Golden Globe and another 9 wins & 22 nominations; "Producers' Showcase": won 7 Emmys and another 9 nominations; and "Funny Face": Nominated for 4 Oscars, another 1 win and 3 nominations.

### 3. *Candice Bergen*

Bergen was the spokeswoman for Chanel N°5 for several years from 1965 following Suzy Parker for a number of years. She is the daughter of actor /comedian Edgar Bergen and Frances Bergen; a former model. Her brother is Kris Bergen a film and TV editor. She was born in May 1946 in California and was fluent in French. Her first screen appearance was at the age of 11. Critics heavily criticised her for her blond, patrician good looks and stiff acting, and her choice of film projects-including "The Group" in 1966, "Getting Straight" in 1970, and "The Hunting Party" in 1971, among others which didn't inspire moviegoers either. Bergen subsequently turned in fine portrayals in "T. R. Baskin" and "Carnal Knowledge" (both 1971), suggesting that she had greater potential than previously suspected. However she remained more interested in photojournalism, and didn't gain widespread acceptance as a screen actress until winning an Oscar nomination for her role as Burt Reynolds' ex-wife in "Starting Over" in 1979. She has since gone on to greater popularity as the star of the critically acclaimed "Murphy Brown" TV show, for which she has received four Emmy Awards. Bergen is married to director Louis Malle. Her mother, Frances Bergen, has resumed an acting career, appearing in such films as *Eating* (1990) and *Made in America* (1993). Bergen published an autobiography, "Knock Wood," in 1984. In 1995, after receiving her 5th Emmy Award for her role as Murphy on "Murphy Brown" in 1988, she declined any future nominations for that role. She received a total of 7 consecutive nominations for the same role.

Bergen has written articles, a play, and a memoir. She has also studied photography and worked as a photojournalist. Considered one of Hollywood's most beautiful women, Bergen worked as a fashion model but soon began acting.

Bergen was the first female guest host on "Saturday Night Live". On "Murphy Brown" she played a tough television reporter. Although the show was a successful comedy, it tackled important issues: Murphy Brown, a recovering alcoholic, became a single mother and later battled breast cancer. In 1992, then Vice President of the United States Dan Quayle criticized the Murphy Brown character for bearing a child while unmarried. These remarks paved the way for a subsequent episode to explore the subject of family values within a diverse set of families. Remaining true to the show's humor, with reference to an incident in which Quayle spelled the word "potato" with an e, as "potatoe", Murphy arranged for a truckload of potatoes to be dumped in front of Quayle's residence.

### 4. *Ali MacGraw*

Ali MacGraw was the endorser for Chanel N°5 following her role in *Goodbye Columbus* which earned her wide recognition briefly following Bergen. Born in April, 1938 to a family of Irish descent in wealthy Pound Ridge Westchester County, New York she is an American model and actress. She worked in 1960 as a photographic assistant at *Harper's Bazaar* magazine, as an assistant to Diana Vreeland at *Vogue* magazine, as a fashion model, and as a photographer's stylist.

In 1969 she achieved stardom in “Goodbye Columbus”, but real stardom came in 1970 with “Love Story”, for which she was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actress.

MacGraw's keen eye and sense of style was celebrated on the cover of *Time* magazine, and she has also worked as an interior decorator.

In 1969 she married film producer Robert Evans, with whom she had one son. They divorced in 1972 after MacGraw became involved with Steve McQueen on the set of “The Getaway”. She and McQueen married in 1973, but divorced in 1978.

MacGraw wrote an autobiography, “Moving Pictures”, which describes her struggles with alcohol and male dependence.

She has played a big role in various charity projects and humanitarian projects. She appeared in the charity song 'Voices that Care'; and did a special for PBS about children who live in dumps in Guatemala City.

She ranked Top Box Office Actress of the Year in 1971; ranked eighth as Top Box Office Stars of 1971; and second as Top Ten Female Box Office Stars of the 1970s.

In 1991, *People* magazine chose her as one of the 50 Most Beautiful People in the World. She currently resides in New Mexico.

## 5. *Catherine Deneuve*

The spokesperson for Chanel N°5 between 1968 and 1979, Catherine Deneuve, was born in 1943, in Paris, France. Her parents were actors. She made her movie debut in 1957, when she was a teenager, and continued with small parts in minor films, until she was offered a bigger role in “Le Vice et la vertu”, in 1963. But her breakthrough came with the musical “Les Parapluies de Cherbourg”, in 1964, in which she played the role of romantic middle-class girl who falls in love with a young soldier, but gets imprisoned in a loveless marriage with another man. She then played a schizophrenic killer in “Roman Polanski's Repulsion” in 1965 and a married woman who works as a part-time prostitute every afternoon in Luis Buñuel's masterpiece “Belle de jour” in 1967. She also worked with Buñuel in *Tristana*, 1970. In the seventies she didn't find parts of that calibre, but her work in Le Truffaut's *Dernier métro*, 1980, which revived her career. The epic drama “Indochine” earned her first Academy Award Nomination (Best Actress). Although Deneuve has never appeared on stage, she is universally hailed as one of the “grandes dames” of French cinema.

In 1995, she was chosen by *Empire* magazine as one of the 100 Sexiest Stars in film history ranking thirty eighth. Titled the “archetype for Gallic beauty”, she succeeded Brigitte Bardot as the model for Marianne, the symbol of the French Republic seen on French coins and stamps. She ranked eighty ninth in *Empire* (UK) magazine's "The Top 100 Movie Stars of All Time" list in October 1997.

In April 2005 Mikhail Gorbachev hosted the Women's World Awards. In Leipzig, announcing the World Awards Organization in Vienna. The former president of the Soviet Union and current president of the World Award presented awards in 10 categories to women of outstanding achievement which included Catherine Deneuve.

She was once fashion designer Yves Saint-Laurent's muse, who dressed her for the films "Belle de jour" in 1967, "La Chamade" in 1968, "La Sirène du Mississippi" in 1969, "Un flic" in 1972, and "The Hunger" in 1983.

She speaks fluent Italian and French, as well as semi-fluent English and German; and acted as vice president of jury at the Cannes Film Festival in 1994. She was also a member of the international jury of the Shanghai Television festival in 1988.

She sang duets with Bernadette Lafont in 1975, Gérard Depardieu in 1980, Malcolm McLaren in 1993, Joe Cocker in 1995 and Alain Souchon in 1997. In 1981, she released an album with songs of Serge Gainsbourg. She is also a designer of glasses, shoes, jewellery and greetings cards.

Her performance as Séverine Sérizy in "Belle de Jour" (1967) is ranked fifty ninth on Premiere Magazine's 100 Greatest Performances of All Time (2006).

#### 6. *Carole Bouquet*

Carole Bouquet was the spokes model for Chanel N°5 between 1986 and 1998. She was born in August 1967 in France. Carole Bouquet had originally enrolled at the Sorbonne at age 15 with the intention of studying philosophy. She later transferred to the Paris Conservatory where she received her acting training. Carole Bouquet made her film debut sharing the title role of Luis Bunuel's "That Obscure Object of Desire" in 1977 with Angela Molina.

Throughout the 1980s and 90s, Bouquet concentrated on feature work in her native France (in few films of note until Bertrand Blier's "Too Beautiful for You" (1989), which ironically cast her as an undesired, though extremely alluring, wife); the exception was a cameo role in the Francis Ford Coppola "Life Without Zoe" segment of the anthology film "New York Stories" (1989). Her most celebrated role of the 90s was as the character 'Carole Bouquet' in Michel Blanc's "Dead Tired/Grosse fatigue" (1994; released in the US in 1995). In this comedy, she played the popular image of herself as a "Movie Star".

She was married to French actor and producer Jean Pierre Rassam until his death in 1985, and was engaged to Gérard Depardieu in 2003. Melina Havelock was played by Carole Bouquet is the first and main Bond Girl in "For Your Eyes Only" in 1981, a role which gained her international recognition. She was involved in 47 films, 3 received Oscar nominations, 8 received 158 nominations between them, and 9 won 66 awards between them.

## 7. *Estella warren*

Estella was the new face of Chanel N°5 between 1999 and 2003.

Canadian Estella Warren was born in Ontario- Canada in December 1978. She was a synchronized swimmer from the age of seven; she moved away from home at the age of 12 to train for the Canadian National Team. She was the Canadian National Champion for three years and represented her country at the World Aquatic Championship, where she placed second. A talent scout, who came to a charity high school fashion show in which she appeared, discovered her and sent a Polaroid photo of her and sent it to a New York City modelling agency. She signed a modelling contract, and eventually appeared in *Sports Illustrated*, *Vogue*, *Vanity Fair* and two TV commercials for Chanel N°5 perfume, which were both directed by Luc Besson. She move to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career, and has appeared in films with stars such as Sylvester Stallone. To date she has appeared in twenty films; one of which received a BAFTA award, and another received an Oscar nomination. In total the twenty films she appeared in received 281 nominations and 82 awards.

## 8. *Nicole Kidman*

Ranked by *Entertainment Weekly* recently as the most powerful actress in Hollywood; current celebrity endorser for Chanel N°5 Nicole Kidman starred in a revolutionary advertising campaign in 2004 which has changed traditional television advertising. In a short film which borrows its plot from her Oscar nominated role in "Moulin Rouge", she plays the role of the famous star escaping the paparazzi in a cab which was occupied by a young man who was oblivious to her identity and fame. A love story develops but when she is discovered, she returns back to her life as a star and stares back at the tower crowned with the Chanel logo, where she spent three days with her lover. He is looking back at her thinking that he will never forget "her smile, her kiss, her perfume". The advert was directed by Baz Luhrmann. She is in the 50th anniversary edition of the Guinness Book of Records as the highest paid actress in a commercial. She netted \$3.71 million for her part in a 4-minute Baz Luhrmann-directed Chanel N°5 movie ad. The advertisement- costing \$11 million a minute- is a short-film titled "No 5: The Film". Guinness book editors noted the actress earned \$928,800-per-minute. Costumes were designed by Karl Lagerfeld.

Recognised as one of the most elegant women of her time, Nicole Kidman, is also known as one of Hollywood's top Australian imports. She was born in Honolulu, Hawaii in June 1967 to Anthony (a biochemist and clinical psychologist) and Janelle (a nursing instructor) Kidman. The family moved almost immediately to Washington, D.C., where Kidman's father pursued his research on breast cancer. Kidman's first love was ballet, but she eventually took up drama as well (her first stage role was a bleating sheep in an elementary school Christmas pageant). In her adolescent years, acting overtook the other arts. She worked regularly at the Philip Street Theatre. Kidman eventually dropped out of high school to pursue acting full-time.

Her first role was at age 16, in the Australian film "Bush Christmas" in 1983 which was a success. With the help of an American agent, she eventually made her US debut opposite Sam Neill in the thriller "Dead Calm" in 1989 in which she achieved wide exposure. After a courtship with Tom Cruise, the couple wed on December 24, 1990; yet Kidman was determined not to let her new marital status overshadow her career.

Family life has always been a priority for Kidman. Born to social activists (her mother was a feminist, and father a labour advocate), Kidman and her little sister, Antonia, participated in their parents' campaigns by passing out pamphlets on street corners. When her mother was diagnosed with breast cancer, 17-year-old Kidman stopped working and took a massage course so that she could provide physical therapy.

Kidman was listed in *People Weekly's* "Most Intriguing People" list. (December 25 1995/January 1 1996 issue); she was chosen by *People Magazine* as one of the 50 Most Beautiful People in the World [1999]; was chosen by *People* (USA) magazine as one of the 50 most beautiful people in the world [1996]. She was named one of *People Magazine's* '25 Most Intriguing People of 2001'; named *E!'s* Celebrity of the Year 2001; and named *Entertainment Weekly's* Entertainer of The Year for 2001. She was named one of the 50 Most Beautiful People by *People Magazine* in 2002; received a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame (13 January 2003) and Ranked number 31 in *Premiere's* 2003 annual Power 100 List. Kidman was voted the 5th Sexiest Female Movie Star in the *Australian Empire Magazine* - September 2002. She was one of *People Magazine's* "50 Most Beautiful People" for most wanted skin (2004).

Kidman has also been involved in projects with the United Nations: she was a goodwill ambassador of the United Nations Development Fund (UNIFEM) in 2006; and Goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in 1994. She was also named Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and has been a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF since 1994. She was the recipient of her native country's highest civilian honour- a Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia - for her services to the performing arts and contributions to health care in January 2006. She is a crusader against child abuse. "*Children should be allowed to grow up without fear of cruelty.*" (October, 1999)

During her career she has won several awards and prizes. She was listed as a potential nominee on the 2006 Razzie Award nominating ballot. Her performance as Suzanne Stone Maretto in "To Die For" (1995) is ranked number 40 on *Premiere Magazine's* 100 Greatest Performances of All Time (2006). She received a Golden Globe and several critics' awards for the performance in "To Die for". She found out about her first Academy Award nomination, for *Moulin Rouge!* (2001), while shooting *Dogville* (2003) in Sweden. She is the first Australian actress to win the Best Actress Academy Award. She was nominated for a Laurence Olivier Theatre Award in 1999 (1998 season) for Best Actress for her performance in "The Blue Room". She was awarded the 1998 Special Award at the London Evening Standard Theatre Awards for her special and significant



contributions to London Theatre for her performance in “The Blue Room”. She was voted the 48th Greatest Movie Star of all time by Premiere Magazine.

She is a pianist, and did her own piano-playing in Cold Mountain (2003) and also a singer who performed a song with Robbie Williams.

Next we describe the dimensions which constitute cultural capital:

1- Aesthetic capital:

This dimension is a reflection of the extent of physical beauty which the celebrity is seen to possess. This is accounted for through awards and nominations based on physical attributes such as “Most beautiful Woman in the World Awards” and so on which are outlined in the table below.

Aesthetic capital has been classified in previous studies (Solomon & Ashmore, 1992), and what becomes apparent from the data, is that the organisation has decisively and quite consistently opted for the Caucasian classic beauty type, which is distinctly characterised as being an elegant and classy type. Secondly, having observed the data longitudinally, it can be argued that a discourse analysis of the images of these celebrities have a dominantly feminine and sensual tone which is consistent over the years since Marilyn Monroe’s association with the perfume. We later classify Chanel’s shift in strategic choice along two dimensions: namely face vs. name which we will elaborate on later. What is relevant at this point is to mention that the aesthetic dimension is what we refer to as the face in this equation.

2. Capital through association:

This dimension simply assesses the weight of association to another source of cultural capital has in amassing the celebrity’s own cultural capital; such as the example of Nicole Kidman’s marriage to Tom Cruise; or more generally, the case of Estella McCartney who is the daughter of The Beatles singer Sir Paul McCartney. This association is important because on the public stage, this becomes an element of the narrative which the celebrity invites us into.

3. Artistic performance:

This particular dimension is divided into three parts as follows: Category of the arts the celebrity is involved in; for example, music, theatre, film, writing and so on. And of course, within each of these categories there are widely varying subcategories such as classical music, punk music, rock and roll, jazz and so on. This dimension is very important in establishing the type of cultural capital sought to be associated with the product as each of these categories holds a certain status signal.

The prizes awarded are strong indications of the importance of the name and the extent to which it is established in the industry in which it exists. Thereby bringing us back to the “name versus the face” strategic equation which we

believe is to be the main factors behind the choice in celebrities over the years. In all the cases reported in the table below, we can see a clear interplay between the two factors, in some cases one dominating the other and vice versa.

4. International recognition:

This dimension simply outlines whether the celebrity's recognition is known locally versus internationally, thereby indicating the reach of cultural capital association geographically.

5. Social actions:

The social actions dimension is an important indicator of the status the celebrity has earned outside of their habitual field. Humanitarian projects, attending high status events, and being involved in charitable events are all positive indicators of the celebrity's own social status, and thus contributing further to the richness of cultural capital which the celebrity embodies.

6. Historical events:

The purpose of the historical events dimension is to assess whether the celebrity has been involved in a historical event which could potentially contribute towards building the "name". As we note from the data below, it is clear that this dimension is not a primary pre requisite in celebrity choice as only two of the seven exhibited celebrities scored points on this dimension.

7. Multidimensionality

Finally, this dimension assesses the overall multidimensionality of the celebrity's persona. As can be seen in the table below, these celebrities are not one dimensional they bring with them an interweaving of different narratives which come from their personal lives as portrayed in the media, through their performance in their respective fields, and through various social actions and projects in which they have taken part.

## Data Analysis

In table 1 (see below), we collate an historical set of celebrity endorsers employed by a single product: Chanel No 5 since its first ever celebrity endorser to the present date. Having examined the dynamics of these endorsements from the point of view of factors which constitute cultural capital, we derive the following conclusions:

Chanel's celebrity endorsement strategy was accidental. This happened when Marilyn Monroe's name was associated to the perfume as she announced to journalists that she "*only wore a few drops of the perfume to bed*". Chanel recognised the opportunity and briefly collaborated with her until Suzie Parker was assigned the role of the new face for the perfume in 1957.

This accidental event set precedence for the strategic choice of future celebrity representatives, in terms of the type of persona sought, and the dynamics and richness of the cultural capital they embody. From the point of view of the cultural capital dimensions we identify in table 1, we note the following patterns:

### Aesthetic capital

From the data below, an apparent pattern of cultural capital of celebrity endorsers emerges. Unsurprisingly, the celebrities endorsing the product rate very highly on the aesthetic capital category, however, what is more important is that the aesthetic type is specifically a classical/ feminine type.

Chanel has strictly and deliberately avoided the "girl next door", and "exotic", beauty types. They have consistently chosen celebrities who are characterised by their classic/symmetrical beauty which is essentially that of a "sensual" beauty type- defined as primarily sexual looks. Further, from the history and biographies of some of the individual endorsers, it emerges that the aesthetic capital which Chanel opted to tap into is characterised as being of an iconic status such as Catherine Deneuve.

The list of endorsers over the decades includes Marilyn Monroe (known as the blond bombshell); Suzie Parker (most photographed woman in the world, and first ever supermodel); Catherine Deneuve; (dubbed an archetype of Gallic beauty; who succeeded Brigitte Bardot as the model for Marianne, the symbol of the French Republic seen on French coins and stamps). Ali MacGraw- who is known as one of the 50 most beautiful people in the world; Carole Bouquet (who played the role of a bond girl in 1981); Nicole Kidman- who is quoted as "iconic" by Chanel president Françoise Montenay: "*For us, she is the most iconic person you could ever find*".

Chanel's strategic decision to select celebrity endorsers of iconic beauty is summarised in the president's statement about the product: "*It's more than a perfume, it's an icon. That's why we need iconic women*".

### Capital through association

Secondly, six out of the seven endorsers are associated to well known celebrities. Marilyn Monroe was married Joe Di Maggio; a well known athlete who was the first to be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She was also associated with President

Jack Kennedy in an eleven year affair. Suzie Parker was married to well known actor Bradford Dillman. Catherine Deneuve was the daughter of French actors Maurice Dorlerac and Renee Deneuve. She was married famous London fashion photographer and director David Baily. Ali MacGraw was married to well known actor Steve McQueen and to Paramount production head Robert Evans. Carole Bouquet embodies capital by association to the internationally known actor Gerard Depardieu and was previously married to film producer Jean Pierre Rassam. And finally Nicole Kidman was married to actor Tom Cruise for eleven years.

### Performance in Field

All the above mentioned endorsers have been involved in film projects which either won or were nominated for Oscar awards. They have all also been awarded for individual performance in their respective artistic fields. It is also noted that all endorsers are primarily film stars. Chanel has consistently been tapping into the film industry, rather than any other artistic field.

Individual awards and nominations as tabulated below (table 1) for each endorser convey further information regarding the strategic choice behind acquiring cultural capital through certain celebrities. However it highlights the “name” aspect of the equation rather the “face” aspect. The strategy as it emerges from the data leads to the conclusion that the organisation has been opting for celebrities who are either an existing source of cultural capital, or those who exhibit signs of being a budding source of this capital, and a potentially rich one.

Suzie Parker represented the perfume from 1957. Her acting debut was in 1957 during her role in *Funny Face*; and in 1958 she was nominated for the Golden Laurel Awards for Top New Female Personality.

Candice Bergen, was the face of Chanel No 5 briefly from 1965/6. She was nominated in 1966 for the Golden Globe Laurel Award for new face female in the 6<sup>th</sup> place and was nominated for the Golden Globe Award in 1967 for her role as most promising newcomer female for her role in *The Sand Pebbles* (1966).

In 1968, Catherine Deneuve was selected as the new representative for the perfume. Although her film career began in 1957 in the film *Les Collégiennes*, the actress was deliberately selected after she had performed in the film *Belle de Jour* in 1967; in which she gained critics as well as viewer’s respect as a rising new face. In 1969, she was nominated for the BAFTA Award for Best Actress for her role in the film.

In the case of Nicole Kidman, her representation of the product brings with it various narratives: her marriage to another source of such capital, her famous divorce, her elegance and relatively good reputation in the industry, and most importantly her role in the film *Moulin Rouge*, which the campaign directly draws on; thus more elaborately and directly converging a movie character with the perfume. This may be seen as an attempt to further amplify the perfume’s intangible qualities in an increasingly crowded market. This is a clear reflection of the new status of the market environment in which the perfume exists. Although Chanel No 5 has come to represent an iconic artefact over the decades, the market in which it exists has evolved over the years from one of a select number of launches per year, to one characterised as hypercompetitive (over 400

launches in 2005). This evolution led the organisation to rethink its overall competitive strategy which is reflected in the new relaunch campaign in 2004, which has further converged the film and the perfume industry.

### International recognition

Some of the celebrities we mention are more recognised in France than anywhere else in the world, such as Carole Bouquet. We find that this varying degree of international recognisability among the chosen celebrities, is a reflection of the model we propose (exhibit 1 and 2) in which we argue that the choice of celebrities by Chanel was based on aesthetic capital as well as the potential for growing source of cultural capital. In the case of Carole Bouquet she was seen as a potential source following her role performance in the Bond film *For Your Eyes Only*, however the actor never achieved the expected status, and was eventually dropped.

International recognition was not one of the criteria at the outset, as this was expected to develop in the future.

### Social actions

Three of the seven celebrities are not known for having considerable social actions such as humanitarian work etc- namely Suzy Parker, Marilyn Monroe, and Estella Warren. The remaining four- Catherine Deneuve; Ali MacGraw; Carole Bouquet and Nicole Kidman are strongly related to various social actions. Catherine Deneuve is well known for her role as the UNESCO goodwill ambassador for the Protection of Film Heritage and Cultural Heritage. Ali MacGraw is on the honorary committee of the Vietnam Veterans of America Foundation (VVAFA). She is also a patron of Tusk Trust promotes the protection of wildlife and habitats, sustainable rural community development, environmental education programmes, responsible tourism, and constructive wildlife research throughout Africa. Carole Bouquet is known for her strong stance against child abuse. She is the official spokesperson for the Federation of 51 child protection associations in some 60 countries, *La Voix De l'Enfant*. She insisted on the need for political will and accused the judiciary of paying all too little attention to the suffering of children. "A society which disregards its children has no future," she concluded. Kidman is a Crusader against child abuse. She is named goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Development Fund for Women, and has been a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF since 1994. She is the recipient of her native country's highest civilian honour -- a Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia -- for her services to the performing arts and contributions to health care [January 26, 2006].

### Historical events

The involvement of the above endorsers in historical events seems to be the category where achievement is the weakest. None of the endorsers strongly performed in this category of capital apart from Marilyn Monroe who famously sang "Happy Birthday" on President Kennedy's Birthday celebration. However, all endorsers are characterised by their multidimensionality. They are publicly known for various roles other than solely existing as a film star. Besides existing in society as film stars, they are also models, singers, professional swimmers, humanitarians, and UN ambassadors.

## Discussion

The rationale behind Chanel's efforts, stems from one strategy, which is to exit the system whereby products are evaluated in the classic sense- i.e. based on price, quality, availability, distribution, and consistency; thereby moving the product from being assessed as a pure economic good to one which is assessed as a pure status good. We particularly refer to the signification of the product rather than the product in itself. We argue that linking products to the cultural capital system allows firms to embed the products in the social status interplay that is often central to human identity.

The purpose of these events is to take the product out of its familiar setting and associations; to place it in a context where it can form other associations, and then use these associations to move the product into a different consumption space.

The moment a product is consumed with the motivation being an association identity status, it moves away from behaving as a pure economic good towards becoming a status signalling artefact.

In the case of perfumes, the utilitarian qualities are almost impossible to articulate, and the underlying competitive strategy for such goods draws on attempting to propel the status factor of the product, and to move away from traditional product evaluation disposition.

Celebrity endorse choice in the case of intangible products such as perfumes is less straight forward than in the case of functional products. On the other hand, the intrinsically ambiguous character of perfume as a product allows producers to engage in moving the perfume away from its economic context towards the context of identity construction. In this context it is easier to link the properties of the perfume with that of the celebrity, allowing the celebrity attributes to inform the perception of the perfume as a product that is part of the life space of the consumer.

We argue that there is a clear return on investment for the association of the product with the system of cultural capital, and this association is enabled through the celebrity endorsement process. The magnitudes of capital which are transferred to the product are dependent on the quality of achievement along the dimensions we list below in table 2.

Our framework is primarily based on Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital. However, it is important to point out that our general theory which argues that celebrities represent a powerful source of cultural capital adopts a macro perspective of this capital rather than a micro perspective as Bourdieu's theory might allude to through its emphasis on interactions among individuals. Our theory adopts a macro perspective which examines the dynamics of the overall system, i.e. the product launch and the association of product and celebrity.

Although Monroe's association with the product arose accidentally, there seems to be a logical transition between the representatives. In addition to what we have elaborated above regarding justification of the strategic choices made over the years, we draw two main inferences:

These strategic choices seem to be dominated by two main dimensions of the celebrity's cultural capital, namely, aesthetic capital versus name recognition. Although both are

equally important in the decision, we observe that in the majority of cases, the celebrity was selected based on the first rather than the latter. For example at the time of choosing

At first glance the strategic choice appears to be dominated by aesthetic capital. Closer examination however, leads us to believe that this is not the case. Aesthetic capital is equally important to name recognisability of the celebrity. Celebrities such as Estella Warren and Ali MacGraw (in which case the aesthetic capital is the dominant factor) were- at the time, selected based on their aesthetic capital, but more importantly based on what was believed to be a promising source of cultural capital in the near future. Ali MacGraw was assigned to represent the product for a very brief period (two years) before switching back to Catherine Deneuve. In 1970 she became one the most recognised actresses almost instantaneously following her role in Love Story. Despite this initial success, MacGraw was dropped out as she failed to deliver the promise of being the source of cultural capital. In the case of Catherine Deneuve and Nicole Kidman, a balance was struck between the two dimensions. Chanel capitalised on the investment made in associating the celebrities in the early stages of their life cycle as soon as these celebrities reached the peak of their cycles.

To summarise the above table, we affirm that cultural capital constitutes two aspects: aesthetic capital, and “name”, the latter being based on artistic performance of the celebrity- including awards and nominations; international recognition; capital through association; social actions, and multidimensionality.

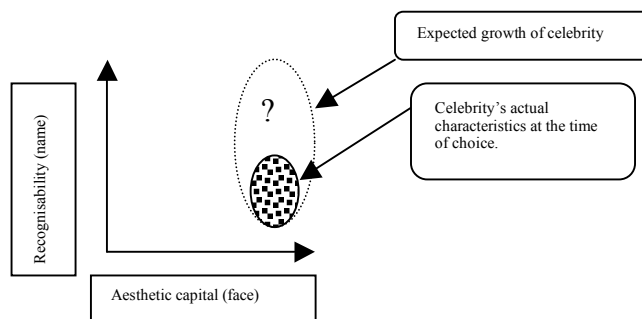


Exhibit 1: Celebrity endorsers' strategic choice.

Secondly, as outlined in table 1, the celebrities are clearly chosen in a particular point of their career life cycle. As we demonstrate in exhibit 2, Chanel has consistently opted to invest in the celebrities at an early stage of their life cycle, with the goal of capitalising their investment during the peak of this cycle. The cycle projected life cycle curve is determined by the celebrity's current performance, and by the inside knowledge which Chanel has access to prior to the announcement of film projects, awards and nominations. In observing the dates in table 1, it is clear that the celebrities have been selected one year prior to their noted achievement e.g. Suzie Parker won the Golden Laurel for Top New Female Personality (5th place) in 1958, but was selected in 1957 by Chanel; Candice Bergen won the Golden Laurel for New Faces, Female (6th place) in 1966, and was selected to represent Chanel No 5 in 1965; in 1971 Ali MacGraw was nominated for an Oscar for her role in Love Story in 1970 and was selected by Chanel in

1969. The same pattern reoccurs for Chanel's chosen celebrities throughout the years. The exhibit below demonstrates the typical celebrity life cycle and we outline Chanel's strategy in line with this life cycle:

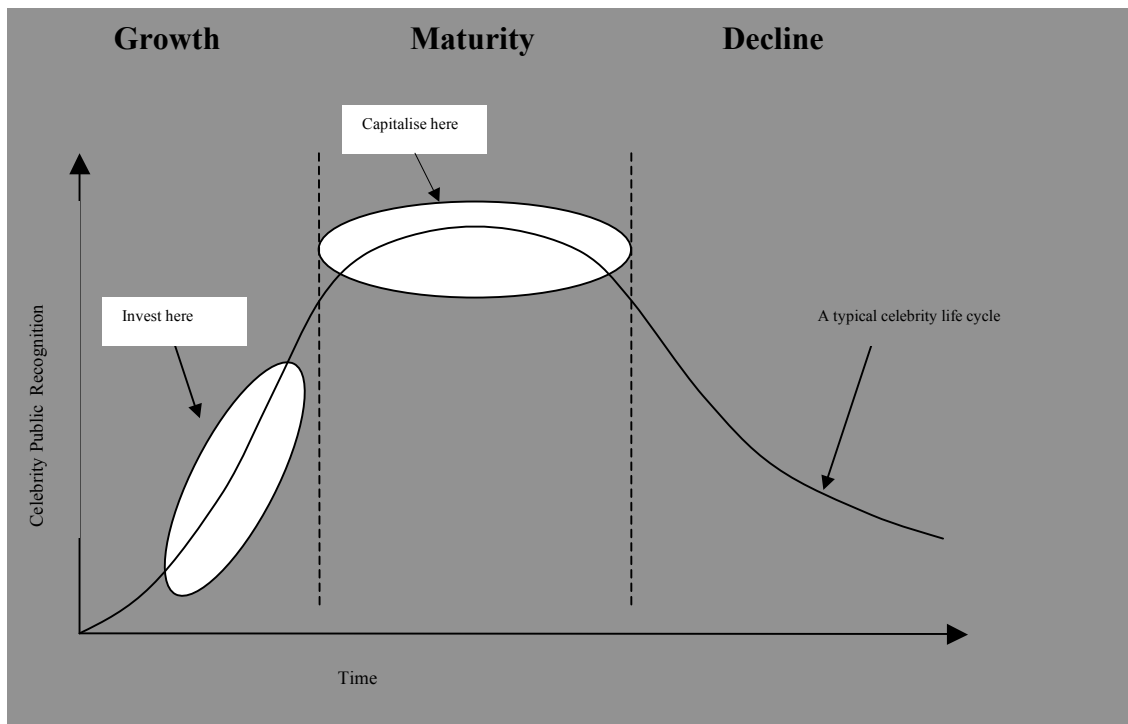


Exhibit 2: Strategic timing of celebrity endorser choice.

Finally we would like to highlight the Chanel's consistent choice of celebrities from the film field. These celebrities tend to possess certain advantages over other categories of celebrities. Chanel's decision to opt for budding sources of cultural capital from the film industry stems from the aim to communicate with consumers on an emotional level. Celebrities from the film industry build a multidimensional persona through their varied roles in films, and through their embodiment of certain characters which consumers relate to much more than in the case of a celebrity from the music industry, theatre, political arena, writing and so on. This category of celebrities is perhaps the best enabler of communicating the qualities and properties of the perfume through building links to the consumer's own emotional and social landscape.



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Table 1

ENDORSER NOMINATIONS AND AWARDS BASED ON ROLE PERFORMANCE  
IN THE FILMS.

NAME	YEAR OF SELECTION	AWARD	RESULT	ROLE	YEAR
<i>Marilyn Monroe</i>	1954	Photoplay award	Won	World Film Favorite - Female	1952
		Photoplay award	Won	Most Popular Female Star	1953
		Henrietta Award	Won	World Film Favorite - Female	1954
		BAFTA Film Award	Nominated	Best Foreign Actress for: The Seven Year Itch (1955) USA.	1956
		Golden Globe	Nominated	Best Motion Picture Actress - Comedy/Musical for: Bus Stop (1956)	1957
<i>Suzie Parker</i>	1957	Golden Laurel	Nominated	Top New Female Personality 5th place.	1958
<i>Candice Bergen</i>	1965	Golden Laurel	Nominated	New Faces, Female 6th place.	1966
		Golden Globe	Nominated	Most Promising Newcomer – Female for: The Sand Pebbles (1966)	1967
		Bronze Wrangler	Won	Theatrical Motion Picture for: Bite the Bullet (1975)	1976
		BAFTA Film Award	Nominated	Best Promising Newcomer for: Goodbye, Columbus (1969)	1970
		Golden Globe	Won	Most Promising Newcomer – Female for: Goodbye, Columbus (1969)	1970
		Won	Golden Laurel	Female New Face for: Goodbye, Columbus (1969)	1970
<i>Ali MacGraw</i>	1968/9 (very briefly overlapping with Deneuve's association)	Oscar	Nominated	Best Actress in a Leading Role for: Love Story (1970)	1971
		David	Won	Best Foreign Actress (Migliore Attrice Straniera) for: Love Story (1970)	1971
		Golden Globe	Won	Best Motion Picture Actress – Drama for: Love Story (1970)	1971
		Golden Laurel	3rd place	Best Dramatic Performance, Female for: Love Story (1970)	1971

NAME	YEAR OF SELECTION	AWARD	RESULT	ROLE	YEAR
		Nominated	Golden Laurel	Star, Female 4th place.	1971
		Henrietta Award	Won	World Film Favorite - Female	1972
<i>Catherine Deneuve</i>	1968	BAFTA Film Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: Belle de jour (1967)	1969
		Golden Laurel	Nominated	Female Star 15th place.	1970
		César	Nominated	Best Actress (Meilleure actrice) for: Sauvage, Le (1975)	1976
		César		Best Supporting Actress (Meilleur second rôle féminin) for: Rive droite, rive gauche (1984)	1985
<i>Carole Bouquet</i>	1986	César		Best Actress (Meilleure actrice) for: Trop belle pour toi (1989)	1990
<i>Estella Warren</i>	1999				
<i>Nicole Kidman</i>	2004				
		AFI Award	Won	Best Performance by an Actress in a Mini Series for: "Vietnam" (1987) (mini)	1988
		Saturn Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: Dead Calm (1989)	1991
		Golden Globe	Won	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture - Comedy/Musical for: To Die For (1995)	1992
		Golden Globe	Nominated	Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role in a Motion Picture for: Billy Bathgate (1991)	1992
		BSFC Award	Won	Best Actress for: To Die For (1995)	1995
		Saturn Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: To Die For (1995)	1996
		BAFTA Film Award	Nominated	Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role for: To Die For (1995) USA.	1996
		BFCA Award	Won	Best Actress for: To Die For (1995)	1996
		Chlotrudis Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: To Die For (1995)	1996
		Empire	Won	Best Actress for: The	1996

NAME	YEAR OF SELECTION	AWARD	RESULT	ROLE	YEAR
		Award		Others (2001)	
		Golden Globe	Nominated	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama for: The Others (2001)	1996
		Blimp Award	Nominated	Favorite Movie Actress for: Batman Forever (1995)	1996
		ALFS Award	Won	Actress of the Year for: To Die For (1995)	1996
		Blockbuster Entertainment Award	Nominated	Favorite Actress - Action/Adventure for: The Peacemaker (1997)	1998
		Blockbuster Entertainment Award	Won	Favorite Actress - Drama/Romance for: Eyes Wide Shut (1999)	2000
		AFI Award	Nominated	Best Actress in a Leading Role for: Moulin Rouge! (2001)	2001
		Hollywood Film Festival	Won	Actress of the Year	2001
		Oscar	Nominated	Best Actress in a Leading Role for: Moulin Rouge! (2001)	2002
		Saturn Award	Won	Best Actress for: The Others (2001)	2002
		BAFTA Film Award	Nominated	Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role for: The Others (2001)	2002
		BFCA Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: Moulin Rouge! (2001)	2002
		CEC Award	Nominated	Best Actress (Mejor Actriz) for: The Others (2001)	2002
		Empire Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: Moulin Rouge! (2001)	2002
		Empire Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: To Die For (1995)	2002
		Golden Globe	Won	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture - Musical or Comedy for: Moulin Rouge! (2001)	2002
		Goya	Nominated	Best Lead Actress (Mejor Actriz Principal) for: The Others (2001)	2002
		KCFCC Award	Won	Best Actress for: The Others (2001)	2002
		ALFS Award	Won	Actress of the Year for: Moulin Rouge! (2001)	2002

NAME	YEAR OF SELECTION	AWARD	RESULT	ROLE	YEAR
				Also for The Others (2001).	
		MTV Movie Award	Won	Best Female Performance for: Moulin Rouge! (2001) Best Musical Sequence for: Moulin Rouge! (2001) Shared with: Ewan McGregor	2002
		Oscar	Won	Best Actress in a Leading Role for: The Hours (2002)	2003
		BAFTA Film Award	Won	Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role for: The Hours (2002)	2003
		Silver Berlin Bear	Won	Best Actress for: The Hours (2002) Shared with: Meryl Streep Julianne Moore	2003
		BICA Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: The Hours (2002)	2003
		CFCA Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: The Hours (2002)	2003
		Golden Globe	Won	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama for: The Hours (2002)	2003
		Sierra Award	Won	Best Actress for: The Hours (2002)	2003
		BICA Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: Cold Mountain (2003)	2004
		Empire Award	Won	Best Actress for: Cold Mountain (2003)	2004
		Golden Globe	Nominated	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama for: Cold Mountain (2003)	2004
		Sierra Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: Cold Mountain (2003)	2004
		Saturn Award	Nominated	Best Actress for: Birth (2004)	2005
		Golden Globe	Nominated	Best Performance by an Actress in a Motion Picture – Drama for: Birth (2004)	2005

Table 2  
CELEBRITY EVALUATION ALONG THE SEVEN DIMENSIONS OF CULTURAL CAPITAL.

	Name	Aesthetic capital	Capital through association	Artistic performance			International recognition	Social actions	Historical events	Multidimensionality
				Which arts path	Prizes	Phenomenal projects				
1	Marilyn Monroe	<p>✓</p> <p>&gt; Voted 'Sexiest Woman of the Century' by People Magazine. [1999]</p> <p>&gt; Chosen by Empire magazine as one of the 100 Sexiest Stars in film history (#2). [1995]</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>&gt;Married Joe Di Maggio [First athlete to be awarded The Presidential Medal of Freedom [10 January 1977]</p> <p>&gt;Monroe's alleged 11 year affair with JFK</p>	<p>Actress, singer</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>3 prizes and one nomination (none are Oscars)</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>&gt; Involved in a film project which won 4 Oscar awards and another which won one Oscar.</p> <p>&gt; Of the 30 films she was in, 7 won 32 awards between them, 12 had 53 nominations between them, 1 had 5 Oscar nominations</p> <p>&gt; 5 films received 10 nominations between them</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>&gt; Was named #6 Actress on The American Film Institute's 50 Greatest Screen Legends</p>	<p>✗</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>&gt; Famously sang "Happy Birthday dear President" during Kennedy's Birthday</p> <p>&gt; Elton John (British Pop/Rock Star) recorded a tribute to her entitled "Candle in the Wind". In 1997 this was re-recorded with updated lyrics in memory of Princess Diana, an equally troubled person who also met an untimely death.</p>	<p>✓</p>
2	Suzie Parker	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Spouse of Bradford Dillman</p> <p>Sister of model 'Dorian Leigh'</p>	<p>Model, Actress</p> <p>She was the first model to make more than \$100 an hour and \$100,000 a year</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Won Golden Laurel award Top New Female Personality 5th place.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>&gt; Involved in 19 films:</p> <p>&gt; One got 2 Oscar nominations, another got 4 Oscar nominations.</p> <p>&gt; 9 films got 46 nominations</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>At the height of her popularity, she was known as the most photographed woman in the world.</p>	<p>✗</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>Suzie Parker is a song recorded by The Beatles during the Get Back sessions.</p>	<p>✓</p>

2	Suzie Parker	✓	✓	Spouse of Bradford Dillman  Sister of model 'Dorian Leigh'	Model, Actress  She was the first model to make more than \$100 an hour and \$100,000 a year	✓	Won Golden Laurel award Top New Female Personality 5th place.	✓	> Involved in 19 films:  > One got 2 Oscar nominations, another got 4 Oscar nominations.  > 9 films got 46 nominations between them.  > 9 films won 37 awards	✓	At the height of her popularity, she was known as the most photographed woman in the world.	✗	✗	✓	Suzy Parker is a song recorded by The Beatles during the Get Back sessions.	✓
3	Catherine Deneuve	✓	✓	[born to the French actors Maurice Dorel and Renée Deneuve, married to Famous London fashion photographer; sister, actress Françoise Truffaut; Roger Vadim (director of And God created Woman, he was married to Brigitte Bardot and Jane Fonda)]	Actress, singer	✓	One Oscar nomination  5 awards  10 nominations including 1 Oscar nomination  Mikhail Gorbachev will host the WOMEN'S WORLD AWARDS on November 29, 2005 in Leipzig, announces the World Awards Organization	✓	> Was involved in 96 films  > 85 awards between the 96 films.  > 177 nominations between the 96 films.  > 10 Oscar nomination between the 96 films	✓	✓	✓	UNESCO goodwill ambassador for the Protection of Film Heritage and Cultural Heritage	✗	✓	

4	Ali MacGraw	✓ Chosen by People magazine as one of the 50 Most Beautiful People in the world. [1991] Representing "Chalfont-Haddon Hall", MacGraw was voted Atlantic City's prettiest hotel waitress for the summer 1957 season.	✓ husband Steve McQueen and head of Paramount Production <u>Robert Evans</u>	Model, photographer, actress An American model and actress. She worked in 1960 as a photographic assistant at <i>Harper's Bazaar</i> magazine, as an assistant to Grauman's Diana Vreeland at <i>Vogue</i> magazine, as a fashion model, and as a photographer's stylist.	✓ In 1970 won best actress Oscar nomination for "love story". Had her footprints and autograph engraved at Grauman's Chinese Theatre after only four films	✓ Was involved in 15 films > Two films won an Oscar award > two films won an Oscar nomination > 6 films won 41 awards between them > 7 films got 104 nominations between them	✓ internationally famous for her role as Bond girl <i>Melina Havelock</i> in <i>For Your Eyes Only</i>	✓ "Children must be protected from those who steal their childhood from them," declared French actress Carole Bouquet, official spokesperson for the Federation of 51 child protection associations in some 60 countries, La Voix De l'Enfant. She insisted on the need for political will and accused the judiciary of paying all too little attention to the suffering of children. "A society which disregards its children has no future," she concluded.	✗		✗	✓ On the honorary committee of the Vietnam Veterans of America (VVAFA),  A patron of Tusk Trust promotes the protection of wildlife and habitats, sustainable rural community development, environmental education programmes, responsible tourism, and constructive wildlife research throughout Africa.	✓
5	Carole Bouquet	✓	✓ > Widow of Jean-Pierre Rassinam, > married to French actor Gérard Depardieu	Actress	✓ She won 2 awards	✓ Involved in 47 films 3 received Oscar nominations 8 got 158 nominations between them 9 won 66 awards between them			✗				
6	Estella Warren	✓	✗	Professional swimmer, model, actress	✓ Won one Razzie Award	✓ Involved in 20 films	✓		✗				



7	Nicole Kidman	<p>Chosen by People Magazine as one of the 50 Most Beautiful People in the World [1999]</p> <p>Chosen by People (USA) magazine as one of the 50 most beautiful people in the world [1996],</p> <p>Named one of the 50 Most Beautiful People by People Magazine in 2002.</p> <p>Named one of People Magazine's '25 Most Intriguing People of 2001'</p> <p>Voted the 5th Sexiest Female Movie Star in the Australian Empire Magazine - September 2002</p> <p>Magazine's "50 Most Beautiful People" for most wanted skin</p>	<p>Married Tom Cruise</p>	Actress	<p>&gt;Named E!'s Celebrity of the Year , 2001</p> <p>&gt; Named Entertainment Weekly's Entertainer of The Year for 2001</p> <p>&gt; awarded the 1998 Special Award at the London Evening Standard Theatre Awards for her special and significant contributions to London Theatre for</p>	<p>1 film got an Oscar nomination</p> <p>1 film got BAFTA nominations</p> <p>7 films won 82 awards between them</p> <p>10 films got 281 nominations between them</p>	✓	<p>✓</p> <p>➤ Crusader against child abuse.</p> <p>➤ Named goodwill ambassador for the United Nations Development Fund for Women.</p> <p>➤ Has been a Goodwill Ambassador for UNICEF since 1994</p> <p>➤ Recipient of her native country's highest civilian honour -- a Companion in the General Division of the Order of Australia -- for her services to the performing arts and contributions to health care [January 26, 2006].</p>	✕		✓
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	(2004)				her performance in The Blue Room.	> voted the 48th Greatest Movie Star of all time by Premiere Magazine. One People.					
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**Mirror, mirror on the Wal: Reflections on the good, the bad and the ugly of them all**

by

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## Mirror, mirror on the Wal: Reflections on the good, the bad and the ugly of them all

*Slave in the magic mirror,  
Come from the farthest space,  
Through wind and darkness  
I summon thee. Speak!  
Let me see thy face.*

*What wouldst thou know,  
My Queen?*

*Magic mirror on the wall,  
Who is the fairest one of all?*

*Famed is thy beauty, your Majesty.  
But behold, it is a lovely maid I see.  
Rags cannot hide her gentle grace.  
Alas! Snow White is more fair than thee!*

In a conference that firmly addresses itself to symbolism, discussion about the fairy tale of *Snow White* would not seem out of place. Fairy tales can be an educational tool in confronting and dealing with life's 'little' challenges. Bettelheim observed that for a child, fairy tales provide "suggestions in symbolic form about how he may deal with these issues and grow safely into maturity" (1976, p. 9). The view expressed in this paper is that the fairy tale of *Snow White* is an apt metaphor for the manner in which we seem predisposed to thinking in binaries and binary opposites. In the case of the fairy tale of *Snow White*<sup>1</sup> we encounter the tussle between the themes of good and bad; daughter and step mother; beauty and ugliness; age and youth; narcissism and 'necessarily' diminished love for others; innocence and evil -- and some less obvious binary opposites such as power and powerlessness. It is also that such thinking appears to abound in the field of organisation studies as with leadership trait theory (House & Aditya, 1997; Kirkpatrick & Lock, 1991), leadership style scales (Fiedler & Chemers, 1984) and 2 X 2 business strategy models (Porter, 1980, 1985). As embodied by its leadership and strategy, these and other paradigms are reflections of what the organisation wants to be or what it does not want to be. Our argument is that a focus on one to the exclusion of the other negates the necessary awareness of plurality of 'good' affects that are 'bad' and 'bad' affects that are 'good' from leadership in and by organisations. These inversions occur through thesis, antithesis and synthesis of opposites; and through their mutual causality. The elevation of one part of a binary over the other negates the reality of there being the good, the bad and the pretty ugly in even what might be considered 'the best' leading organisations in our communities.

The plea in this paper is to first understand the origins and predispositions to such thinking and, at the same time, understand the alternatives that are possible in comprehending our world. In making such an appeal, we will not only relate this to the *fairy tale* of *Snow White*, but also the *story* of the world's largest retail store, Wal-Mart (Ferne & Arnold, 2002; Fox, 2005). Our first task is to

reveal the origins and predispositions to thinking in binary opposites and how we subsequently become enraptured with the 'positive' -- the 'good', the 'beautiful', the 'virtuous', and the 'heroic' - while ignoring the 'bad', the 'ugly', the 'immoral' and the 'cowardly' actions reflected by those we perceive to be our business leaders.

### **Enrapture with the 'good': Dichotomy, binary opposition and psychodynamics**

Western thought seems to be imbued with a style of thinking based upon dichotomy and binary opposition. It is common to hear people talk in terms of: right or wrong; rational or emotional; yes or no; nature or nurture; heart or head; quality or quantity, etc. Embedded in this fundamental style of thinking, however, are not only *oppositions* but also *hierarchy*, in that the existence of such binaries suggests a struggle for predominance. If one position is right, then the other must be wrong. Hélène Cixous observed that oppositional terms are locked into a relationship of conflict and, moreover, this relationship is one in which one term must not only be repressed; but is also repressed *at the expense of the other* (1986, p. 63). Of course, when we use these opposites we often do so in a context of elevating one term while simultaneously inferring a denigration of the other.

Luce Irigaray had similarly observed that one of the principles of Western rationality is that of *non-contradiction*, where we strive to reduce ambivalence and ambiguity to an absolute minimum such that it is the 'only' the other that is blamed and therefore responsible for the self: "In cases where causals show the chiasmus of *I* and *you*, they can be reduced to the same schema as the conditionals, leaving *you* the responsibility for *I*'s condition or action" (2002, p. 48, see also Whitford, 1991). In such logical -- conditional and conditioning -- systems, two propositions cannot be true simultaneously. One proposition must prevail, and the other must accordingly, be vanquished (see Carr, 1999, 2003). The manner in which we dichotomise the world has a deep-seated source that on the one hand, is partly explained by a psychodynamic process called *splitting* and on the other, by another psychodynamic process called *mirroring*.

*Splitting* is a regressive reaction where, in an attempt to minimize anxiety from a potential or actual threatening 'object' or 'idea', we may comprehend the world as comprised of 'good' or 'bad' objects. This primitive way of relating is coherently described in the work of object-relations theorist Melanie Klein (1944, 1975a, 1975b, 1975c, 1975d, 1986). Klein argued that primal interpersonal relationships are based in paradox or mutual causalities. In a kind of Manichaeian world in the first years of life, Klein argued that an important initial process for the infant is to resolve ambiguity and conflict posed by the mother's breast because the breast is a good object and bad object *at the same time*. The infant *idealises* the 'good' breast and projects love onto it because through the transfer of milk, it triggers feelings of contentment that are absorbed or *introjected* by the infant: these feelings represent the mother's reassurance, which is life sustaining. It is the good

breast that becomes the core around which the ego seeks to develop as if it were the grain of sand that yields the pearl (see Klein, 1975c, pp. 178-180).

This 'good' object also confounds the infant because it inspires a degree of envy from the emphasis of the infant's need and dependence upon it. During unwanted disruptions of milk or separations from the breast, the infant experiences the good object as being outside its control, because the infant cannot have what it wants, when it wants it. Because of the undeveloped ability to understand the paradox, in the child's mind, the breast becomes simultaneously, a frustrating, terrifying, omnipotent 'bad' object that is perceived to have the *persecutorial* power to destroy both the infant *as well as* the 'good' object. Perceptions of persecution cause separation anxiety or the feeling of isolation from the life force. This anxiety becomes acute; it threatens to transform isolation into total dissolution, which becomes synonymous with the fear of 'death' (Carr, 2003a, 2003b; Carr & Lapp, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2005d; Carr & Lapp, 2006a; Lapp & Carr, 2005).

The less developed ego will use another defense mechanism and seek to deny the reality of the persecutory object [or as Freud (1940/1986) terms "disavowal"]. It is then around the 'good' breast, and *what it is perceived to embody*, that development in childhood occurs. Yet, the experience of envy of the 'good' breast (i.e. because of the infant's inability to control it) is a potential and persistent source of interference in that process. Generally, as early as the third month of life, the infant usually comes to this realisation that it both loves *and* hates the same breast, a 'condition' that Klein referred to as the *depressive* position. The depressive position is a reflection of the types and amounts of ambiguity and ambivalence the infant is willing to accept in that situation:

A new achievement belonging to the depressive position is the capacity to symbolize and in that way to lessen anxiety and resolve conflict. This is used in order to deal with *earlier* unresolved conflicts by symbolizing them....In the depressive position and later, symbols are formed not only of the whole destroyed and recreated object characteristic of the depressive position but also of the split object (extremely good and extremely bad) and not only of the whole object but of part objects.

The fairy tale is an example in point. It deals basically with the witch and the fairy godmother, Prince Charming, the ogre, etc.... It is, however, a highly integrated product, an artistic creation which very fully symbolizes the child's early anxieties and wishes. (Segal, 1981/1990, pp. 58-59)

The depressive position therefore, is a transient stage of low-anxiety affectations. It is also during this time that one is prone to accepting what is believed to be the 'truth' that brings into play, the position of 'seeing is believing'.

When the situation changes such that the infant requires more or different aspects of that which symbolises the 'good' breast, it is in this psychodynamic process of splitting that the child minimises conflict by attempting to maximise clarity. This again, is the very early, infantile exaggeration of differences between good and bad objects in order to eliminate 'grey' areas and to create a 'black and white picture' so part of the object becomes either all 'good' or reassuring and the

other part, all 'bad' and persecutorial. Dichotomization is accompanied by generalization, distortion, concealment, manipulation of the 'facts' and a demonization of the "otherness" that poses a threat. Klein termed this as a *paranoid-schizoid position*, highlighting "the persecutory character of the anxiety and ... the schizoid nature of the mechanisms at work" (Laplanche & Pontalis, 1967/1988, p. 298). Thus, it is in the earliest times of life that one becomes predisposed to thinking in terms of 'either, or'; rather than 'and', with the consequence of negating mutual causation and consideration of the whole-object *and* the whole-subject. Whilst during 'mature' development we pass through this phase, this primitive defence against anxiety is a regressive reaction that, in the sense of always being available to us and especially when situations and circumstances reflect what we 'need to be bad', the paranoid-schizoid position is never transcended. During times of 'maturity', what adults have learned is to become more accomplished at residing longer and in the 'same' depressive positions. This of course, is the 'good' aspect of regression that mitigates the anxiety of feeling the 'bad' that has been remembered from childhood days' unhappy endings. The depressive position then becomes its mirror of 'believing is seeing'.

In adulthood, the linkage of our proclivity to use binaries and to dichotomise the world with the primitive defense of splitting, was captured by Madan Sarup (1996) when he argued:

Binary oppositions reduce the potential of difference into polar opposites: Self/Other; rational/emotional; metropolis/periphery. In binarism, one term represents the dominant centre, the other term represents the subordinate margin. The important thing about binarism is that it operates in the same way as splitting and projection: the centre expels its anxieties and contradictions onto the subordinate term. The Other often mirrors and represents what is deeply familiar to the centre, but projected out of itself. (p. 57)

Thus, we can note that part of the reason we become enchanted with the '*positive*' -- the 'good' -- is out of our fear that if we do not, we are prone to what we take to be the 'bad', or the potentially 'bad'. There are, however, other psychodynamic processes also occurring during a similar period of development that relate to enrapture of the positive. The citation, above, from Sarup alludes to one such process that is called *mirroring*. The psychodynamic process of mirroring is one in which figures (i.e., such as the mother) reflect back to the infant, the appropriateness of the infant's own identity and actions and, in so doing, provide an emotional basis for the infant's identity and development. There have been numerous psychoanalytic theorists who have contributed to our understanding of this process, most notably Freud (1933/1988; see also Carr, 2002), Lacan (1949/2004), Kohut (1971) and Winnicott (1971).

"Freud (1905/1977, 1933/1988) believed that 'objects are the targets towards which action or desire is directed in order to satisfy instinctual satisfaction'" (Carr & Downs, 2004, p. 353). The corollary is that it is also from this object that the inability to continue identification causes the deepest feelings of persecution and effects the most destructive behaviours through the unbridled emergence of the death instinct. The importance of Freud's originating work on narcissism, identification and introjection is so potent that it initiated and formed the basis for the works of Melanie Klein: "The Kleinian Technique is psychoanalytical and strictly based on Freudian psychoanalytic concepts"

(Segal, 1981/1990, p. 3). Together, both Freud and Klein would propose that mirroring, since it arises from destructive forces, is a way to reflect the 'bad' that has been split away by child or adult. Alternatively, other analysts view mirroring as a Freud-Kleinian inversion.

Winnicott (1971) suggested that the precursor of the mirror is the mother's face. The infant's initial communication with the mother is not just with and through the breast but, while feeding, the infant finds itself reflected in the mother's face. As Green noted, the consequences of this form of communication are that:

The baby may see in the mother's gaze either himself or herself. If, too precociously, it is of the mother/object that he (a male infant) perceives, he cannot form the subjective object, but will prematurely evolve the object objectively perceived. The result is that he must organize a false self, as an image conforming to the mother's desire. (1993, p. 216)

The pre-verbal or un-verbalized experience of being *seen* by the mother is part of the infant coming to terms with what is self and what is 'other' [or as Winnicott (1971) expressed it, as the 'me' and 'not me'] -- the infant seeks to confirm its existence through their existences: I am *seen* thus I exist. But in the 'mirror' that is the mother, the infant experiences not just being noticed and acknowledged but also approval or disapproval. Heinz Kohut (1971) suggested that mirroring is one of two narcissistically invested transference reactions (the other was idealizing transference). On the one hand, the infant seeks the approval of the parent in an act of both recognition and confirmation so as to confirm the infant's love of self. On the other hand, the infant seeks to be like the parent in the sense of the parent seeming to be the perfect and omnipotent 'other' (see also Jacoby, 1993). Thus in the development of self, both these entwined dynamics are implied because such transference "reflects a dissolution of boundaries and a mingling of self-and-other" (Meissner, 2004, p. 79). It is in the interplay of self and the discovery of other that mirroring results in the person seeing the self from the outside-in that at the same time formulates perceptions of the self that become an inside-out reflection (Weiss, 1999).

The process of mirroring is not merely confined to the early period of development, but is an ongoing dynamic of seeking out others and environments that confirm this self-identity. In this same psychodynamic, it has been observed that: "Parents who have inner, often unconscious, doubts about their own strength tend to demand that their children be especially courageous, independent and aggressive" (May, 1953, p. 233). The unfolding awareness of the unconscious dimensions of oneself can be anxiety producing and in so doing, trigger primitive defences such as splitting. In many ways it can be said that mirroring is part of an attempt to control what is unseen with what is seen, so that a body, both corporeal and knowledgeable: "flows over into a world whose schema it bears in itself but possesses this world at a distance rather than being possessed by it" (Merleau-Ponty, 1973, p. 78).

In the fairy tale of *Snow White* we have the Queen seeking the counsel of the mirror to confirm her identity as the fairest of them all. The denial of this identity does in part trigger anxiety and in turn the primitive defense of splitting where anger is directed at the 'bad' object,



Snow White. In an effort to restore her image as the fairest of them all, the 'bad' Queen, who was also a wicked witch, disguised herself as an old, ugly, good woman who delivered a perfectly rosy red poisoned apple to Snow White. Snow White, who could not see past a projected image of purity and innocence, felt sorry for the old, ugly woman, bit into the apple and immediately fell into endless sleep. In the fairy tale, Snow White was then placed in a glass coffin where she would lay until an 'other' could break the spell.

In this fairy tale, the conjunction of the psychodynamic processes of splitting and mirroring, seems to confirm *self* and *other* as being locked into some oppositional (conflicting) relationship in the manner where there is *struggle* for predominance. What is not readily appreciated, but is also in the same fairy tale, is that *self* and *other* are not in fact separate to each other, but are mutually constituted. Binary oppositional and dichotomous thinking may have a deep seated source as we have described, however it is a realization of the dialectic nature of self and other that provides us with reflexive moments to entertain alternative constructions of the world. It is to the matter of dialectics that we now turn our attention.

### **Thinking dialectically: Hegel and the 'master and slave'**

In the previous part of this paper we noted that the 'splitting' of the world into binary opposites is somewhat embedded in one of the principles of Western rationality, namely that of *non-contradiction*, where there is an attempt to reduce ambivalence and ambiguity to an absolute minimum. It is in such a logical system that we noted that two propositions cannot be true simultaneously. Western rationality also seems to embrace another related philosophy, one that has been called a *separation thesis* (West, 1988/1993): individuals are separate from one another, hence free of the *other*. In this order of things, it is suggested, that we are first individuals and then we form relationships and engage in collective activity with others (see Carr, 2003c).

We cannot agree with the separation thesis and argue that the self is constructed by others as we ourselves construct the others to ourselves. Alternatively expressed, the relationship of self and other implies an existence that includes the experience of "the extension of self into other, [and] of other into the self: the degree to which the self is experienced as part of the other" (Modell, 1996, p. 97). It is a dialectical relationship of mutual construction. For example, in humanity's (self's) quest to dominate nature (other), nature is not completely alien, for humans are also a part of nature (i.e. the self is also other to itself). Thus, domination of nature can be read as self-mastery and repression (see Adorno, 1963/1998, pp. 245-258; Adorno & Horkheimer, 1947/1997; Benhabib, 1996, p. 331). The significance of the self-mastery and repression was an issue that was central to the theorizing of Hegel and, indeed, in this very context some have suggested that Hegel was "the first intersubjective or relational psychologist ... [who] anticipated many fundamental aspects of the psychology of the self" (Modell, 1996, pp. 99, 102).

In his work *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807/1977), Hegel discussed the manner in which we gain self-consciousness. For Hegel, the reality of self requires recognition by an other's self-consciousness. It is this 'desire' from which Lacan (1949/2004) conceptualised mirroring:

With the mirror phase Lacan began to work with a concept of the human subject who does not have his own unity in himself, but with a subject who finds his unity only in the other, through the image in the mirror. This gives us the matrix of a fundamental dependency on the other, a relationship defined not in terms of language but in terms of image. (Sarup, 1992; see also Lacan, 1949/2004, p. 4)

For just as we construct the world of our experience, other self-consciousnesses are constructing their own worlds, including their perceptions of us. Hegel argued that:

Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged. The Notion of this its unity in its duplication embraces many and varied meanings. Its moments, then, must on the one hand be held strictly apart, and on the other hand must in this differentiation at the same time also be taken and known as not distinct, or in their opposite significance. The twofold significance of the distinct moments has in the nature of self-consciousness to be infinite, or directly the opposite of the determinateness in which it is posited. (1807/1977, p. 111, [para. 178])

At this juncture Hegel has introduced a very tricky question: "How do we get consciousnesses capable of granting each other solid recognition so that we can have solid selves that are not mere inessential objects?" (Kain, 1998, p. 109). To answer this question, Hegel used the now-famous parable of the master and slave (Lacan, 1949/2004; Sartre, 1943/1992; Sarup, 1992), in which he described the dialectical dynamic of the confrontation between two consciousnesses. In this confrontation, one consciousness dominates (i.e., the master). As part of this initial dynamic, the dominated consciousness acquiesces (i.e., the slave). The master seeks to affirm his<sup>2</sup> dominance by negating the slave, treating the slave as a means to satisfaction of his desire. Paradoxically, however, this negation by means of instrumental treatment has the effect of making the slave more important. As Kain (1998) noted:

Objects resist desire .... Desire wishes to have the other, control the other, assert itself as the center, the real, the significant, but in fact it illuminates the resistance, the independence, the difficulty of having, the other. It illuminates the other's reality. (p. 110)

Thus, the master becomes increasingly dependent upon the slave. Initially, the master appears to dominate (negate) the slave's self-consciousness. The master, as the victor in a battle that is both literal and metaphorical, attempts to become a consciousness purely in- and for-itself. The slave, vanquished, whose existence is for the other, represses his own instincts (e.g. preparing food that he will not eat) in the effort to satisfy the master's desire. However, fear and work transform the slave. Through sensuous labour, the slave learns to become increasingly independent of the master. The slave's consciousness is forced back on itself. In an auto-creative act, the slave's negation itself becomes negated (Lapp & Carr, in press). The deeply meaningful paradox illustrated here is the master's failure to see that he needed the *other* to recognize the fact that he does not need the other at all (Kain, 1998, p. 111; see also Bernstein, 1971, pp. 26-28).

The tension contained within the dynamics of these relationships has been described in the following way:

Hegel ... considered self and other simultaneously, as an ensemble. He viewed self and other in a symmetrical mirror relationship, as well as in an asymmetrical relationship of dependence, desire, and control. But, Hegel reasoned, if the self is only the mirror of the other, then the unique and distinctive traits of the self, those things that constitute individuality and personhood, are obliterated. Hegel thereby identified a profound human dilemma, for if the self is defined by means of its reflection in the other, it loses its personhood. Therefore, *in order to define oneself, one must create externality by negating the existence of the other*, ultimately killing the other as something that is alien and foreign to the self. But the killing of the other is not to be taken literally, for if the killing is actual the parable would be over. (Modell, 1996, p. 99, italics added)

In our fairy tale of *Snow White* it should be apparent that had the Queen not felt empowered by beauty, she would not have become an ugly slave to beauty -- she would not have spent so many resources trying to overcome it. Had Snow White not become enslaved by the 'ugliness' of ugliness, she would not have bitten the apple.

The rendering of the relationship of self and other as a dialectic of mutual construction requires us to also appreciate that Hegel's view of dialectics perceives that, more generally, the particular and the universal are interdependent. It was in this recognition of the ongoing reciprocal effects of our social world that Hegel suggested three fundamental 'laws' of *dialectical process*. These are:

1. The law of the transformation of quantity into quality, and *vice-versa*;
2. The law of the unity (interpenetration, identity) of opposites;
3. The law of the negation of negation. (see Guest, 1939, p. 45)

The first of these 'laws' suggests just as a liquid, through boiling, can change to a gas or, through freezing, may become a solid, so too in the social world forms of existence can be transformed. Qualitative changes in the workplace, for example, may lead to higher productivity, a quantitative outcome. In the case of our fairy tale, the notion of power or not being in bondage is a qualitative aspect that is changed by quantity of beauty, and vice versa.

The second of Hegel's laws of dialectical process concerns the unity of opposites. This law is fundamental to the notion of dialectics as a method. Indeed, Lenin in his *Notes on Hegel's Logic*, wrote: "Dialectics may be briefly defined as the theory of the unity of opposites" (cited and translated in Guest, 1939, p. 51). 'Opposites' are viewed not as existing as being in stark contrast to each other, but existing in unity. Hegel expressed this relationship as:

Positive and negative are supposed to express an absolute difference. The two however are at bottom the same; the name of either might be transformed to the other. ... The North Pole of the magnet cannot be without the South Pole and *vice versa*. ... In opposition the difference is not confronted by *any* other, but by *its* other. (cited and translated in Wallace, 1975, p. 222)

The co-existence of opposites was viewed as the essential contradictory character of reality. It was this contradictory character that provided the evidence of the manner in which things

developed. Lenin was to describe contradiction as “the salt of dialectics” and argued that “the division of the one and the cognition of its contradictory parts is the *essence* of dialectics” (Guest, 1939, p. 48, italics is original emphasis). Hegel viewed dialectical thought as akin to “dialogue” in which the conflict of opinion results in the emergence of a ‘new’ viewpoint. The dialectic, as such, was conceived as a “motion” involving three ‘moments’: thesis, antithesis and synthesis. McTaggart (1896) captured this dynamic when he noted:

The relation of the thesis and the antithesis derives its whole meaning from the synthesis, which follows them, and in which the contradiction ceases to exist as such ... An unreconciled predication of two contrary categories, for instance Being and not-Being, of the same thing, would lead in the dialectic ... to scepticism if it was not for the reconciliation in Becoming ... [Thus] the really fundamental aspect of the dialectic is not the tendency of the finite category to negate itself but to complete itself. (pp. 9-10)

In *Snow White*, the Queen and Snow White were at the same time, reflections of what each other was not and so demonstrated a unity of opposites.

The third of Hegel’s laws of dialectical process is that of the negation of the negation. Here what is to be understood is that social change occurs not in a linear process that completely negated a pre-existing state of affairs, but that the change revisits and contains features of that previous state. In the fairy tale, because both ugliness and beauty were mirrored to her, the Queen was able to eliminate her own ugliness and the symbol of her powerlessness, by ‘killing’ an other’s beauty. By negating Snow White, for a time, the Queen negated her powerlessness that was mirrored to her.

But the important point is that this form situates agency known as the ego, prior to its social determination, in a fictional direction that will forever remain irreducible for any single individual or, rather, that will only asymptotically approach the subject’s becoming, no matter how successful the dialectical synthesis by which he must resolve, as *I*, his discordance with his own reality. (Lacan, 1949/2004, p. 4)

It was only for a time, because at the end of story, a handsome prince arrives to change the reflection and awaken and rescue Snow White.

It is our contention that we allow ourselves to become enraptured by only positive images or the perceived ‘good’ of something or someone when it is too difficult to unravel ambivalence and ambiguity of the mutual causality of opposites inherent in relationships. This is also evident by the split in the mirroring agent. The wicked witch of a queen first ordered a huntsman to shoot Snow White with a bow and arrow. It was upon his failure to hurt something so beautiful that the queen herself, mirrored evil in the guise of the ugly old woman and poisoned Snow White. At the same time, it was the seven dwarves who cared for and revered Snow White. But upon their failure to keep her from harm and again to revive her from her death-sleep, it was the mirror of heroism that finally saved beauty. Below, although Sarup spoke to the fairy tale of Sleeping Beauty, he also spoke to society’s need to mirror a positive ending regardless of characters involved:

The movement of the Hegelian dialectic depends on an inequality of power between the two oppositional terms. The well-known story of Sleeping Beauty exemplifies

this. The woman is represented as sleeping, as possessed of negative subjectivity until she is kissed by a male. This kiss gives her existence, but only within a process that immediately subordinates her to the desire of 'the prince'. (1993, p. 110)

The consequence is that we are more likely to seek someone to mirror rather than to seek to be mirrored that is an example of an unfinished dialectic because the slave her or himself does not work to negate the 'original' master but instead, works to create new ones. Mirroring creates new and different masters to satisfy our desires to be recognised and vice versa.

The fairy tale of *Snow White* is an unfinished dialectic because the negation, Snow White's powerlessness, was negated but the Queen's was not -- the Queen did not understand that she did not need Snow White's reflection at all and Snow White did not understand her power. Therefore, to both the Queen and Snow White, the prince threw a 'curve' or put a kink in their dialectical relationship such that his intervention, his power, created a different distanced mirror between the two women -- limited infinity and infinity of limits of non-negation. Well, this is according to the variations to the ending of the fairy tale that are known today. What happens to Snow White should the Queen kill the prince? If the prince kills the Queen, does he become King? and Snow White, Queen?

This moment [the negation] at which the mirror stage comes to an end inaugurates, through identification with the imago [image] of one's semblable and the drama of primordial jealousy...the dialectic that will henceforth link the *I* to socially elaborated situations.

It is this moment that decisively tips the whole of human knowledge...into being mediated by the other's desire, constitutes its objects in an abstract equivalence due to competition from other people, and turns the *I* into an apparatus to which every instinctual pressure constitutes a danger, even if it corresponds to a natural maturation process. The very normalization of this maturation is henceforth dependent in man on cultural intervention.... (Lacan, 1949/2004, p. 7)

The unfinished dialectic is firmly grounded such that, generally, the experience of dialectics is really the epistemology of the unfinished dialectic in whatever we desire to mirror, to reflect 'real' life.

Sartre speaks of man being torn between a 'desire to be' and a 'desire to have'. For both Sartre and Lacan desire is defined in terms of a 'lack of being'. (Sarup, 1992, p. 36)

Thus, our synthesis of philosophy and psychodynamics is that it must be recognised that the self is both master and slave at the same time -- as is other, at the same time. It is then that the 'man [sic] in the mirror' is that which is likely to be desired for self, rather than what is -- and in the case of 'bad' against 'good', what is not desired for other: "The fact is that they encountered that existential negativity whose reality is so vigorously proclaimed by the contemporary philosophy of being and nothingness" (Lacan, 1949/2004, p. 8).

## Mirror, mirror on the Wal: The case of Wal-Mart

The explication of *Snow White* that is informed through philosophy and psychodynamics, provides us with a way to determine how the good is at the same time bad, and the ugly, beautiful or pretty. We mimic that which we do and do not want to see but is believed to be positive and regardless of consequence, which can include slavery to excess (Lapp & Carr, 2005). In our view, to spell out the fairy tale of *Snow White* using what were once considered by Freud (1920/1943) to be incommensurable opposites, psychodynamics and philosophy serve us well as a heuristic in 'awakening' an understanding of the spell of materialism mirrored in capitalistic leadership and vice versa.

The ways in which the good, the bad and the ugly are mirrored to and by us, we will now note in a discussion of the world's largest retail store, Wal-Mart. Taking our lead from our explication of the fairy tale *Snow White*, the quintessential capitalist corporation that is represented; reflected by Wal-Mart can be shown to be *Snow White* turned *Wicked Witch* in a materialistic tale about the beauty and ugliness of being big in the retail kingdom. And indeed, some of the organization theory that relates to the tale of this corporation would appear to be pretty ugly! We believe Wal-Mart's success lies in its ability to mirror that which consumers desire and in so doing, give communities a bite at the apple of 'not being'.

### Baby Wal-Mart

*Wal-Mart was started in 1962 in the state of Arkansas, USA. The company grew very fast becoming, by 1985, one of the leading US retailers. By 1995, when it entered the Brazilian market, it operated four store formats in all 50 states in the USA: (1) discount stores; (2) supercenters; (3) warehouse clubs; and (4) deep discount warehouse outlets. The company's strategy was based on four pillars: (1) cost leadership; (2) customer orientation; (3) logistics; and (4) information technology. (da Rocha & Dib, 2002, p. 63).*

*Sam Walton was the late twentieth century's Henry Ford, argues Bob Ortega. "Walton and Wal-Mart have transformed retailing the way Henry Ford revolutionized transportation. It's easy to forget, nowadays, that Ford invented neither the car nor the assembly line. What he did was to make them the new paradigms, to make life without cars, or industrial production without assembly lines, unthinkable." Similarly, Sam Walton did not invent the deep discount store. But through his example and success, he did change the retailing paradigm -- paving the way for Staples, Borders, Toys-R-Us and others. (Anonymous, 1999, p. 22)*

*Walton was a real innovator...creatively adapting to chronic undercapitalization in early years; developing new modes of efficient inventory maintenance and distribution; finding markets in rural areas that other retailers had written off; understanding the potential of a retail operation based on low margins and high sales; establishing a reputation for 'everyday' low prices and fair dealing that helped save money by eviscerating the need for advertising; treating workers as 'associates' and developing an employee culture of corporate loyalty; and much more.... Walton developed these concepts and principles over a long career, and...he implemented them first in his handful of stores in Arkansas and later in his rapidly spreading national and international empire. (Anonymous, 1999, p. 22)*

*When he died in 1992, 'he was lauded as the most influential retailer of the century, and with good reason, for nearly every great retailer of the coming years would follow his business examples'. While the conscious efforts to maintain a cheerful workplace, Sam Walton's direct connections to employees and his sincere interest in learning from their input, and stock options for employees all help or helped to boost employee morale, at*

bottom most, Wal-Mart jobs are near minimum wage with very little job security. The result is high turnover and widespread job dissatisfaction. (Anonymous, 1999, p. 23)

### **Wal-Mart maturity: The good, the bad and the ugly**

Is Wal-Mart good for America? Well, it depends upon whom you ask.... The debate has begun to spawn a mini-industry of research by economists and other academics exploring the effects of a corporate giant whose tentacles spread into nearly every corner of American society. Earlier this month, Wal-Mart jumped into the fray with what seemed to be a good-faith attempt to measure, definitively, its economic impact on U.S. consumers. It released a study by Global Insight, a Boston-based economic research firm that Wal-Mart had commissioned to conduct a year-long study addressing such issues as prices, jobs and wages.... Wal-Mart's study found that Wal-Mart has a largely positive effect on Americans' lives, and that its low prices give consumers more buying power by holding down prices through out the economy. It also concluded that Wal-Mart jobs generally pay market-rate wages.... Against this backdrop, here's a sampling of what economists and other experts are saying about the company at the heart of the controversy. Global Insight found that Wal-Mart's presence holds down prices of consumer goods in the U.S. by 3.1 percent... Adjusting for inflation, the report says that means Americans saved \$118 billion in 2004, or \$402 per person, thanks to Wal-Mart.... The Global Insight study found that some local retailers shut down after Wal-Mart came to town, so other jobs were lost.... Every new Wal-Mart creates 150 - 350 new jobs but displaces anywhere from 53 to 253 existing jobs, for a net gain of 97 new jobs. Global insight didn't address the quality of those jobs -- in other words, whether the new jobs paid better or worse than the displaced ones, or had better or worse benefit packages.... A team led by David Neumark, an economist at the Public Policy Institute of California, found that Wal-Mart stores actually reduce retail employment by 2 to 4 percent in a given county.... In California...a team of urban planners compared Wal-Mart's wages and benefits with those of union supermarket workers in the San Francisco Bay Area,. They concluded that union workers received an hourly wage of \$15.30, versus \$9.60 for Wal-Mart workers. Adding benefits, union workers earned an equivalent of \$23. 64 per hour [55% increase due to benefits also provided] almost twice the \$11.95 [24% increase due to benefits provided] earned by Wal-Mart workers....On average, every new Wal-Mart worker costs a state an average of about \$900 in new Medicaid costs. (Weber, 2005, pp. 1-4)

A leisurely drive through the suburban shopping districts of virtually any American city reveals the successful inroads that large mass merchandisers have made into the retail sector in the United States. At the same time, the once-thriving downtown shopping areas of many of these same cities are now rife with boarded-up retail storefronts. Unfortunately, the rise of the corporate retail superstores has come at least in part at the expense of the local, traditional, "mom-and-pop" dealers. While shoppers seem to uniformly appreciate the often lower retail prices available at the mass merchandisers, many also rue the loss of personalized customer service previously provided by friendly, local dealers. (Boyd, 1997, p. 223)

Deservedly or not, Wal-Mart picked up the label "Merchant of Death" years ago because of its alleged impact on Main Street businesses, and bankers have long feared being "Wal-Marted" themselves.... The proximity of Wal-Mart stores to so many community bankers' markets helps bring them to mind more than others.... Wal-Mart, historically and presently, gives away little that doesn't suit its purposes. It's instructive, in trying to understand Wal-Mart and its interest in financial services, to consider how the company sees itself in the bigger picture.... In a short presentation by Jay Fitzsimmons, chief financial officer, to a Merrill Lynch retailing conference in March, Fitzsimmons had set out to explode misconceptions about the company. His first target was the idea that Wal-Mart is a retailer. Fitzsimmons insisted that the company sees itself as being in the distribution business. Another target was the perceived role of Wal-Mart as seller to its customers. Fitzsimmons says the company sees itself as customers' agent, going out into the market to find the best deals on what the customer wants.... **Credit Cards.** (Cocheo, (2003, pp. 29-37)

### **Reflections of Wal-Mart Overseas**

Despite all claims made about the complexity and chaos of modern organisational life, this age of the ubiquitous persuader whose job it is to get people to 'show commitment', to 'buy into' the company mission and embrace its values wholeheartedly is not so different from the Middle Ages. What was formerly offered by the church is now peddled by the modern corporation in the form of 'good practice', 'quality', 'excellence' and

*their opposites to be driven into the darkness. But our labour no longer expresses God's will for men on earth; rather it is supposed to express the surrender of our hearts and minds to the corporation. (Piasecki, 2002, p. 21)*

Not surprisingly, poor working conditions have given rise to union organizing efforts. But Wal-Mart has mostly been successful in fending them off, partly through its corporate culture of employee involvement and especially, through harassment and intimidation of union supporters. One of [Ortega's] main sources on working conditions in Guatemala was Flor de Maria Salguedo, a union organizer who helped him arrange interviews with workers making clothes for Wal-Mart as well as Kmart, Target and J.C. Penny. Salguedo's husband had been killed in a labor organizing drive. Tragically, after Ortega left Guatemala, Salguedo was kidnapped, beaten and raped. She says that one of the attackers told her, "This is what you get for messing about with the foreigners". The devastating element of Ortega's reporting is his suggestion that Wal-Mart's abuses flow quite naturally from its business strategy, and in some cases are intimately bound up with its strategy. (Anonymous, 1999, p. 23)

His [Sam Walton's] success with bigger and bigger boxes spawned the category-killer chains that continue to crush smaller businesses and to ensure that every town eventually will have exactly the same selection of books, videos, records, magazines, clothing, food, toys, hardware and everything else, not only from New York to California, but from the Yukon to Tierra del Fuego. He helped to create a society in which part-time and temporary jobs are the norm for ever-more workers. (Anonymous, 1999, p. 24)

... the enthusiasm of consumers in most retailing markets to the entry of Wal-Mart was another reason for concern. Arnold and Luthra (2000) reported from other studies that Wal-Mart conquered 25 per cent of the department store market only three years after its entry into the greater Toronto [Canada] area. In Germany, the company was called the "smiling invader" and was extremely successful in attracting customers (Mello, 1999). And although UK consumers did not seem to be as price-sensitive as US consumers, Arnold and Fernie (2000) report that Wal-Mart's acquisition of Asda and subsequent actions were beginning to change store attributes in the UK, by increasing customers' awareness of price differences among retailers. The authors hypothesized that the "market spoiler" effect proposed by Arnold et al. (1998), by which a retailer's actions change in its own favour, consumers' perceptions of the importance of store choice attributes, could be started to occur in the UK market. (da Rocha & Dib, 2002, p. 65)

The most important element of successful change is never to let your people get offside, says Marie Gill, head of organizational development at UK supermarket Asda, which recently merged with Wal-Mart, one of the world's largest retailers. "The important thing for us was to ensure that our people understood that this takeover was a meeting of cultures", she said. "We educated them with the ethos that we were becoming part of the Wal-Mart family.... People do not usually resist change -- they resist being changed. Employees have to trust that the decisions made by the business are for the best, not only for the customers but also for the people. In Asda's case, we would not have gone ahead with the merger if it was not. The most incredible thing about the whole process is that Asda has not fundamentally changed -- the process has been more of an evolution". (Pollitt, 2004, p. 18)

Godfrey Owen, deputy chief executive of Brathay [**Brathay, hired through Wal-Mart by Asda**, is a consulting firm for people development (see [http://www.brathay.org.uk/about\\_home.asp](http://www.brathay.org.uk/about_home.asp))] explained: ...."Change is only really viable when two organizations share some kind of synergy. The cultures of Asda and Wal-Mart were similar from the start and, as a result, their values were similar...."The programs we develop for clients at Brathay help organizations to manage change as they equip them to manage and embrace change effectively. Part of our work is to help organizations and their employees to answer the question: 'How can I be successful in a new culture?'...."It is important that when working through a change-management program that people work towards a common goal and that firms empower their employees to put them into action. If staff are not focused on the organization's objectives, the process is almost certain to fail. Our programs are designed to help to win the vital struggle for hearts and minds". (Pollitt, 2004, p. 19)



## Implications for organisation studies

One of the reasons for creating the case study as it is, was to demonstrate that: 1) much of the data available on Wal-Mart is published from a business and strategy perspective within which there are pearls of 'wisdom' regarding organisational and human resources development; 2) at the same time, business strategy is privileged over its people inside and outside of the organisation itself, and 3) there is ample evidence to suggest that many of the people affected by Wal-Mart welcome the store into their communities or they are unaware and or unconcerned, ambivalent or unaccepting of Wal-Mart's presence. As such we look at the dialectics of organisational leadership and followership as it pertains to the content of the aforementioned case study.

### 'Good' leadership traits

Trait theory is perhaps, the most definitive example of splitting used in organisational leadership theory. Its basic tenets are that people who measure up positively to pre-defined traits will exemplify behaviors associated with those traits and therefore, have the potential not only to be leaders, but also 'good' leaders. Consequently, trait theory is also a conditional and conditioning paradigm that embodies mirroring: "traits were assigned which distinguished leaders from non-leaders or followers.... The focus was on those characteristics or traits that separated 'great leaders' from the masses" (Hunt, 1984, pp. 113-114).

During recruitment and selection of new hires, one of the first aspects 'tested' for is organisational 'fit'. Much of the hiring interview and especially multiphase queries, are imbued with determining whether there is a values match between the business and the incumbent (Jaffe & Scott, 1998). If there is, you're in, and if not, you're out. If you're in, through transference, such as in orientation programs or internships, the pairing becomes stronger. Consequently, the use of such matching exercises are really mirroring exercises and attachment mechanisms that reinforce that which the employee already is as well as what the employee should not be *and what that employee should never become while working for that organisation*. And, that which one should be, should not be; and should not become is determined by those few at the top or the person to whom one should, historically, 'bow up' (Adorno, 1991/2004). Other studies have shown that minimisation of relational dichotomies at work increases one's power base: the more relationships one has the more independent one becomes and therefore, the less dependent upon any one 'master' (Lee & Tiedens, 2001). Those who have the power to hire in their own image magnify their presence (Carr & Lapp, 2005c, 2006a).

Although it is difficult to separate where Sam Walton ends and Wal-Mart begins, the business can be seen to have developed against Walton's leadership paradigm that is now 44 years old and still seems to be going strong but not necessarily in a 'good' way. By virtue of applying one

trait theory that is Fiedler and Chemers's (1984) least preferred coworker scale (LPCS) to the Wal-Mart case study, we can see that Sam Walton is reasonably characterized as being pleasant and friendly. This means that those with whom he would have least preferred to work and to have had work for him would be unpleasant and unfriendly -- all of the time and even when treated badly. LPCS is an inversion of what the leader will reflect and be through what he or she states he or she dislikes about others. In other words, the LPCS is a tool that enacts splitting, the results of which are expected to be mirrored by the leader: "The LPC scale is used by Fred Fiedler to identify a person's dominant leadership style. Fiedler believes that this style is a relatively fixed part of one's personality and is therefore difficult to change" (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2003, pp. W-127-W-128). The 'good' part of trait theory is that eventually, it locates the same types of people in the same places for easier identification. The growth of trait theory and related recruitment and selection exercises increases the clarity of what can be seen to be believed.

### **'Bad trait theory'**

Trait theory and the characteristics that comprise it are only as 'good' and as 'bad' as history has shown, so far. Further, it is the split between superior and subordinate that is mirrored when in reality, to be superior and subordinate, master and slave occurs at the same time to cause ambivalence and associated affective anxiety and then 'good' or 'bad' leadership. In turn, the internal health of the organisation affects its desires that affect its business practices or business behaviours (Nicholson, 1998) that are mirrored back to it by employees, investors and community members. Through, transference and mirroring, leadership traits also co-construct organisational identity (Curry, 2002) that with the help of idealisation and transference creates a set of traits associated with an organisational ideal (Schwartz, 1990). For Adolf Hitler and his organisation, an extreme credo associated with trait theory was definitively split between superiors and subordinates: "responsibility towards above, authority towards below...German folklore has a drastic symbol for this trait. It speaks of Radfahrrernaturen, bicyclist's characteristics. Above they bow, they kick below" (Adorno, 1991/2004, p. 143, 156).

The problem with trait theory, or any 'immovable' or 'immutable' paradigm for that matter, is that it is firmly entrenched in a depressive position that was derived from splitting. For instance, transactional leadership is that which denotes expectations of routine performance (Bass, 1985). Alternatively, transformational leadership occurs when: "leaders broaden and elevate followers' interests and stir followers to look beyond their own interests for the good of others" (Schermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 2003, p. 301). Thus, the paradox of transformational leadership is that to be transformational, one must be transactional in the sense that the former becomes routine performance. Eventually, mirroring negates that which was to go beyond 'normal' performance (i.e. to become transactional and routine).

In the Wal-Mart case study, one can see the combination of transactional and transformational paradigms in terms of the organisation's infiltration into the mega-supply of mega-products around the world. But when combined with leadership trait theory, it is then that leaders do not benefit from followers' suggestions or concerns because to mirror loyalty, one cannot be disloyal to some decisions of some leaders -- it becomes an all or nothing proposition. Disloyalty is akin to that which was experienced during times of 'bad breast' reminders such that those who seem to be disloyal become 'all bad'. In the case study, the most powerful example of this concerns the violence against the Guatemalan union organiser and her husband -- imposed by other Guatemalans on their own community members due to the effects and affects of mirroring by Wal-Mart. The concept of 'kick down' resonates fully. Yet, if transformational leadership was an entrenched trait it would also be that the followers, such as union organisers, could at the same time, 'kick up' suggestions for their own betterment if not 'just' as employees, then as consumers and *long-term* investors. It has been noted that even the most transformational executives are less than successful at changing upper-level board decisions and values: "it is probably dangerous to assume that, in either type of organization, the influence of one party will necessarily guide decision-making in a direction that is at odds with the goals of the other" (Maitlis, 2004, p. 1306). Further, the 'good' of Wal-Mart has more than one opposite of 'bad': the 'good' of Wal-Mart is causing a 'poor' quality of life. Once the dichotomy between what is 'good' and what is 'bad' has been set, it becomes its own unshakable paradigm -- the non-union supporters, the slaves, were the transformational Snow Whites, who turned into that which was reflected to them, the ugly, violent Wicked Witch Queen and master -- clearly the depressive position of an entrenched trait. To break this mirror, one must re-split the paradigm. Splitting is a psychodynamic process that has the potential to negate its own negation -- providing that the resplitting results in positive synergy. The only way out then, becomes to 'get out' and to look for and insist upon positive rather than negative synergy from the mutual affectation of opposites. If Wal-Mart is 'successful' it is successful because it is allowed to fulfil desire -- that is precisely one of its stated goals. As such, the Wal-Mart situation in our communities can be seen as 'plain as the noses on our faces'.

### **'Pretty ugly leadership traits'**

As shown in Table 1 below, Walton's leadership profile seems to reflect maturity (Argyris, 1956) and the positive aspects of the *Big Five Personality Factors* paradigm (Barrick & Mount, 1991). In other words, to what the case points is Sam Walton, himself, being the 'good' master or parental figure traits from whom subsequent Wal-Mart leaders have taken parental-figure traits as their cue. Unfortunately, it is also that many of the communities in which Wal-Mart works, seem to be enraptured with this organisation's reflection such that when Wal-Mart looks down upon its employees in what seems to be a reassuring manner (i.e. creating employment and consumer choice), that because of inherent dialectics, there are also 'bad' consequences that may be reflected not only

above but also below the surface. Philosophically and psychodynamically, these deep changes or negative transformations change self and other and vice versa.

**Table 1: Example components of leadership-followerhip dialectics**

<i>Argyris (1956) Maturity-Immaturity Continuum;</i>		<b>Immature Maturity: Dialectical synergy</b>
<b><i>Maturity; The Good</i></b>	<b><i>Immaturity; The Bad</i></b>	<b>The Pretty-Ugly</b>
<b>Barrick &amp; Mount (1991)</b>	<b>McCall &amp; Lombardo (1983)</b>	<b>Hallerton (1996); Torres (2003)</b>
<b>“Big Five” Personality Factors</b>	<b>“Derailing Factors” for executives</b>	<b>‘Deadly Sins’ [by] Successful Leaders: behavioral habits common to successful people</b>
<i>Activity; Diverse behavior: Extroversion: sociable; assertive; outgoing</i>	<i>Passivity; Limited behavior: Inability to act</i>	Gluttony: Make decisions to get as much as possible for self at all costs Sloth: Lax leaders have high productivity employees
<i>Independence: Openness to Experience: broad-minded; innovative; curious</i>	<i>Dependence: Fails to experience and to learn from experience</i>	Pride: uncompromising
<i>Long time perspective: Conscientiousness: dependable; responsible; persevering</i>	<i>Short time perspective: Cannot be trusted</i>	Envy: Openly demean others’ behaviours and accomplishments
<i>Deep interests: Agreeableness: cooperative; trusting and trustworthy; dependable</i>	<i>Shallow interests: Cannot get along with people</i>	Anger: Willingness to say and if necessary, to yell ‘no’; open disagreement at all costs
<i>Superordinate position; Much self-awareness: Emotional Stability: high anxiety threshold; secure; relaxed</i>	<i>Subordinate position; Little self-awareness: Narcissism</i>	Lust: Pretend to love others to get what one wants Covetousness: Generate ‘false-love’ to achieve self-advancement

The diagramming of the table is purposeful in that: 1) it represents leadership trait dichotomies within each theory (i.e. the good and bad of Argyris’ immaturity-maturity theory is implied) and between theories (i.e. the good of maturity is in diametric opposition to the bad of immaturity that is shown explicitly) to show a unity of opposites and mutual affectation of interrelationships; 2) the perforated lines between binaries (i.e. the good or bad and the pretty-ugly) demonstrates that concentration on one side of the binary can lead to ‘pretty’ results for self, which are explicit and ‘ugly’, ones for other, which are implied and left for the reader to determine. The reasoning for this is to make an appeal to those who might consider that the concept of finding the ‘one best opposite’ as is so popular and has been for so long, in the ‘hard’ sciences is in the absence of such dichotomy, open to interpretation in the social sciences (Guest, 1939; Laing, 1889; Wallace, 1975). This leads us to the third characteristic of the table, the rightmost side of the right column is also perforated to allow for environmental influences, including but not limited to hard sciences, so as not to split off any potential for diverse opinions being ‘kicked-up or bowed-down’. People want a more democratic system than they perceive they get (Savery, 1993). In so doing, although we have chosen to show negative synergy from the unity of trait theory opposites, there is opportunity for negation of negation of dependence upon such negativity. Finally, we leave the table and its interpretation toward the end of this paper because it is a tool that could be used to effect the final dialectical ‘rule’ of the negation of the negation of Wal-Mart’s negative leadership power.

## Finishing the dialectic

Followers have yet to negate the powerlessness within themselves to negate the power of Wal-Mart. For example, none of the articles included in references or in what could also be lengthened to be a bibliography, stated that any Wal-Mart buying boycotts had actually occurred although some were planned (Moldoff, 2002; see also Peled, 2001). Because of Wal-Mart's low-paying job and supplier practices, those who work for Wal-Mart, can only afford to shop at Wal-Mart. And, what can be bought is either Wal-Mart approved or it is not. Eventually, it could be that Wal-Mart communities, in terms of this paradox of choice, become embodied as Wal-Martians -- their use and abuse of only Wal-Mart products and services will decrease diversity of appearance as well.

It is to the concept of appearance that we now turn. Specifically, this is to the aspect of the dialectic that may never become 'finished' when organisations such as Brathay appear to come to the rescue of all Wal-Mart's acquired Snow Whites. These metaphorical princes can act in ways to allow for emancipation from negative synthesis of unified and interrelated opposites. That is, they can provide at least two sides to every story and help followers and give followers the tools to make their own decisions. On the other hand, they can also create false images by providing leadership traits the slaves want but cannot see in their own reflections because as slaves, they are so used to their leaders' refusal to mirror them. Brathay and company can mirror what the slaves desire but do not recognise in themselves: heroism, competency, dynamism and charisma. But to ethically foster these 'master' qualities, it is that they are developed for the purpose of creating freedom from the wicked-witch of dependency on Wal-Mart. Charismatic overly narcissistic leaders who were able to hire Brathay in the first place, may have been co-opted to do so by charismatic overly narcissistic leaders in Brathay, even if inadvertently (Sankowsky, 1995; Dumas & Sankowsky, 1998). The consultant's dilemma should not necessarily be one of the Prince's paradox -- instead it should be the paradox of the Huntsman. The ending of the Wal-Mart fairy tale is also paradoxical: to negate its negative synergy is a beginning that is 'really' dependent upon the independent thinking of its leaders and followers alike and in unlike ways. The breaking of this mirror is to reflect the Wal-Mart *I* and its followers' *I*'s back into the community *I*.

## Notes

1. The authors are aware that there is not just one definitive story of *Snow White* but that there are a number of versions in different cultures. Whilst there is no one definitive text of the story, the central themes remain similar (see Tatar, 1999) and it is these common themes that we rely upon in the 're-telling' of parts of the fairy tale.
2. We are following Hegel's original usage here and below by using the male pronoun for master and slave. In no way, however, is this to be taken as gender-specific.

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# THE GLASS BEADS OF GLOBAL WAR: DEALING, DEATH AND THE POLICY ANALYSIS MARKET

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## ABSTRACT

According to Hanson (2005): 'On July 28, 2003, two senators announced that a Pentagon betting market on terror attacks was about to open, which terrorists could abuse. Amid widespread condemnation, this project ended the next day. The day after that, its widely reviled supervisor John Poindexter resigned.' The so-called 'Policy Analysis Market' being described here invites, nay begs, to be understood through Baudrillard's sustained invocation of the (post)modern world as *simulacrum*. For the case is replete with the mutual (re)generation of various simulacra that cannot be drawn back to any one simple origin. We witness simulations sustaining other simulations in a complex of unending, unendable, deferral; a complex illusorily encountered by both protagonists and antagonists as necessarily resolvable to a real, via enactment or abandonment, in their unceasing, mournful, yearning for a ground beyond simulation. 'Behind the masks... are further masks... and so on to infinity. The only illusion is that of unmasking something or someone.' (Deleuze, 2004:130). We interrogate a range of accounts of the (un)timely demise of the PAM, from the fearful senators and the moralistic media who subsumed and buttressed their position to the *extropian* market evangelists for whom the failure of this particular market was merely proof of the veracity of markets elsewhere. And we find that, *inter alia*, PAM was not really market-like enough and, indeed, that it duplicated in impoverished form already existing markets that pertain to its objects of interest; that it was too much a market, given that its 'goods' are seemingly inappropriate for market trade; that it exposed too much of the truth of the actual operation of existing markets via the difficulties it confronted with regard to the possibility of insider dealing; and that the de-centering of speculative effort does nothing to ameliorate the inherent impossibility of, the inherent difference within and between, prediction and the real.

*God makes the world by calculating, but his calculations never work out exactly..., and this inexactitude or injustice in the result, this irreducible inequality, forms the condition of the world. The world 'happens' while God calculates; if the calculation were exact, there would be no world. The world can be regarded as a 'remainder'*  
(Deleuze, 2004: 280)

## INTRODUCTION

'On July 28, 2003, two senators announced that a Pentagon betting market on terror attacks was about to open, which terrorists could abuse. Amid widespread condemnation, this project ended the next day. The day after that, its widely reviled supervisor John Poindexter resigned.' (Hanson, 2005). This betting market, known as the 'Policy Analysis Market' (PAM) was part of a US Defense Department Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) sponsored programme entitled 'FutureMAP' (an acronym for 'Futures Markets Applied to Prediction'). In this paper we interrogate a range of accounts of the (un)timely demise of the PAM, ranging from those of the fearful senators and the moralistic media who subsumed and buttressed their position to the extropian market evangelists for whom the failure of this particular market was merely proof of the veracity of markets elsewhere. And we find, on the way, that PAM was not really market-like enough and, indeed, that it duplicated in impoverished form already existing markets that pertain to its objects of interest; that it was too much a market, given that its 'goods' are seemingly inappropriate for market trade; that it exposed too much of the truth of the actual operation of existing markets via the difficulties and opportunities it confronted with regard to the possibility of insider dealing; and that the de-centering of speculative effort does nothing to ameliorate the inherent impossibility of, the inherent difference within and between, prediction and the real. We begin then with a little more detail on PAM itself and its ephemeral passage to being and subsequent death.

## INFORMATION MARKETS/IDEA FUTURES

PAM is an example of a technology that takes the form of a market and belongs to a set of such devices known either as 'Information Markets', 'Ideas Futures' or 'Prediction Markets'. The three terms tend to be used interchangeably (see the quote below), although the latter two are perhaps more explicitly directed towards prediction (Prediction Markets of uncertain but relatively bounded events, Ideas Futures of the more unbound, such as technological/scientific breakthroughs) whilst the former foregrounds the discovery and aggregation of information (which may or may not be used for predictive purposes).<sup>1</sup>

Prediction markets – also called 'idea futures' or 'information markets' – are designed to aggregate information and produce predictions about future events: for example, a political candidate's re-election, or a box-office take, or the probability that the Federal Reserve will increase interest rates at its next meeting. To elicit such predictions, contract payoffs are tied to unknown future event outcomes. (Servan-Schreiber et al, 2004: 243).

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<sup>1</sup> Other terms commonly used to describe these phenomena include those which substitute the term 'exchange' for 'market', and the slightly more, depending on your perspective, accurate or pejorative terms, 'betting market' or 'betting exchange'.

Payoffs on such markets/exchanges can be absolute win-loss on the basis of the occurrence or not of a specified event (e.g. the Republican candidate winning the largest share of the popular vote in a US presidential election) or in proportion to a the size of a potentially continuously varying index, at a given date and time (e.g. the proportion of the popular vote garnered by the Republican candidate in a US presidential election), or indeed as the result of some form of combinatorial (e.g. for a named individual to both receive the Republican candidacy and the largest share of the popular vote in a US presidential election process). And stakes can be ‘real’ in the form of cash money or ‘imaginary’ in the form of play money. The former stake system, in the US, is only legally operable in the Iowa Electronic Markets system (IEM) run by the University of Iowa Business School<sup>2</sup>, although illegal real money systems (for those resident in the US) are available on line (for example, the TradeSports<sup>3</sup> betting exchange headquartered in the Republic of Ireland). A prominent example of the latter stake system, involving play money (the Hollywood Dollar®), is that of the Hollywood Stock Exchange (HSX)<sup>4</sup> on which one can play bet on both discrete and variable outcomes, in terms of say a star’s career end, in the discrete case, and a film’s box office take by a certain date, in the variable case.

The examples we provide above are illustrative in more ways than we have thus far alluded. The exchanges/markets of TradeSports and HSX, although now used by some observers as providers of signalling information on the likelihood of future events, do not appear to have been originally set up with such lofty ideals in mind. Rather they were and are betting exchanges in which one is invited to play, with real or imaginary stakes (respectively) in anticipation of both real or imaginary returns and indeed of course the pleasure of the punt. The Iowa Electronic Markets however, and PAM is a follower of this progenitor, were explicitly interested from the outset in predictive ability and justify their existence in large part through invocation of such a noble end, along with other similar ones such as teaching and broader aspects of that other global good, ‘research’. The Iowa Electronics Markets are ‘operated by faculty at the University of Iowa Tippie College of Business as part of our research and teaching mission’ (<http://www.biz.uiowa.edu/iem/>, consulted 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006). Such...

“Prediction markets” are designed and conducted for the primary purpose of aggregating information so that market prices forecast future events. These markets differ from typical, naturally occurring markets in their primary role as a forecasting tool instead of a resource allocation mechanism. (Berg, Nelson and Rietz, 2003: 3).

So these markets are explicitly designed for a predictive purpose, rather than being ‘naturally occurring’, as Austrian ideologues inform us is the case with ‘real’ markets, and their users therefore are primarily those who look in from the outside (although such observers can and do also play within). This insider/outsider distinction is an intriguing one, to which we will return. For now we turn to chart the ways in which PAM sought to instantiate a predictive market for the analysis of policy from the intellectual underpinnings and exemplification provided by IEM.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.biz.uiowa.edu/iem/>, last visited 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.tradesports.com>, last visited 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.HSX.com>, last visited 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006.

## MAKING THE MARKET FOR POLICY ANALYSIS

A suitable vehicle for making the link between IEM and PAM is provided by the body of Robin Hanson, whose words we have already encountered. Hanson is Associate Professor of Economics at George Mason University. He previously studied physics in California as an undergraduate, physics and philosophy of science at Chicago as a Masters student and returned to California (albeit to a different institutional location) to take his PhD, which resulted in a dissertation entitled 'Four Puzzles in Information and Politics: Product Bans, Informed Voters, Social Insurance, & Persistent Disagreement'. As well as rendering himself as the originator of the notion of Ideas Futures<sup>5</sup>, he is vociferous in his support for IEM, endlessly invoking it as one of his prime examples of the superior, or at the very least equal, efficiency of prediction markets in comparison with other modes and technologies of futurology. Such technologies are also lauded by this hypester for their democratizing function (once democracy has been consonantly re-thought) when applied to the realm of policy making:

Our policy-makers and media rely too much on the "expert" advice of a self-interested insider's club of pundits and big-shot academics. These pundits are rewarded too much for telling good stories, and for supporting each other, rather than for being "right". Instead, let us create betting markets on most controversial questions, and treat the current market odds as our best expert consensus. The real experts (maybe you), would then be rewarded for their contributions, while clueless pundits would learn to stay away. You should have a free-speech right to bet on political questions in policy markets, and we could even base a new form of government on idea futures. (Hanson at <http://hanson.gmu.edu/ideafutures.html>, last consulted February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006).

But it is with PAM itself that Hanson moves centre stage. Hanson as, somewhat ironically, big-shot academic, was the principal apologist and protagonist for PAM both prior to its brief existence and in the furore surrounding and since its demise. Indeed, despite not formally being the lead economist at the project's inception, he has since seemed to take responsibility for both the defence of the project and its intellectual inspiration. And we should not be too churlish here. For Hanson is, if nothing else, clearly a laudably conscientious liberal in terms of the ways in which he seeks to expose his own thinking around these issues and indeed that of those who disagree with him to open critical scrutiny. Indeed, you would not be reading the current paper without this facet of Hanson's public spiritedness in defence of debate: virtually all of the sources dealing with PAM itself, along with its pre-cursors and doppelgangers, upon which we draw here were found through exploration of the magnificent resource that he has assembled on the subject at <http://hanson.gmu.edu/policyanalysismarket.html> (last consulted 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006).

So what then is the Policy Analysis Market? And why was it both so controversial and, consequently, short lived? Here is the 'Concept Overview' from the original PAM website that appeared in July 2003<sup>6</sup>:

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<sup>5</sup> 'I generated this idea in the fall of 1988' (Hanson at <http://hanson.gmu.edu/ideafutures.html>, last consulted February 22<sup>nd</sup> 2006).

<sup>6</sup> Due to the resulting controversy the site disappeared almost as quickly as it had appeared. For example, when we first became aware of PAM in late July 2003, via critical discussion on a number of discussion lists, it was already impossible to access the site itself, which was to act as the portal for

Analysts often use prices from various markets as indicators of potential events. The use of petroleum futures contract prices by analysts of the Middle East is a classic example. The Policy Analysis Market (PAM) refines this approach by trading futures contracts that deal with underlying fundamentals of relevance to the Middle East. Initially, PAM will focus on the economic, civil, and military futures of Egypt, Jordan, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Turkey and the impact of U.S. involvement with each.

The contracts traded on PAM will be based on objective data and observable events. These contracts will be valuable because traders who are registered with PAM will use their money to acquire contracts. A PAM trader who believes that the price of a specific futures contract under-predicts the future status of the issue on which it is based can attempt to profit from his belief by buying the contract. The converse holds for a trader who believes the price is an over-prediction – she can be a seller of the contract. This price discovery process, with the prospect of profit and at pain of loss, is at the core of a market's predictive power.

The issues represented by PAM contracts may be interrelated; for example, the economic health of a country may affect civil stability in the country and the disposition of one country's military may affect the disposition of another country's military. The trading process at the heart of PAM allows traders to structure combinations of futures contracts. Such combinations represent predictions about interrelated issues that the trader has knowledge of and thus may be able to make money on through PAM. Trading these trader-structured derivatives results in a substantial refinement in predictive power.

( [http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/linkscopy/PAM/pam\\_concept.htm](http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/linkscopy/PAM/pam_concept.htm) , accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006).

And this is what at least part of it looked like:

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trading on the exchange. It is once again thanks to Hanson's meticulous documentation of resources that might be used to understand PAM that we are able to report precisely on its content here. A facsimile of the original site can be found at <http://www.ratical.org/ratville/CAH/linkscopy/PAM/> (last accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2006).



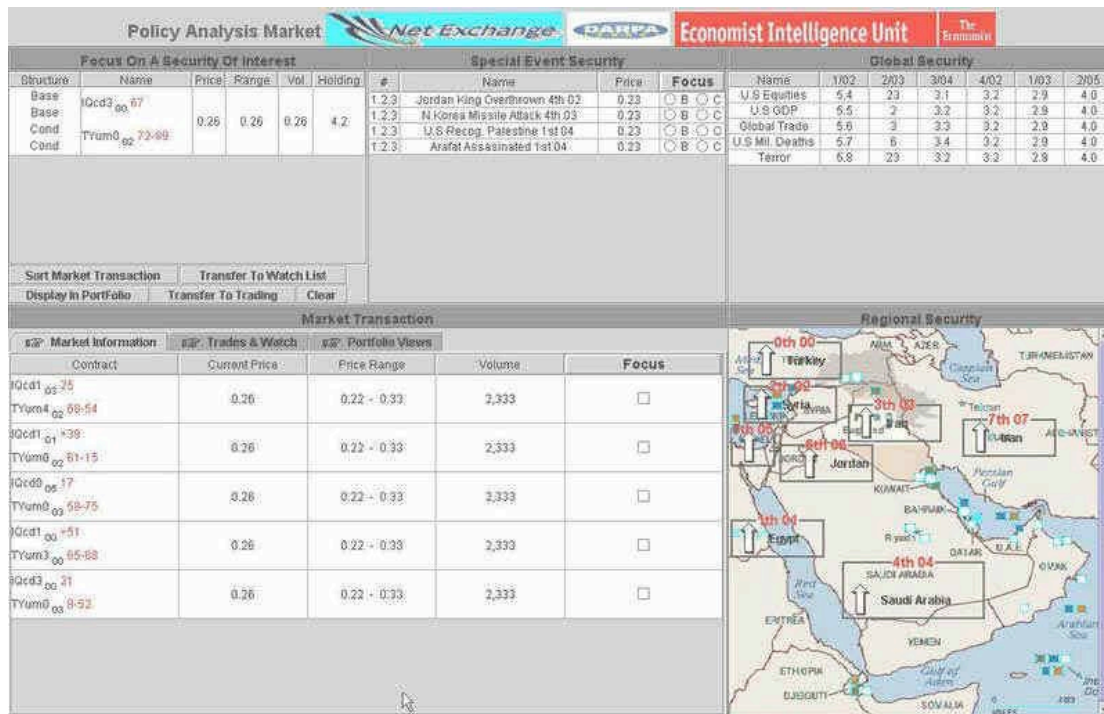


Figure 1: The Policy Analysis Market

(Image obtained from <http://cryptome.org/pam/pam-site.htm>, accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006. The image is apparently: 'Copyright © 2003 Net Exchange. All rights reserved.')

Where to begin? The image is clearly in itself something of an autocritique. Consider first the four possible trades listed under 'Special Event Security'. Here we witness some of the possible occurrences upon which our putative trader could speculate: the overthrow of the King of Jordan by the fourth quarter of 2002; the assassination of Yasser Arafat by the first quarter of 2004; a North Korean missile attack by the fourth quarter of 2003; and perhaps the least likely, US recognition of Palestine by the first quarter of 2004, each of which is currently trading at apparently about 1 in 4. Special events indeed and the essence of security! It was the possibility of trading and hence potentially profiting upon the prediction of special events like these that primarily attracted the ire of the two US Senators, Ron Wyden (Democrat, Oregon) and Byron Dorgan (Democrat, North Dakota) that we met at the outset of our piece. In a joint letter to Admiral Poindexter, as you will recall, the apparently 'widely reviled' supervisor of the project, our Democrats stated: 'Spending taxpayer dollars to create terrorism betting parlors is as wasteful as it is repugnant. The American people want the Federal government to use its resources enhancing our security, not gambling on it.' ([http://wyden.senate.gov/media/2003/07282003\\_terrormarket.html](http://wyden.senate.gov/media/2003/07282003_terrormarket.html), consulted 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006). And it was the Senators' response to the proposed market and the incredible heat and light it generated in the media which led to the market's cancellation and Poindexter's resignation two days later. However, this was not the end of the possibility for punting on policy in the Middle East and beyond. One can, for example, still place bets of this nature, albeit illegally if one is based in the US, at TradeSports (see their 'current events' section). More amusingly however, much of the media seemed to be of the opinion that the white knight of private enterprise had ridden into town to fill the gap left by PAM in the market for markets. Apparently the 'American Action Market', to be launched by Tad Hirsch of MIT's Media Lab would



meet many of the needs that PAM had sought to fulfil (see for example, <http://www.wired.com/news/politics/0,1283,59879,00.html>, consulted 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2006). However:

The American Action Market (AAM) is a tongue-in-cheek prediction market project originated by Tad Hirsch of the M.I.T. Media Lab as a parody of the cancelled Policy Analysis Market which was originally proposed as part of the US Total Information Awareness program. It would permit for-profit betting on major political events.

([http://www.sourcewatch.org/wiki.phtml?title=American\\_Action\\_Market](http://www.sourcewatch.org/wiki.phtml?title=American_Action_Market), both accessed 1st December 2005)<sup>7</sup>

Other aspects of interest immediately visible upon the PAM site are the 'organisations behind' (PAM site) the programme, 'Netexchange' and 'The Economist Intelligence Unit', alerting us immediately to the business potential of what is proposed. When one looks in a little more detail one begins to realise the fiendish cunning of the instruments that were hopefully to be made available for trade. Consider the following, also taken from the copy of PAM available at <http://cryptome.org/pam/pam-site.htm>:

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<sup>7</sup> The rest of the article reads as follows: 'As the original Pentagon project had planned to do, it will open October 1, 2003.

It will have several "categories of 'futures'" that users can bet on and trade. Some of these have easily verifiable outcomes:

- Who will be the next foreign leader to move from the CIA payroll to the White House's "most wanted" list?
- What will be the next major White House lie to break? How will the White House attempt to control it? Will the attempt be successful?
- Which corporation will be next to see its close relationship to the White House erupt into scandal?

"In addition, AAM will also allow users to place and trade longer-term wagers on current or past scenarios that are in the short term unverifiable because of White House secrecy, and which will only be proved or disproved via impeachment hearings, journalistic sleuth-work, etc. For example:

- Was Donald H. Rumsfeld the first to suggest using the attacks as pretext to overthrow Saddam Hussein, as reported in the press, or did the idea first come from others?
- Was the invasion of Afghanistan planned from the start as a stepping-stone to an attack on Iraq?
- Was the President (George Walker Bush) fully conscious of the lies in his pre-war speeches, or were the decisions to lie taken by others? By whom?
- How important a long-term factor in the 2003 invasion of Iraq was Iraq's expulsion of U.S. and British oil companies from Iraq between 1972 and 1975?"

As with any such market, "as evidence is accumulated to prove or disprove a particular future, its market value will change; this change may serve analysts as an indicator of a scenario's likelihood, even if a final resolution of the bet is never achieved." Thus the bets can drive policy, as do those on the better-known commodity markets.

It is not clear if AAM can also serve as an assassination market'

The combinatorial bet, an example of which is illustrated here, is interesting to Hanson in at least two ways. Firstly, and important for PAM itself, combinatorial bets supposedly generate information about more phenomena from a limited number of participants in the market than more simple instruments alone would allow. Indeed one of the more technical criticisms of PAM was that the sheer number of possible trades, given likely numbers of traders, was such that the market would be so thin as to be both unreliable and unrealistic in itself and also liable to exacerbating potential manipulation by ‘interested’ traders (of whom more later). Combinatorials offer one possible, albeit partial, solution to such a set of difficulties. Secondly, Hanson suggests that these wagers demonstrate linkages between different events. On PAM all such possible linkages were prefigured by the site designers and thus the attractiveness of trade in each of the combinations, regardless of the direction of that trade, could be taken to be evidence of the plausibility of the link that the contract itself instantiated and thus a further source of information for policy makers.

In the aftermath of the debacle constituted by the concatenation of PAM’s inauguration and demise, Hanson radically ramped up his defence of the project throughout media of all forms (see his PAM website for innumerable examples). And it is here that things get really interesting for the perspectives we want to pursue in relation to this phenomenon. But first we take a brief theoretical interlude.

### **BETTING ON BAUDRILLARD**

Robert Cooper (1993) conceives of the reproduction of uncertainty in modern technology and the representation upon which it trades<sup>8</sup> - the ghost that haunts both the so-called War on Terror and the part that PAM seeks to play in its resolution - in terms of the spatial logic of the fold. For Derrida (1981: 227) the fold is a gathering that is at the same time a dissemination, a joining that keeps apart, but never presents itself as such. Whilst for Deleuze (1993), the fold is that which mediates between virtuality and actuality. It is not just a question of representation—organizing matter into visible form—but also the virtual relations of force that act to destabilize the determinable and bring forward what can be articulated.

In markets for commodities the endless mutability of price constitutes precisely this destabilization of the determinable, along with the ceaseless re-articulation of particular prices. In derivative markets however, of which PAM is an example, there is ironically an apparent, at least theoretical, grounding through resolution in the

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<sup>8</sup> Following Heidegger (1977), Derrida (1981), Deleuze (1993) and indeed, particularly Deleuze’s reading of Foucault (1986).

underlying phenomena from which the derivative is derived: a commodity in the case of commodity derivatives; an ‘objectively’ determinable event in the case of prediction markets. The event either happens, as the future is played out in the present, or it does not.<sup>9</sup> And the positions taken can thus be closed out. Perversely then, it is in the realm of the derivative that the problematic of representation’s descent into simulation that is constituted by markets, along with all other forms of modern technology, is most clearly visible. For the values that markets make available to us in relation to the goods that are traded upon them are, in as close to a final analysis as we are doomed to get, relationally dependent upon the values of other goods in other markets. This is the majesty of Simmel’s insight into Money.

Whilst representation in its simple, initial form, seeks to re-present reality in order better to control it, when representation ascends to a worldview, as Heidegger warned us that it had, the bringing together of what were once relatively discrete representations and their increasing taking of their meaning and value from other representations rather than merely from that which they purported to represent, produces the ever expanding risk of simulation. With the increasing distance from any anchor in some pre-representational reality, technology - and the market is a technology of exchange - and its simulational objectives become the source of uncertainty rather than its solution. And the world begins to function as a gigantic simulacrum (Baudrillard 1983).

The emergence of the ‘gigantic’ here, in the sense in which Heidegger (1977) mobilizes the term, inaugurates the shift from world representation to world *simulation*. But what are the consequences of this shift? ‘Simulation has gone beyond the stage of detachability’ governed by representation ‘which enabled the world to be manipulated as “transient aggregates given to assembly, disassembly and reassembly”, by abolishing the very notion of a substantive reference’ (Cooper 1993: 302).<sup>10</sup> And once all reference points are lost, for Cooper as for Baudrillard, it inevitably becomes impossible to return to any singular underlying ‘reality’. We are in a logic of simulation which has nothing to do with a logic of facts and an order of reasons.

Simulation is defined by a *precession* of the model, of all models around the merest fact—the models come first, and their orbital constitutes the genuine magnetic field of events. (1983: 175, our emphasis)

With the emergence of simulation the ‘system’ becomes self-sustaining. ‘Simulation folds back on itself again and again in . . . [a] process of dedifferentiation’ (Cooper 1993: 303). The project has a self-collapsing characteristic of ‘implosion’ (Baudrillard 1983), which inevitably leads to an undermining of the rigidities of categorical thought upon which representation depends. And technology of all sorts, such as the platform upon which PAM appears, as well as PAM itself, is absolutely critical for this move:

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<sup>9</sup> One could assert a similar grounding resolution in relation to commodity markets themselves. Here it would be made by the price of a particular good in a particular market, in relation to the price of other goods in other markets.

<sup>10</sup> The secondary quote is from Fisher (1978).

The real is produced from miniaturised units, from matrices, memory banks and command models—and with these it can be reproduced an indefinite number of times . . . In fact, it is no longer real at all. It is hyper real, the product of an irradiating synthesis of combinatory models in a hyperspace . . . (Baudrillard 1983: 3–4)

For Baudrillard, there can thus only ever be access to an *image* of the real, its pretence of being. (Baudrillard 1989: 45)

Strictly speaking, nothing remains for us to base anything on. All that remains for us is theoretical violence—speculation to the death, whose only method is the radicalisation of hypotheses (Baudrillard 1983: 5).

Capital must be made to circulate, no longer around a fixed point, but as an endless chain of investments and reinvestments, just as value must be made to radiate in all directions (Baudrillard 1990: 153).

In the speculative markets through which capital is made to circulate, markets that are increasingly becoming dominated in both absolute and relative terms by their derivative cousins, the uncertainty that is so dangerous to realist representation is utterly necessary, an absolute condition of possibility. It is only if uncertainty and its own seemingly tamer derivative, risk, can be endlessly regenerated, recreated, that the market can continue to offer the potentially supernormal returns required to attract the speculators and the liquidity that they bring to enable the market to continue to function *along with* the possibility of the game continuing interminably through the endless deferral of the final arbitration of value.<sup>11</sup> It is why castigations of derivative markets' unreality are so pedestrian in their misreading of 'the problem'.<sup>12</sup> However, in the case of prediction markets like PAM, it is precisely the desire to better grasp reality that motivates the construction of the market as information instrument, as vehicle to a world in which uncertainty is minimised if not entirely expunged. This fetishization of a singular reality is PAM's and similar prediction markets' fatal flaw. And we will return to drive home our stake following the recommencement of our empirical act. Speculation to the death!

### THE FETISHIZATION OF SINGULAR REALITY<sup>13</sup>

Enter Robin Hanson – stage right. In his multiple media appearances following the demise of PAM one of the most notable aspects of Hanson's performances was the endless invocation he made of examples of prediction markets that were seen, when judged retrospectively, to have met or surpassed predictions offered via other means. Key characters in this play are temperature, oranges, election victors and losers, pollsters, gamblers, those big-shot experts and, of course, horses.<sup>14</sup> Let's start with the relationship between fruit and weather. As Fortune magazine's profile of Hanson has it:

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<sup>11</sup> See Rotman's (1987) reading of Derrida in relation to what he terms *xenomoney* for more detail on this point.

<sup>12</sup> See Lilley and Lightfoot (2006) for just such a pedestrian view.

<sup>13</sup> Ideally read whilst listening to Carly Simon sing the theme to 1977's Bond outing, *The Spy Who Loved Me*, a possible *our tune* for our extropians (see below).

<sup>14</sup> We don't explicitly take the equestrian turn here ourselves. Interested readers who wanted to pursue it could do worse than start at: <http://hanson.gmu.edu/gamble.html> (last consulted 24th February 2006) or indeed Thaler and Ziemba (1988).

Orange juice futures have been shown to be more accurate predictors of Florida weather than conventional forecasts. (Kahn, 2003).

The sole piece of research upon which this endlessly repeated assertion is based comes from a paper published over twenty years ago, which on closer analysis, seems to say nothing of the sort:

Ever since Richard Roll's widely misunderstood 1984 paper on the subject, there's been an urban myth going round that the frozen concentrated orange juice (FCOJ) futures market provides a better forecast of the weather in Florida than the weather channel. Not only did Roll not find this, he actually thought he'd found that the variance in the FCOJ contract price was about five times greater than anything that could possibly be explained by weather movements.

(<http://crookedtimber.org/2003/08/05/hayekian-markets-reconsidered>, consulted 24<sup>th</sup> February 2004).

There are a number of things worthy of note here. First, the example gains its purchase on the mediated consumer by the obviousness of its referents and the ways in which these can be used to relate to everyday activities, like the planning of one's summer holiday in Florida. Second it is rarely, if ever, tested or checked, like the oft quoted notion of the vast number of words that Eskimos apparently have for snow. Third is the incredible softness of the target. It is only with the recent advent of weather modelling on supercomputers that any mode of seemingly more sophisticated weather forecasting has consistently been able to beat more tried and tested truisms, such as 'the weather tomorrow will be the same as it is today'. And we witness a similar pattern with the other trumps of truth that Hanson and his *extropian*<sup>15</sup> colleagues seek to deploy. So, whilst over more than a twelve-year period, the IEM...

when they've been able to compare the market price on a day with poll results, national poll results on that same day trying to predict the election, ... out of 600 times, over three-quarters of the time, the market was a more accurate estimate of the outcome than the polls were (Hanson, from March 14th 2003 discussion on *Wall Street Week* TV show, available at <http://www.pbs.org/wsw/tvprogram/warbetting.html>, consulted 2nd December 2005).

...there are other more sober ways of making the comparison. For example, Michael Abramowicz (2003: 19 - 20), in his AEI Brookings's Joint Centre for Regulatory Studies report on information markets and their possible uses in administrative decision making, presents similar data, but quickly moves on to the killer point:

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<sup>15</sup> Hanson himself has no formal truck with any 'isms'. But he and his colleagues are frequently discussed and contribute to both 'extropian' lists and indeed their 'transhumanist' brethren. Extropy is apparently 'a symbol for continued progress and reflects the extent of a living or organizational system's intelligence, functional order, vitality, and capacity and drive for improvement' (<http://www.extropy.org/About.htm>). It is seemingly an essential part of transhumanism, the belief that changes in technology in the near future will so alter our social and material set up as to throw into question the very category of the human. (see, as a worthy starting point for further investigation of these cults, <http://www.extropy.org/>, last accessed 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006). Marinetti, come on down!

Collectively, these data seem sufficient to establish that the markets' predictions were neither haphazard nor perfectly omniscient...

The ultimate question is whether experts or markets are likely to outperform the other on average assuming that equal resources are provided for each task... No set of even hypothetical experiments seems sufficient to provide a definitive answer, or at least one in favor of information markets...

Perhaps the most that can be said on the basis of such experimental data is that information markets and well-motivated experts are roughly comparable... [A]ny ultimate benefit attributable to markets' information aggregation powers alone is likely to be relatively small.

We return to Abramowicz's relative lack of belief in such benefit shortly. Before doing so we deal with two other aspects of the defence of such tools that are particularly pertinent: the existence of other more 'natural' markets that could seemingly do similar jobs and the potential effects of interested or insider traders. Obviously markets in oil and derivatives thereof, the commodity whose securing is seen by many to be the prime mover of Western interest in the politics of and policies towards the Middle East, already exist. And presumably, and it's a big presumably, players in these markets will already be concerned about the issues that PAM and similar markets seek to reveal in their information aggregations. Indeed for a number of commentators that is precisely how such markets and their movements are to be read – see for example, PAM's 'Concept Overview'. But for Hanson their lack of purity renders them insufficient for the job. In a section of his self-valorisation entitled 'Close, but not enough' we find the following dismissals:

Stocks and bonds are bets on big bundles of ideas: underlying technology, business strategy, marketing skill, prices of input factors, market demand, etc. You want to bet on just what you think you know about.

Derivatives are usually required to have prices predictable from the underlying instruments they derive from. Many believe that the right combination of existing instruments can reproduce any bet, so new instruments only lower transaction costs. They're wrong. (<http://hanson.gmu.edu/ideafutures.html>, consulted 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006).

Such space clearing for his own pet projects seems somewhat at odds with his other claims about the virtue of combinatorials in thin markets (just how many traders are there out there?). Relatedly, the notion of new instruments thus 'only lowering transaction costs' seems somewhat strange. New instruments can only lower transaction costs if they result in a market of sufficient liquidity that those costs associated with both the mechanics of trade enactment and the risks attendant upon dealing at an unrealistic price can be either eliminated by weight of trading or sufficiently spread. More profoundly the notion that derivatives, either existing or imagined, have prices that are predictable from underlying instruments is at best only theoretically defensible. If derivative prices were precisely predictable from those of underlying instruments alone, the *raison d'être* for those derivatives dissolves. A more accurate reading of the relation between derivatives and underlying instruments would rather seem to be that the prices of the latter are partly predictable from the prices of the former. Derivatives seem to drive the prices of their underlying assets and those who seek to profit supernormally from, or speculate through, the gearing that derivatives trading generally entails take key advantage of this, which leads us rather

neatly on to the other source of concern that motivates Hanson and the apologists for other prediction, information and idea markets: that of the possibility of insider or interested traders playing upon them. Many prediction markets, PAM included, seem actively to encourage the insider trading that constitutes the *bête noir* of propitious trading on more 'natural' markets. HSX positively invites it and one of the key constituencies of PAM's putative players was to be intelligence analysts and their policy making associates. As Charles Polk, president of Netexchange, put it in relation to PAM:

'We welcome insider trading,' he said..., since it would move prices and send a signal to the Defense Department, and anyone else watching the market, that conditions were changing. By being willing to lose money on the market maker, the Defense Department would be able to get information.<sup>16</sup>

The last point in the quote is itself worthy of brief commentary. For true market evangelists the fact that the Defense Department was 'willing to lose money', was effectively willing to run the market at a loss by acting as market maker, was the ultimate indictment of the project's inherent wrongness. Indeed, some enterprising Indian commentary even suggested that PAM's demise offered possibilities of profitable resurrection on Dalal Street, with this grievous violation of full throttled capitalism being corrected in the process.<sup>17</sup>

The possibility of insider trading was also central to the morally outraged critical responses that we considered earlier. Nightmare scenarios of Al Qaeda not only plotting future atrocities but being able to self-fund them through successfully betting on their coming to pass were clearly much too tempting to be resisted by a parade of disgusted media and media friendly demagogues. For example, Dorgan and Wyden, in denouncing PAM as 'grotesque' and 'morally repugnant', went on to add: 'This encourages terrorists to participate, either to profit from their activities or to bet against them to mislead US authorities.' (source as previous note).<sup>18</sup>

For our prediction protagonists however fundamentalist activity on the market is one of its key virtues. Odd betting patterns, presumed to be by entrepreneurial terrorist planners, or indeed a double-bluff on their part, would act precisely to deliver the revelation of the future that the market was set up to achieve. But a more fundamental role for a different sort of fundamentalist is also foreseen. 'Interested' players, those other insiders who seek to move the market not for necessarily immediate pecuniary motive but rather to deceive, would have their action rooted out by those traders who base their bets on 'fundamental value', those whose relationship to a singular reality is most valued by our market protagonists (see, for example, Abramowicz, 2003, 39 et passim). Insiders and the interested *add* information and as long as that information is suitably aggregated their presence constitutes yet another market good.

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<sup>16</sup> From Floyd Norris, 'Ideas & Trends; Betting on Terror: What Markets Can Reveal', *New York Times*, August 3, 2003, available at <http://hanson.gmu.edu/PAM/press/NYT-8-3-03.htm>, consulted 5th December 2005.

<sup>17</sup> Ravi Visvesvaraya Prasad, 'Terror Futures: A Badla on the Lashkar e Taiba', *Indian Express*, August 9, 2003, text also available at <http://hanson.gmu.edu/PAM/press/IndianExpress-8-7.htm>, consulted 5th December 2005.

<sup>18</sup> Abramowicz (2003) and Richey (2005) seem more concerned with the equally real possibility of such self-fulfilling action on the part of government agencies (see particularly, p. 13 and note 50 of the latter).



### **AN OBJECTIONABLE OBJECTIVE: A MARKET FOR DISCIPLINE?**

As we have already noted, for Hanson our right to bet on the likelihood of future events is central to perpetuation of a suitably re-modelled freedom in a transhumanist future (see, particularly, <http://hanson.gmu.edu/iffreespeech.html>, last consulted February 24<sup>th</sup> 2006). But this freedom is a curiously unrecognisable one, perhaps most baldly articulated by Abramowicz, who, as we noted above, was not too bothered about the superiority of information markets' predictions, so long, it transpires, if they could still 'help discipline' those who would seek to exercise freedom, either in their own name or that of others, since 'the predictions of well-functioning information markets are objective' (Executive Summary). The objective here has a curious relation to the real, a revealing problematic which perhaps indicates much of what is fundamentally at stake here. For this real is not the actual, certainly not in the sense that Deleuze mobilizes this term, rather it is that which can be ascertained without objection. Consider as particular exemplification of this point the following. Abramowicz, in suggesting ever more arcane ways to ensure that only fundamental traders hold sway in the final analysis of a market's arbitration, posits the possibility of a two stage information market. In the first players effectively bet on the outcome of a second, with the second open only briefly, after close of the first with only its payouts dependent upon the verification or not of some future event. For Abramowicz one virtue of such a device is that 'there will no longer be risk associated with real world randomness' (note 156)! It is thus not reality itself that concerns those that seek solace in prediction markets but rather certainty and reduction - reality perhaps, but like the freedom we encountered above, only that reality which has been suitably reformulated. Made single, not manifold.

Such a singular reality can only be a simulation, which will 'always be by-passed, confounded and exceeded by practical experience' (Baudrillard 1990: 155). For there is always 'irruption of that minimum of reversibility which exists in every irreversible process' (Baudrillard 1990: 161), requiring our endless human intervention to secure it, to keep its mask in play and to maintain the illusion that it is outside of us and that we are not required for its maintenance. Indeed, one could go further. Our endless defence, our securing of our simulated worlds, against the ceaseless encroachment of the entropy from which they are formed is, according to Baudrillard, only made interesting to us by this interminable maintenance requirement. The attractiveness of ordered production and prediction (see also, Cooper, 2005) is thus ironically provided by its potential to fall back into disorder, which 'secretly' ruins and dismantles it 'while simultaneously ensuring that a minimal continuity of pleasure traverses it, without which it would be nothing' (Baudrillard 1990: 161). And for Baudrillard this means that the seduction through which all our attempts to stabilize the real world are undone 'doesn't belong to the order of the real' but rather surrounds it, providing the background against which our small victories over chaos are able to shine, just as derivatives markets surround those in their underlying assets. '[S]eduction envelops the whole *real* process of power, as well as the whole real order of production, with endless reversibility and disaccumulation—*without which neither power nor production* [nor indeed prediction] *would exist*' (Baudrillard 1990: 159, original emphases). This continual disintegration of order and manufactured form is the very ground that production, prediction and power require for their perpetuation. It is what makes *these* processes seductive.



The lack of real prediction associated with PAM and similar systems is made clear by Mason Richey (2005). Here PAM is indicted not for the reasons we have encountered above in the media furore surrounding its announcement but rather on more philosophical terms, entirely consonant with our line of argument here. Richey follows the logic of PAM to its self-defeating terminal conclusion. Traders purchase a contract on PAM if they think its underlying event is more likely than its current price suggests. En masse such trading will raise the price of that contract. But PAM is an information and prediction market. Its *raison d'être* is to provide a signal to those who are interested in the occurrence, or rather the prevention, of the events that underlie traded contracts. Thus a rise in prices is likely to instigate a response from those for whom the market was created as signalling mechanism. In turn this thus reduces the likelihood of the occurrence of the event. I bet, you see I bet, you act, I lose. Or as Richey puts it: 'The idea that government authorities employ the market to foresee events that they will prevent would, *a priori*, mute the signal.' (2005: 10). But this is not the most fundamental of the flaws. It merely reflects one of a deeper level. And it is precisely why Hanson seems so misguided in his rendering of existing instruments as being in need of supplementation if they are to deliver prediction of a precise enough nature. For in the act of specification of the possible future, the job that the signalling market of derivatives is intended to achieve is already done. In the case of PAM, again in Richey's words (2005: 10):

[T]he derivatives of maximal predictive interest, the impetus for the system's design, terrorism derivatives, must be explicitly articulated in order to be offered. But if the market designers can list a specific terrorist event, then they have already defined, determined, and predicted the very event that the market is designed to identify. If the market designers know which terrorist derivatives to offer, then they have already done the work of the market.

For Richey then: 'The system does both too little and too much' (2005: 10). This combination of inadequacy and excess is intimately tied to PAM's curious relation to a simulated future of an ordered, pre-dicted, singular real. Our reading of Dillon (2004, 2006, forthcoming) suggests that such fetishization of fixation is increasingly anathema to key strands of themselves increasingly dominant thinking within the strategic centres of our Western security apparatus. As he pithily puts it, "the contingent" has become a new order of the real'.<sup>19</sup> The strategic thinking that both we and any securing agency actually needs to engender in a world in which 'human being is increasingly relativised in space and time through technologies of communication and information' (Cooper, 2005: 10), exemplified by PAM and its derivatives, is not that of ever greater emplacement. For in a world ever more clearly revealed by the congenitally failing securing action of such technologies as 'an inexhaustible informational remainder which, strangely, appears only to disappear' (Cooper, 2005: 22), such yearning for the objective, for a singular real in which to find and found ourselves is futile in the extreme. Indeed, one could go further – it is in the desire for and the violent imposition of a singular truth that most contemporary conflict is rooted. It is only a manifold real that has sufficient play of space and space of play to prevent the horrors attendant upon crusades for *the* truth. If we want to play, on markets or otherwise, we should not do so in ways which are, from the outset, restrictive. For such play is no play at all, certainly no play for a real, manifold future

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<sup>19</sup> See the abstract available at <http://www.le.ac.uk/ulmc/cppe/dillon.pdf>, consulted 24<sup>th</sup> February 2006.

worthy of the name. We must embrace chance and uncertainty, not seek to keep it at bay, or simply play no more.

[M]an does not know how to *play*: this is because, even when he is given a situation of chance or multiplicity, he understands his affirmations as destined to impose limits upon it, his decisions as destined to ward off its effects... This is precisely a losing game, one in which we risk losing as much as winning because we do not affirm the *all* of chance... The system of the future, by contrast, must be called a divine game... [I]t wins by embracing all possible combinations and rules in the system of its own return. (Deleuze, 2004: 141 – 2: original italics)

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## Abstract

This paper aims to consider the concepts of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ in organisations not as diametrically opposed, but rather as dialectically related. Organisations can be neither inherently ‘good’ nor inherently ‘bad’ as they are the product of social construction and a reflection of those who control and inhabit them. The research upon which this paper is based draws upon a case study which examined the concepts of rationality and reality in relation to change management. It considers the ways in which the use of power can result in a web of deceit as individuals strive to protect their position and identity in a changing work environment. Fear and insecurity are at the centre of the dialectical relationship between the individual and the institution. This combined with asymmetrical power relations creates conditions that inhibit rather than enhance the change process.

**Keywords:** fear; power; institutionalisation; isomorphism; rationality; morality; entrapment

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## Background

*“Is morality taught, or does it reside in the very modality of human existence? Does it arise out of a process of socialisation or is it ‘in place’ before all teaching starts? Or is it rather...the other way round: the fellow-feeling, that substance of all moral behaviour, is a precondition of all social life?” (Bauman, 1989: 209).*

The paper explores issues of morality, or moral behaviour, through the evaluation and analysis of one particular organisation. I take as my point of departure the notion that all morality comes from society and that there is not moral life outside society (Knowles, 2002). I briefly explore morality as a commonsense notion and how this notion is transmitted and perpetuated through process of institutionalisation.

At the centre of the case study is a CEO who uses his power to create a climate of fear as a means of achieving ‘rational’ motivated, instrumentally driven change not only within his own business but also within the wider industry sector. As the largest supplier in the sector, he takes the moral high ground and argues that his own and his competitors businesses are riddled with ‘malpractice’; he aims to persuade his competitors to face up to their ‘own cheating and become respectable and responsible manufacturers and suppliers’. If he and his company are to become the beacon of morality, setting the standards which others should follow, they need to be beyond reproach. The perceived infallibility of the CEO’s position put great pressure on his subordinates and raised a number of interesting dilemmas. His confidence in the transparency of his position and the validity of his approach made him feel immune from counter accusations and strengthened his resolve to expose the failings of other, regardless of the consequences to them. However, his own highly authoritative (bullying) style of management resulted in mistakes and failings within his company being hidden from him by fellow Board members, managers and staff who feared his wrath. Consequently, he became entrapped by his own rationality and the claims made in its name. Other members of the organisation became entrapped in the process as they feared that exposing the problems they encountered would have led to unwelcome reprisals.

The issues raised are explored from the perspective of Critical Theory in particular the ways in which instrumental rationality promotes a form of management that is largely disregarding of the feeling and emotions of those subject to its control. In the view of the CEO, and by standards of modern capitalist society, his efforts to achieve efficiency and profitability were moral goals as they contributed both economic wealth and employment. What we understand to be acceptable (moral) or unacceptable (immoral) behaviour is the result of socialisation and it varies with context. I draw upon institutional theory to explore how we gain our understanding of ‘the way things are’ and how institutional order is established and perpetuated through the roles that people play and the perception they have of their power or powerlessness in resisting change. I draw on DiMaggio and Powell’s concept of isomorphism to consider how change might be effected in the wider community of the industry sector though the homogenising influence of trade/professional bodies.

## How reasonable is reason?

The traditional approach to Critical Theory emphasises the role of instrumental reason in the domination of man, effectively from the Enlightenment onwards. Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1947) forcefully challenged the positivist view of science as the ‘Benevolent agent of enlightenment’ (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996: 75). They argued that modern industrial society had become beguiled by the power of one-sided instrumental reason with its capacity to harness and control the nature in people, leaving modern society seemingly trapped in a scientific nexus (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996: 75; see also Putman, Phillips and Chapman: 1996: 376) in which managers and others were assumed to have neutrality and freedom from self-interest and political bias. Critical Theory sees

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organizations, and ‘The social sciences that support them, as relying increasingly on forms of instrumental reasoning (or as Lyotard (1984) described it “performativity”), privileging means over ends and aiding the dominant group’s ability to invisibly accomplish their ends’ (Alvesson and Deetz: 1996: 211).

While the Enlightenment project involved the critique and replacement of superstition and religious dogma with the promise of more ‘enlightened’ thought and practice (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996), the emergence of technology and the concomitant capacity for the technical control of nature, created the potential for technology to replace the pre-Enlightenment myths with new myths and new forms of control and domination. Instrumental forms of action undermined the emancipatory potential of critical reason. Instrumentality, which only recognized self-interest, progressively became more dominant and the ethics of social judgement became simply a matter of personal conviction (Ray, 1993). Therefore, while capitalism contributed increasingly to positive freedom, individuals also became imbued with a sense of insignificance and powerlessness as they became separated from each other in a spirit of competition and self-sufficiency; Fromm called this process ‘individuation’ (Fromm, 1942: 23). Enlightenment held the potential for both liberation and oppression in that ‘The autonomous subject [*could be*] progressively emancipated by knowledge acquired through scientific methods’ (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996:4), but could equally be dominated by the technology (in its widest sense) that emerged from scientific knowledge.

Marcuse concept of *One-Dimensional Man* (1967) highlighted how the organization of advanced capitalist societies frustrated and deflated the emancipatory impulses of oppositional movements. He was particularly concerned about the effects of consumerism in affluent Western societies and argued that instead of using the vast productive capacity at their disposal to effect qualitative improvements in the lives of its citizens, Western cultures created unreflective consumerism. The successful satisfaction of the desire to consume, he argued, diminished the potential for the development of critical distance from the ideology of consumerism, thus making the likelihood of the rejection of this dominant value, for most people, seem, irrational (Marcuse, 1964).

Marcuse argued that ‘One of the most vexing aspects of advanced industrial society is the rational character of its irrationality’ (Marcuse, 1964: 9), in which peoples’ concept of ‘self’ was tied to their productivity and efficiency and to the commodities which this enabled them to buy. Marcuse believed that consumerism, advertising and mass culture integrated individuals into, and sustained, the capitalist system (Marcuse, 1964: ix). Through these mechanisms, the individual was preconditioned to develop ‘false’ wants, which were superimposed upon him/her by particular social interests, and which served to repress individuality. The perception of freedom of choice is a powerful form of domination in that the individual might be free to choose from the range available, but this spontaneous reproduction of superimposed wants does not establish autonomy; as Marcuse argues, it only testifies to the efficacy of the control (Marcuse, 1964).

However, the generation of needs and wants was not entirely a function of mass communication; rather it was an aspect of long-standing preconditioning. Berger and Luckmann might have argued that they were instilled in primary socialization, with needs and wants being developed on the back of previously instilled desires. In ‘*One Dimensional Man*’ (1964), Marcuse dealt with what he called certain basic tendencies in contemporary industrial society which rejected all values and aspirations that could not be validated by the prevailing form of rationality (Marcuse, 1964: xx). The consequence of this is an ‘Advanced state of conformity’ (Marcuse, 1964: xii) resulting in a “one-dimensional society” and “one-dimensional man” (Kellner, cited in Marcuse, 1964: xx).

For Marcuse, the form of domination had changed from being the archetypal servant and master; to be replaced with a more sinister form of domination, that of the ‘Objective order of things’ (Marcuse, 1964: 144). The ‘objective order of things’ – economic laws, the market etc., - itself the result of domination,

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created a higher rationality, that of a society which sustains its hierarchical structure whilst exploiting its citizens and yet entrapping them through the distribution of benefits on an ever wider scale. The 'objective order of things' is defended and even exploited by those who see the tangible benefits of the system. Marcuse argued that:

'This mode of thought and behaviour becomes natural, hidden in a reified vision of the world, but only to those who are incapable or unwilling to comprehend what is happening and why; they become immune to any other than the established reality. ...A false consciousness... has become established in the prevailing technical (social) apparatus, which in turn reproduces it' (Marcuse, 1964: 145).

Thus, if society is capable of satisfying the individual through the way it is organized, it will, largely, demand acceptance of its principles and institutions. Opposition becomes illusory and simply confined to alternatives within the status quo (Marcuse, 1964: 2).

In the next section, consideration is given to the potential effects of the marriage of technology and bureaucracy to effect domination. Marcuse argued that the growth of the masses (a term he used pejoratively, in which individuals could only be quantitatively, but not qualitatively, distinguished from each other) accompanied a growth of bureaucracy.

### *Technology and Bureaucracy – an unholy cocktail*

Weber saw bureaucracy as a rationalized, moral alternative to the common practice of nepotism and the abuse of power that was rampant in the feudal, pre-industrial world and it is from this legacy that modern organizations emerge (Hatch, 1997: 171). However, Weber (1978) also assumed 'That there would be considerable resistance to bureaucratic organization because it suppresses human emotions and communal sentiment' (Knights and Willmott, 1999: 130). At the same time, he acknowledged that the desire to pursue material self-interest would probably be overwhelming and that few would be able to resist the temptation of rationalization. His prognosis for modern society was that the masses:

'Are destined to be controlled by large bureaucratic organizations – from the registry of birth, through educational institution and workplace to registry of death...distracted and entertained by populist forms of sensuality involving immediate gratification' (Knights and Willmott, 1999: 133).

Weber also saw modernity as a double-edged sword (Ray, 1993: 3; Alvesson and Willmott, 1996: 45), in that, on the one hand, science and technology had the capacity to dispel myth and preconceptions about the world; on the other, he feared that unbounded scientific rationality would leave no room for moral or human value-judgements (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996). A reliance on scientific facts overriding moral or ethical consideration was seen as destructive, and Weber aimed to set limits on the value of scientific rationality. His concern was that science would encroach into every aspect of life and that the moral-practical consciousness of the individual would be subsumed in favour of the identification of the most appropriate means based on purely technical considerations. Because of this, he tried to separate the realm of science (facts) from the realm of values (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996, Ray, 1993), the aim being that facts should not be allowed to invade - or to use a Habermasian term – colonize, values (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996). In segregating the two, he argued that science could develop value-free knowledge, which the individual could use to inform the process of making value-judgements. Likewise, the individual should be able to develop ethical and political views, free from the compelling authority of scientific facts (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996: 47). Weber's advocacy of value-free science was not oblivious to the value-laden standpoint from which the scientist emerged. However, he effectively side-



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stepped the issue by arguing that science would simply present the facts and individuals would decide whether or not to accept them. While this is convenient for those who regard organisations as emotional vacuums, it is questionable whether science and morality can successfully be disengaged in this way.

Despite Weber's belief that people would use information to make informed choices based upon the values they held, the traditional critical theorists were not so accommodating. They saw Enlightenment as releasing the capacity of reason to challenge domination, but saw instrumental reason acting as a force in opposition to, and undermining, it. The identification of reason with reality had, they (Marcuse, Adorno and Horkheimer) believed liquidated the power of negativity. Unhindered by the negative power of reason, reality, it was feared, would move towards the notion of a society motivated by instrumental reason.

Bauman (1989) argued that technological advances gave even greater capacity for managers to distance themselves from decisions and their outcome. He described how the dehumanization of action in bureaucratic operations, coupled with technology, enabled the extermination of millions of people during the Second World War, by reducing them to 'Quality-free measurements' (Bauman: 1989: 102-103) and removing from them human distinctiveness. The concentration camps represent an extreme manifestation of a tendency present in all bureaucracies (Bauman: 1989: 102). Key to the process and the achievement of the goal was the instrumentalizing of human behaviour in order that the objective could 'Be pursued with efficiency and vigour, with or without ideological dedication or moral approval on the part of the pursuers' (Bauman: 1989: 93). While Bauman does not suggest that modern society lives on the brink of another Holocaust, he does suggest that many of the bureaucratic traits that made the Holocaust possible endured in modern society. This is especially so given the ordered technologically controlled world of modern contemporary society where activities are most efficient and cost-effective when 'means' are subjected to solely instrumental-rational criteria and are thus dissociated from the moral evaluation of the ends. This process of dissociation, he argues is an important factor for the effective running of a bureaucracy and it was brought about by two processes: firstly, by the functional division of labour, accompanied by a linear graduation of power, and secondly, by the substitution of technical for moral responsibility (Bauman: 1989: 98).

As technological specialism leads inevitably to greater divisions of labour it increased the distance between the various contributors and the final outcome, thus increasing individual's sense of alienation as labour became more instrumentalized and meaningless (Grint, 1999). The effect of distance (as Milgram (1974) demonstrated) reduces the feeling of responsibility an individual has for the suffering caused to others, especially if the task can be dissociated from the final outcome. The second factor Bauman referred to was the substitution of technical responsibility for moral responsibility and this occurred, he felt, when tasks were functionally segregated and when responsibility was linear. In this type of scenario, tasks become so segregated from the final outcome that the actor considers the task itself as the outcome; the means become ends. The activity is unencumbered with any moral connection and can be judged on unambiguous rational grounds (Bauman, 1989: 100). Whilst most organisations would not consider their final output morally questionable, frequently people, particularly in larger organisations, cannot see beyond their own area of immediate responsibility and are satisfied with only the broadest understanding of the organization's activities. The separation of individuals within an organization, through division of labour, affects people in a variety of ways: in addition to the means becoming ends; ends are taken as self-evident or as lying outside any rational debate. The means are determined by the most efficient and/or effective way of achieving given ends (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996) and individuals are expected to be fully effective, prepared to use their skills and expert knowledge to full potential and to work to the best of their ability. Decisions about the most efficient form of action become the province of experts who are

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deemed to know what is best, within their province of expertise. An individual's practical devotion to their task may be enhanced by the attachment of emotional values, such as fear, a sense of belonging or ambition. Managers seem most susceptible to these pressures, in that they are expected to acquire beliefs and understandings about what the organisation requires of them through a process of socialization and are expected to live up to these expectations in the performance of their role, whether they judge them to be morally acceptable or not. This process of 'Dehumanization' (Bauman: 1989: 102) starts when an organization refers to its members in quantitative terms – people become 'numbers' or 'overheads', output and profitability are measured 'per head' and so on. The 'dehumanized' individual is no longer seen as having moral demands to be considered as his/her tasks are seen as being performed with ethical indifference. Therefore, any failure to co-operate fully with the smooth running of the organization may be considered 'negative' behaviour by people who are 'not team players' or who are 'trouble makers'.

By assuming that science, including management science, has the capacity to produce objective knowledge, devoid of 'subjective bias', it is possible to conceive of organization managed on scientific rather than arbitrary or partisan principles (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996: 44). On this basis, bureaucratic management, favouring instrumental reason, forms the staple part of the management ethos. The individual's day is filled with what Berger and Luckmann describe as 'Pragmatic motives' (1967:56), that is, the tasks and routines that make up one's role. Individuals become deeply implicated in the 'Unremitting exploitation of human nature' (Alvesson and Willmott, 1996: 39) for the purpose of fulfilling organizational objectives, leaving little time for consideration of other aspects of management, such as whether they or other people are 'happy' or 'fulfilled'. While individuals may feel reluctant, or ambivalent about aspects of their role, the desire to progress up the hierarchy or simply retain their job, may result in personal values being suspended as individuals find 'rational' arguments to justify their actions. In addition success in capitalist society is frequently measured by material gain. As Fromm argues, it becomes 'man's fate to contribute to the growth of economic systems, to amass capital, not for the purpose of happiness and salvation, but as an end in itself' (Fromm, 1942 [1991]: 95).

Technology enables performance data about human and non-human resources alike can be routinely gathered. Preference is increasingly given to the deployment of technology capable of performing highly complex (otherwise labour-intensive tasks), creating the potential for a concomitant reduction in both 'manpower' and the skill base. Process technology is frequently self-reporting, in that its efficiency and output can be immediately determined without exaggeration or misrepresentation. By reducing the variability inherent in human performance, organizations can be managed on the principles of instrumental rationality. Geoghegan argued that under capitalism, technology (wrongfully) becomes 'cloaked' in a mantle of reason as a consequence of two main developments: 'At the individual level, *[there is]* an introjection of systematic values; at the collective level *[there is an]* incorporation and effective neutralization of organized opposition' (Geoghegan, 1981: 65).

In a critical analysis of the changes that technology can bring to an organization, in terms of shaping and mediating its activities, Lyytinen (1992: 161) identified six major roles, of which two are particularly relevant to this paper and are not unconnected to the comments made by Geoghegan above: to rationalize and automate decision-making and to monitor the performance of employees and organizational groups.

Information systems provide 'fuel' to organizational decision-makers in a way that enables them to defer personal judgement and to rely on the information presented and the technology that produced it, as a basis for rational decision making. The responsibility for a decision can shift from the individual to the information. An individual is free, if he/she chooses, to make a decision in the equivalent of a social vacuum, by putting distance between him/her self, the decisions and its outcome. As Lyytinen (1992) argued, the development of technology serves to strengthen and legitimize managerial decision-making by lending it rational instrumentality.

The panoptic function of technology ensure that people believe that nothing can be hidden, thus making it unnecessary for organizational management and others who monitor individual activity, to exhibit power in any overt sense; individuals internalise control and self manage. In this way power is 'Routinized, anonymous [and] inscribed in the very architecture of the modern organization (McKinlay and Starkey, 1998: 115).

## **Institutionalization and Entrapment**

Institutionalization, in the Berger and Luckmann (1967) sense, could be defined as a structure 'That has become taken for granted by members of a social group as efficacious and necessary; thus it serves as an important causal source of stable patterns of behaviour' (Tolbert and Zucker: 1996: 179). The normative life of society is controlled by institutions (Knowles, 2002). It includes instilling in us patterns of behaviour as well as a range of moral beliefs together with the 'characteristics and temper...of mind associated with holding that belief' (Knowles, 2002: 23). This perspective asserts that a society can only act freely in the context of a form or nature of society that protects that freedom. We construct social institutions as mechanisms of control and understand that we can only be 'free' within their protection.

Social institutions act to normalise or habitualized behaviour with the advantage that activities can be reproduced with economy of effort, in that the individual does not have to work out the best way of performing the task each time it is undertaken, or to work out their attitude or response to a situation. The routine of the task becomes embedded within the individual's stock of knowledge; as Berger and Luckmann argued this has distinct psychological advantages in that it narrows choices for the individual, freeing them from 'All those decisions' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 71).

Habitualization of behaviour is a necessary precursor to institutionalization; Tolbert and Zucker call it 'Pre-institutionalization' (1996: 181). Institutionalization proper occurs when this typified behaviour is mimicked in the actions of others and serve to control the actions of existing and new members by predefining patterns of conduct. The efforts of members can be channelled in the direction of the organizational interest as opposed to the individual member's interest. Therefore, by the very fact of their existence, institutions control human conduct. Institutions exist and persist in the social world, whether individuals like them or not and whether and not they understand them. However, 'The relationship between man the producer and the social world, his product, is a dialectical one' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 78); however objectively real institutions appear to be, 'man' and his social world act upon each other.

The process of transmitting reality from one individual to another, in either primary (to a child) or secondary socialization (to a new organizational member) reinforces its objective facticity and also serves to legitimize it. Part of this process involves explaining the *raison d'être* of the institution to others who were not party to its formation. The explanation must be consistent and persuasive if it is to be plausible enough to allow the institution to claim authority over individuals and to influence their perception of its reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). The greater the success in socializing the new generation, the lower the additional means of control and coercion need to be. The ideal position is considered to be that the individual accepts the institutional meaning in a 'taken-for-granted' manner in which people mutually accept these typifications of behaviour as the role being played in accordance with the rules established for it. One individual may hold several roles, one in each state of reality, and may segmentalize aspects of 'self', objectifying them in the socially available typifications. The role is the medium through which the institution's rules of conduct are embodied in the individual's experience, through the processes of socialization. The role objectified is a fundamental part of the social world, and it is by playing the role that the individual participates in the social world. Internalizing the role makes the world subjectively real

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and the individual is expected to behave accordingly. The rules of conduct for roles are not only known to those who share the role, but also to those in other roles. One is expected to perform the role in a typified manner and, as this information is available to others, conduct is susceptible to enforcement. For example while employees expect to be subject to the control of managers/leaders, but they have reciprocal expectations about the way managers/leaders are supposed to behave.

Various roles represent the aggregate of all the specialist knowledge of the institution objectified, and each role carried with it a socially defined appendage of knowledge. These propositions support the essentially dialectic nature of society; in that, firstly, society exists only to individuals that are conscious of it, and, secondly, the individual's consciousness is socially determined. In narrowing this process to roles specifically, they argued that:

‘On the one hand, the institutional order is made real only in so far as it is *realized* in performed roles and that, on the other hand, roles are representative of an institutional order that defines their character (including their appendages of knowledge) and from which they define their objective sense’ (Berger and Luckmann, 1967:96).

The definers of reality are seen as those with specialist knowledge, skill or qualities i.e. experts, professionals. An expert's definition of reality (that is, institutional order) may be challenged if the practitioners find that it is so far removed from their experience or understanding of reality that its validity becomes untenable. Alternatively, challenges may be posed by new entrants to the reality. One can think of many instances in organizations of all types, in which management's definition of reality and that of its employees do not synchronize. However, the power of the existing orthodoxy (the conceptual machinery, be it management, political or social) may be such that it is able to sustain or produce a modified reality which effectively maintains the status quo. New experts, presenting rival views, may emerge to challenge the accepted orthodoxy. Even enforced definitions of reality are no less convincing than those accepted voluntarily. The enforced theories may be assumed to be valid because they work; that is, they have become taken for granted in the society in question (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 137). Also, groups of experts may align themselves to those individuals or groups who have the power to act as ‘Carriers’ (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 138) of their definition of reality and, as such, the success of the theory is tied to the success of the carrier group. The pragmatic acceptability of an expert theory becomes tied to the ability of the expert to demonstrate its applicability to those in power in the carrier group in question; for example, organizational management in the hands of management consultants or expert administrators.

As will be discussed later, carrier groups may help to reinforce the new reality within the organisation of origin, or may act as advocates, proselytizing the merits of an approach wider afield. How this message might be carried and transmitted is considered next.

### *Isomorphism – the homogenisation of an organizational field.*

DiMaggio and Powell described the process of organizational homogenization as ‘Isomorphism’ (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, edited by Pugh: 1997: 437), that is ‘A constraining process that forces one unit of the population to resemble other units that face the same level of environmental conditions’ (Hawley, 1968, cited in DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; cited in Pugh: 1997: 437). DiMaggio and Powell argued that, while bureaucracy remains the common organizational form, the causes of bureaucratization and rationalization have changed as a consequence of the state of bureaucratization now having been achieved. Bureaucratization and other forms of homogenization emerge, they argued, out of ‘Structuration’ (Giddens, 1979) or ‘Organizational fields’ (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983, cited in Pugh, 1997: 437). The state and the professions could be said to have the greatest influence on this process as

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they have become the rationalizers (in Berger and Luckmann terms, the reality definers) of the modern era (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; cited in Pugh, 1997: 436).

DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 437) argued that the emergence and structuration of an organizational field (a body of organizations that constitutes an aggregate of organizational life e.g. key suppliers, organizations that offer similar products or services, regulatory bodies) cannot be determined a priori, but must be defined on the basis of empirical investigation. Organizational fields only exist to the extent that they are institutionally defined. The process of institutional definition, or structuration, consists of four stages: an increase in the extent of interaction amongst organizations in the field; the emergence of a defined organizational structure of domination and patterns of coalition; an increase in the informational load with which the organization must contend, and the development of a mutual awareness amongst participants in a set of organizations that they are involved in a common enterprise (DiMaggio, 1982, cited in DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 437). An industry trade association would, for example, fulfil this definition.

The argument is that once organizations in the same line of business are structured into an actual field, power forces emerge that engender homogenization. Unlike the argument promoted in many management texts, DiMaggio and Powell contended that organizations are less driven by competition or by the need for efficiency than they are by a need to be similar. The more developed an industry field becomes, the greater the 'Inexorable push towards homogenization' (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; cited in Pugh, 1997, 436). DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 439), in support of Meyer (1979) and Fennell (1980), identified two forms of isomorphism: competitive and institutional isomorphism. Competitive isomorphism assumes a system rationality which emphasises competition, niche changes and fitness measures. This form of isomorphism was believed to explain, in part, Weber's process of bureaucratization, but fell short of providing a full explanation of organizational life. While it may explain the early adoption of technology according to DiMaggio and Powell, institutional isomorphism, compensated for the deficiency of bureaucratization by adding the social and political dimension.

DiMaggio and Powell identified three mechanisms through which institutional isomorphic change occurred: coercive, mimetic and normative. Whist coercive isomorphism (which resulted from pressure, formal and informal, by one interdependent organization upon another) and mimetic isomorphism (contributed to institutional isomorphism through a process of mimicking, in that the actions of one group provided a model for others to copy) are interesting and have some relevance to this paper, they are not considered further at this stage; normative isomorphism however has greater relevance and is considered below. Radaelli (2000:28) described normative isomorphism as the 'ideal-type'.

Normative isomorphism, DiMaggio and Powell argued, stems from professionalization; that is, 'The collective struggle of members of an occupation to define the conditions and methods of their work, to control the production of producers' (Larson, 1977:49-52). Two sources of isomorphism are identified – educational establishments (colleges and universities) and professional bodies.

Universities and professional bodies develop and propagate organizational norms relating to professional management behaviour and the principles of management. In this way, managers are 'cloned' or, as Perrow (1974) described it, they are:

'Almost interchangeable individuals who occupy similar positions across a range of organizations, possess similar orientations and dispositions that may override variations in tradition and control that might otherwise shape organizational behaviour' (Perrow, cited in DiMaggio and Powell, 1983:445).

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The homogenization of attitudes and behaviour extends beyond professional codes of conduct and embraces other forms of 'Anticipatory socialization' (Cicourel, 1970; Williamson, 1975 cited in DiMaggio and Powell, 1983:445), in which aspects of behaviour and appearance become pre-requisites for acceptance. This process of socialization produced individuals who approach problems in a similar way and reach similar decisions. Other forms of isomorphic pressure which fall into this category are trade magazines and associations, organizational field workshops and the use of consultants. Trade associations provide an arena for key personnel from competing and related organizations to interact and exchange ideas, be mutually supportive and undergo anticipatory socialization to the norms and mores of the organization they hope to join. However, increased internal organizational efficiency does not appear to result from homogenization. The advantages, argued DiMaggio and Powell, are manifest in the ease of trading with similar companies (including those that adopt similar codes of conduct), the ability to attract career-minded staff from within the sector and, in particular, the sense of legitimacy as a result of the acceptance of others operating in the sector (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 447; Bowerman, 2002).

DiMaggio and Powell's thesis rejected the views of other organizational researchers who contend that organizations were becoming more diverse and differentiated (Baum: 1996: 77); on the contrary, they argued that the new mimics the old as managers actively seek models upon which to build (Kimberly, 1980). The homogenizing force of 'rational administration' increasingly pushes aside, so called, 'non-rational', 'non-bureaucratic' forms as legitimacy is found by incorporating the prevailing rationalised concept of the ways of working (Meyer and Rowan, 1991; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 452).

There are many reasons, too numerous to contemplate here, why one organisation might follow the lead of another: uncertainty or constraints such as bounded rationality may lead one organisation to model itself on another it perceives to be successful. This matter is discussed next.

### *Reification, Bounded Rationality and Entrapment*

Tolbert and Zucker (1996: 176) argued that there was very little consensus on the definition of key concepts, measurements or methods within the theoretical tradition of institutional theory. They contended that institutionalization was almost always treated as a qualitative state: structures are either institutionalized or they are not. As a result of this, questions on the degree to which similarity between organizations exists have been neglected (see earlier discussion). Tolbert and Zucker's (1996) analysis used institutional theory as a point of departure for exploring the distinction between two models of social actor which, they claimed, underlie most organizational analysis; they refer to them as the 'Rational actor' and the 'Institutional actor' (Tolbert and Zucker, 1996:176). From the perspective of this paper, their models provide a point of departure for consideration of the concept of entrapment.

The rational actor model assumes that the individual is constantly engaged in calculating the cost and benefit of his/her action in order to maximize the benefit. The institutionalized model assumes that individuals are 'over socialized' and will accept norms and follow them without question. However, rather than treating these models as oppositional, Tolbert and Zucker regard them as either end of a continuum, and try to understand which factors create behaviour that resembles one end of the continuum or the other. 'What is needed', they argued, 'Are theories of when rationality is likely to be more or less bounded' (Tolbert and Zucker, 1996: 176). That is, although people (decision makers) try to behave rationally, there are a number of factors which prevent them from being fully rational. The difference between how they perceive they ought to behave and how they actually behave, when subject to the complexities of life, can result in the individual becoming entrapped. As Argyris described it 'People can't think straight when feeling threatened' (Argyris, 1990 cited in Fineman, 1996:547).

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The 'rationality' of institutional order, forms that part of the stock of knowledge which 'everybody knows to be true' and which generally remains unchallenged. Berger and Luckmann referred to this type of knowledge as primary knowledge about the institutional order on a pre-theoretical level, or possibly transmitted recipe knowledge relating to rules of conduct (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 83). When people failed to act 'rationally', Fineman (1996: 548) argued, it was:

'Because what they see is not necessarily a veridical reading of what is "there". It is distorted by the actors' imported needs and desires, especially unconscious fears. Anxiety, envy, shame and guilt can shape organizational interactions and structures in ways of which participants are unaware. Such emotionalized thinking twists reality, confuses the appraisal of options and undermines organizational effectiveness and health'.

The individual's perception of reality is an important factor in the concept of entrapment. Entrapment has been defined in a number of contexts, (see: Brochner, 1981; Wilson, 1992; Lindblom, 1957; Proctor, 1993; Bazerman et al., 1983; Paul et al., 1987; Teger, 1979; Fox and Staw, 1979) but, in essence, all definitions encompass the concept that individuals, in certain circumstances, increase commitment to a particular 'ineffective' course of action in order to justify the previous allocation of resources and in an attempt to recover sunk costs.

This definition of entrapment focuses on situations in which the individual seeks to justify past decisions by increasing his/her commitment to them, even when the action no longer seems valid (see Hammond, Keeney and Raiffa, 1998: 50; Fineman, 1996: 548). The belief is that the individual's actions may be distorted by an unconscious fear of failure, censure from colleagues, loss of livelihood etc. As a consequence, it may seem psychologically safer to compound the 'error', perhaps in the hope that the situation may be recoverable, rather than admit that a project failed to meet expectations.

Before looking at the factors surrounding the formation of the individual's perception of his/her options in these circumstances, I would like to broaden the definition to encompass another level of entrapment. Individuals can also become entrapped in a concept of reality in which they see themselves as participants in a reified (in the Berger and Luckmann sense) world, which they believe that they had no part in creating and therefore have little or no power to control or change. In this context, reification is defined as 'The apprehension of human phenomena as if they were things...that is, as if they were something other than the product of human activity' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 106), they continue:

'The implication is that the individual is capable of forgetting his authorship of the human world, and further that the dialectic between man the producer and his product is lost to consciousness' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 106).

Consequently the individual is involved with society but, through primary and secondary socialization is not made aware, or forgets the nature of, his/her role in its formation. The individual is introduced to the world as already objectified and it is experienced as real and outside him/herself.

A critical question is whether the individual has or retains an awareness that, however objectified (or reified), the social world was made by 'men' and can therefore be remade by them (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 106). By losing sight of this concept Berger and Luckmann argued, it becomes possible for individuals to perceive themselves as products of the world, with some human activity as an epiphenomenon of non-human processes. Humans are therefore capable, paradoxically, of creating a reality that denies them (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 107). A reified consciousness is therefore a 'false' consciousness. Sartre's concept of 'bad-faith' similarly related to the way in which people are perceived in

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terms of the roles they adopt in life. By playing a role, Sartre believed, the individual lost his/her capacity to conceptualize what he called 'nothingness', that is the ability of the individual to detach him/herself from the role he/she occupies. In this way, individuals may become alienated from their true potential through this process of identification with the perceived demands of a role.

The argument follows that the individual increasingly enjoys the tangible benefits of the system and considers them worthy of defending (as in rational actor mode). However, the individual is unwilling or unable to consider alternative modes of thought or behaviour, or as Marcuse argued, is perhaps incapable of comprehending a reality that is any different from the established reality (as in institutional actor mode). He argued that false consciousness corresponds to a given reality and contributes to its preservation and maintenance as it becomes embodied in the prevailing social/technical apparatus which reproduces it. However, the individual rationality is bounded in that it is shaped by the confines of its understanding of the world, bought about by its participation in the stock of knowledge. As Miller, Hickson and Wilson argued:

'They [*people*] intend to be rational, and indeed their behaviour is reasoned – it is not irrational, which is an important distinction, but it is unrealistic to expect them to meet stringent requirements of wholly rational behaviour. Human frailties and demands from both within and outside organizations limit the degree of rationality which can be employed' (1996: 295).

Although this description was not intended for use in this particular context, one can extend the understanding of bounded rationality to encompass the situation in which individual processes of socialization lead to bounded rationality. The individual acts reasonably within the confines of his/her understanding and becomes entrapped by his/her belief in the validity and objectivity of the organization to which he/she belongs and to his/her role within it. If the 'Vicious cycle' (Kunda, 1991: 30-31) is to be broken, the apprehension of reification as a modality of consciousness requires at least a degree of 'De-reification of consciousness' (Berger and Luckmann, 1967: 107).

If institutions are viewed by individuals as reified, their roles within them are also subject to reification in the same way. As in the concept of 'bad-faith', individuals may regard the elements of self-consciousness which they allocate to a particular role in an objectified way. In an organizational sense, individuals may feel it necessary to act in a particular way, perceived necessary for the effective performance of their roles. However, in doing so, they may become entrapped in a concept of self that they believe is necessary – even inevitable while playing the role.

In terms of the earlier part of the definition of entrapment, individuals striving to comply with the expectations of performance in a particular role may find themselves entrapped by the specific choices they make within organizational rationality. Rationality is thought to be a unique human property (Fineman, 1996: 547) in that individuals are seen as making decisions that will seek to maximize their gain with respect to the specific organizational goal; therefore, the greater the individual's attachment to a goal or a role, the greater the likelihood that he/she may disappoint him/herself or others.

Habitualization take care of the routine day-to-day tasks, but outside aspects of routine behaviour, the individual is within the realm of bounded rationality in which decisions made may affect one's own interests as well as those of the organization. The basic premise of modern organizational management is that purposive rational action will prevail; that is, that the individual will 'Apply technical rules, that have some empirical test of the efficiency and effectiveness of the means' (Lyytinen, 1992: 165). However, people may not always sustain rationally 'optimal' processes or paths in their decisions, or conform to managerially defined rationality (Fineman, 1996: 550). Firstly, because there is often too much



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information for all alternatives to be considered, or too little time, therefore people may resort to subjective judgements and, as such, their rationality again becomes bounded. Secondly, in situations where the outcome is uncertain:

‘People with power may chose to exercise it to further their own or others interests. They may frame the matter for decision in a way that suits their own ends or blocks the objectives of others. They may push for their preferred option whether it is best for the organization or not. They may manipulate information or withhold it or ignore it. Since all interest groups may be engaged in similar processes, behaviour may be characterized as a form of bargaining, negotiation and compromise that are less than optimal for all parties’ (Miller, Hickson and Wilson, 1996: 296).

It is paradoxical to argue that the creation of an environment of fear or repression in the workplace will elicit the best in people or engender a rational approach to the problems encountered. If the only measure of success is goal achievement, individuals are unlikely to admit to error, for fear of the overtone of ‘failure’ or ‘poor judgement’ which accompanies such disclosure. Rather than admit failure, people will try to repress, mask or deny their feelings or actions as demonstrating them will incur a display of emotion or admission of defeat. People will develop what they feel to be entirely rational arguments, or defend a situation, should the embarrassment of a failure present itself. In striving to appear to be behaving rationally, paradoxically, individuals may compound the difficulty for themselves and ultimately the organization (see Staw and Fox, 1979; Staw and Ross, 1987; Paul et al 1987; Brochner et al 1979).

People are required to fulfil their reified role in accordance with the expectations placed upon them by the institutional order. The individual is expected to maximize gains for the organization in relation to the achievement of specific goals. In this respect, rational calculating behaviour is seen as holding the greatest potential for the achievement of this objective. Instead of giving vent to emotional impulses and desires, which are considered ‘Antithetical to rationality and cognition (Putman and Mumby, 1993), people try to control their emotions and suppress their human nature.

In their work on the philosophy of nature undertaken throughout the 1940s, Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse argued that capitalist society could be characterized by three aspects of domination: domination by physical nature; domination of man by man and subjugation of human nature. Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse argued, using Freudian psychoanalysis, that civilization rested upon the suppression of human instinct, driven by a desire in modern society to strive for domination over nature. For this to occur, ‘man’ must take part in the subjugation of others and to subjugate nature in himself. This is necessary to prevent emotions interfering with the process of rationality. Emotions, Horkheimer argued, that were once directed at oppressors, were turned inward in a dialectic twist (Tar, 1977: 88-89; Marcuse, 1964), and were redirected through instrumental reason towards the domination of others and the curtailment of one’s own emotions (human nature). The desire to dominate nature was pursued in ignorance of the reason behind such a desire, therefore it became neither transcended nor reconciled, merely repressed under the possibility of resurgence.

More recent arguments by Fineman supported this view, he said ‘In the last decade or so, we have witnessed an acceleration in institutionalization of management control over emotional displays’ (Fineman, 1996: 557). Fineman described the manipulation of emotions for financial gains as as akin to ‘Emotional eugenics’ adding that ‘Human beings are diminished and often exploited because many have little choice but to comply’ (Fineman, 1996: 557). Other researchers, (Willmott, 1993: Putman and Mumby, 1993) argued that employers should resist ‘Emotional enculturation’ and encourage employees to think more in terms of the advantages of self-reformation and owned feelings. Employees would need, they argued, to disengage from tacit support or collusion with the worst elements of such ventures.

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However, for many of the reasons discussed above, the practicality of such action is questionable. Also, one cannot assume that people are generally aware that they need to be emancipated or that they would appreciate the change in lifestyle that an emancipated society might entail. As Marcuse, who articulated the views of the earlier critical theorists, contended that:

‘The question once again must be faced: how can the administered individuals - who have made their mutilation into their own liberation and satisfaction, and thus reproduced it on an enlarged scale – liberate themselves from themselves as well as from their masters? How is it even thinkable that this vicious cycle can be broken?’ (Marcuse, 1964: 250).

As Berger and Luckmann argued, individuals use their stock of knowledge to attribute ‘logic’ to institutional order (to the assumption that institutes function as they are supposed to), and to conform in their integration. Therefore to break the vicious cycle that Marcuse referred to, a fundamentally different composition/interpretation of society would be required to become part of that stock of knowledge. The vital question, again posed by Berger and Luckmann, is whether the individual has or retains an awareness that, no matter how reified the social world appears to be, it was made by ‘man’ and can be remade by ‘man’.

In the next section some of the issues considered above are drawn into focus in the case study.

## Case Study - Heritage +Timbermaster

### Introduction

H+T comprised three companies: Heritage, Timbermaster and Craftsman. Collectively these companies have contributed over two hundred and twenty two years to the manufacture and development of specialist timber panel products. For much of the last twenty years, Heritage and Timbermaster have dominated the market occupying the first and second positions respectively as the largest panel manufacturers in the sector. Both were acquired, at different times, by Ryecroft plc who already owned Craftsman. The three companies were merged to form H+T, the largest specialist timber panel manufacturer in the UK. In 2000, H+T had a turnover of approximately forty-five million pounds and employed approximately five hundred and fifty people. It operated from three sites in Doncaster (Craftsman), Birmingham (Heritage) and Barnstaple (Timbermaster). As Craftsman was the smallest of the three companies and had already been merged with Heritage sometime earlier, so it does not feature in the case study.

All names and location have been changed to protect the confidentiality of those who participated.

### Brief Background and History

#### *Heritage Panel Products (Heritage)*

Heritage was formed in Birmingham in 1938. The company made general joinery products mostly for domestic applications until the 1960s when it became interested in specialist joinery applications to meet high performance commercial applications. In 1988, Heritage was bought by Ryecroft plc, who had investments in a number of industry sectors, and it became part of the Building Products sector along with the previously acquired Craftsman. A CEO was appointed to manage the business and a period of rationalization began. Instead of investing in Heritage, as anticipated, Ryecroft used it as a ‘cash cow’ to support other acquisitions and other subsidiaries within the plc. The recession of the early 1990s proved to be very difficult for Heritage and the company retrenched, whilst continuing to innovate with the aim of improving business efficiency and productivity.

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In 1995, Ryecroft appointed Gerry Hill as its new CEO, Building Products division. Due to previous contractual obligation he was forced to take six months 'garden leave', prior to taking up his appointment. He used that time to review the business and the market overall and to devise his strategy before he become operational. Part of his consideration was what to do with the existing Board members as he felt that they had not managed the business particularly well. He regarded their achievements thus far as a combination of luck and good market conditions, i.e. the product of good fortune rather than good management. Although the market was very buoyant, the business was barely breaking even and he concluded that 'Underneath the fat of high demand, there were some basic problems with the business'. He described the Board of Heritage as being 'Well established in their cocoon nests' and he set about unsettling them.

Gerry planned to transform Heritage from the manufacturer of bespoke joinery products to one of batch manufacture by introducing a standard range of product to the company and mechanizing the production processes. He introduced batch manufacturing, reduced costs and increased productivity considerably, with the result that the company could move away from traditional joinery skills to machine production, changing the nature of the business completely.

## *Timbermaster Architectural Panels*

Timbermaster Architectural Panels (hence forward referred to as Timbermaster) was originally founded in 1888 by two furniture and cabinet makers. Throughout its history, the company had been a major local employer, with a tradition of sons following their fathers into the business. They maintained a traditional skill base through a strong apprenticeship programme. Like Heritage, Timbermaster moved progressively into specialist panel manufacture as the market demands changed throughout the 1960s. The company prospered in the period 1960-1980, developing a lucrative export business. Timbermaster dominated this market for many years, winning a number of large and lucrative contracts.

Changes in market conditions in the early 1990s resulted in a substantial turndown in business and the decision was made (by the families) to sell to Architectural Ironmongers plc (AI). Whilst the company secured a massive order, book it over-stretched the business and in 1996 a massive loss (several million pounds) was recorded, driving AI into liquidation.

When a buyer was sought for Timbermaster, Gerry persuaded Ryecroft to put in an offer, but with stringent terms and conditions, one of which was that they should break even. This meant a further hundred job losses and a major change in the strategy of the business. Gerry's argument to Ryecroft in persuading them to buy the ailing Timbermaster was:

'I know this business inside out and how to make a return on it. We can strip out all of the Directors, the management and one hundred people, and run the business from here (Birmingham).'

The purchase was completed in 1998 and Gerry set about merging it with Heritage.

## *The Strategy for the Merger*

The impetus that drove the merger was Gerry's desire to create a company which others in the sector would target and emulate. Cost control was of fundamental importance to the strategy he devised. He did not aim to be the cheapest supplier on the market, but to be the cheapest producer by using technology and standardization. His longer-term strategy was to have 80 per cent of orders processed electronically, enabling staff numbers to be reduced in all support service functions and on the shop floor by automating

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production where possible. He said 'If you look at the factory today, you will still see too many people, too much material and too much resource'. His rationale was that if technology could replace people and reduce cost to the business it should be implemented.

He saw the role of Production as fulfilling the technical potential of the products offered to clients in the most effective way possible and that human intervention was the weakest point in the transition from technical to production. Because the industry had been reliant on manual process and intervention, he argued that it was 'Littered with mal-performance'. He aimed to use the prominent position of the company and his prominence within the industry to transform it into a world class player, by focussing on products, performance and service – this became his mission. He first had to convince his management teams, and then the wider industry, that they had to, 'Face up to their own cheating and become respectable and responsible manufacturers and suppliers'. In reality what this meant was paying more attention to the quality of the finished produce; producing technical and promotional materials that did not mislead with respect to performance and policing the business through third party inspection and certification regimes. He expected his Board members to attend industry meetings and to advocate the changes he proposed. Despite their reluctance to do so, he commented that he was determined that they should.

One of Gerry's first priorities was to make technical honesty (ensuring that claims made regarding product's performance could be fully substantiated) company policy. He remarked that 'They [the Board] took a lot of convincing that this was the right thing to do, as a policy rather than a goal'. His logic was 'How can I advocate a strategy of honesty to industry, if my own company is not "whiter than white".' Being technically ethical carried a cost burden which needed to be calculated, in that it was easier and cheaper to cut corners than to do things by the book. Gerry's approach very much embodies the principles of Taylorism, in that he argued that everything was quantifiable and measurable and that as a company they should know the precise cost of each and every task performed. Non-conformances, by way of failures to comply with products or standards, in the company, he estimated, were costing it approximately one million pounds in lost revenue each year. He claimed to have already recovered eight hundred thousand pounds simply by tightening procedures and aimed to continue to improve upon these figures. His figures, and in particular ROI (return on investment), drove the strategy.

A specialist had been given a three year mission to improve quality and to reduce non-conformance across the company. His goal was to reduce costs by a further half a million pounds 'Simply' as Gerry put it, 'By getting people to do it right rather than do it wrong'. Some progress had been made in this direction partly as an unanticipated consequence of the merger. Higher levels of conformance were achieved at both sites before major changes had been implemented. Gerry commented that the merger had sharpened the mind' of employees already, in part because they feared further job losses. Also, in the days following the merger, John Saberton (Heritage's Operations Director) achieved target productivity levels as he dismissed all the temporary employees. In all his deliberations, Gerry had not anticipated, but aimed to capitalize upon, the positive impact that uncertainty, fuelled by fear, would have on productivity.

Gerry's vision was not confined to H+T. As already indicated, he clearly aspired to provide an industry template. It was necessary, therefore, for other members of the Board to act as advocates (carriers) for his philosophy, and the new skill base that would underpin it. Gerry had already appointed John Saberton, a skilled production engineer, indicating the significance he placed on engineering processes as opposed to joinery skills. John was presented firstly as the 'white knight' who would save the company by implementing engineering practices and secondly, was he intended to displace Mike Fawcett, who had not been entirely compliant with Gerry's wishes. John was initially installed at H+D as joint MD with Mike Fawcett (the present incumbent). However, the partnership between the men did not work; it was not expected to and Gerry went on subsequently to demote both men, disappointed at their inability to work together. Gerry recognising the position he has placed Mike in (having demoted him twice) said:

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‘He took it very well. He is very obstinate. He put the noose around his own neck and hanged himself. Now that’s great, not many people can do that. You have to admire him, he has an inner strength and you can use that inner strength, although his obstinacy can also be a problem. He has not been very cooperative over Timbermaster, in his view, “We should shut the bloody lot and move it here”. Also, he was not cooperative over Paul Cocker either.’

Paul Cocker (Marketing Director) had worked for Timbermaster since leaving school at 16 years of age and Mike had acted as unofficial mentor to him. Paul’s progress had followed Mike’s as he had moved progressively up the hierarchy. Gerry admitted to feeling that the relationship between Paul and Mike was too cosy, so he acted to put obstacles between the two men. Gerry believed that freed from Mike’s influence, he could more easily sway Paul with his own arguments. Although I don’t give details of the conversation here, both men were aware of Gerry’s desire to divide and conquer.

Gerry expressed the belief that the employees held the Board generally in low regard. He regularly walked the factory, taking soundings for the staff. He believed that the Board regarded themselves too highly and he aimed to progressively remove their symbols of authority, claiming that they must learn to manage (literally) without them. The Board, he claimed, were ‘Outraged’ when he removed their named parking spaces, but he argued if they arrived early enough, as he did, they could park anywhere. He did not believe it was necessary to be too nice to one’s colleagues, simply respectful. He liked to keep some distance between his home life and his working life. He argued that people were essentially self-interested and his approach to employees reflected this belief. He argued:

‘Ninety-five percent of the people here come to work for the money and you’ll never change that. The “what in it for me factor”, is a big motivator, so you have to appeal to that. Expose the opportunities for them to make more money and they’ll, hopefully go for it as long as they have the tools to do the job.’

He also believed in managing by example and that, if he demonstrated commitment to the business, others would follow. Gerry did not feel that subtlety was essential in making his opinions and wants known. In fact, he acknowledged that his people management style was at times ‘Brutal’. If he saw deficiencies in people, particularly in senior management, he would expose them. His attitude was:

‘If I pick it [*a problem or a weakness*] up, I will just expose it. I will embarrass people. I don’t hide anything. I don’t have any secrets, it’s the way I work. I will take off all their clothes and stand them in front of a crowd. I have to, because it’s a big wide world. I don’t give a bugger, if I have to do it I will.’

This wasn’t just an idle threat; his brutal honesty made those around him, at all levels, feel wary and vulnerable. He defended his approach by arguing that his own weaknesses and deficiencies were fair game for others, although given the nature of his personality, his power and authority, there seemed little danger that others would be so brave as to challenge him.

As part of the resocializing process (‘Heritage-izing’) and with the aim of demonstrating the productive capacity of one site over another, the management instigated a partnering scheme. This scheme was introduced initially in Production but it spread rapidly to the commercial departments. It aimed at getting people in similar jobs to compare their method of operation output. In addition, partners could be mutually supportive and, it was believed, a best practice would naturally emerge. While Gerry had not been directly involved in the process, (it was an initiative by John Saberton), he believed that it would have the effect of increasing productivity and he was, therefore, in favour of it. In his final comments on the H+T Board, Gerry felt that they had become, ‘Accepting of failure, because that’s where they have come from’. He added ‘It’s a dangerous attitude to say near enough is good enough, but it’s not in my book; it has to be absolutely right, absolutely right’. His attitude motivated not only his approach to H+T, but also to addressing what he regarded as general industry malaise, of which they were a microcosm.

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## A View from the Board

In addition to Gerry, the H+T Board comprised five men, four from Heritage, (Mike Fawcett, John Saberton, Terry Driscoll – Technical Director) and Paul Cocker) and one from Timbermaster (Stephen Anders).

The Heritage men believed that their staff were ‘Hard and streetwise’ with a ‘Take no prisoners attitude’ having ‘graduated’, from the experience several years under the demanding eye of the venture capitalist Ryecroft. They felt that their years of experience could be brought to bear on Timbermaster. Timbermaster, by contrast were seen as lacking a good work ethic and having a ‘seaside’ mentality.

Each Board member expressed mutual disappointment in the other’s business. Timbermaster seemed to lack everything they thought was positive in a business and embodied everything they thought was ‘bad’. Terry Driscoll found the paternalistic approach of Timbermaster unacceptable, and likened it to the provision of ‘Social services: thriving on the fact that families, brothers, cousins, all worked there’. He added:

‘From the outside, [*before the acquisition*] we thought that they did everything right, but when we looked in the cupboard, so to speak, we wondered how the hell they had managed to win so many orders from us’.

More redundancies were deemed to be an inevitable consequence of the merger.

Mike Fawcett (Commercial Director) was initially not convinced that the acquisition was a good idea. Nevertheless, it was his task to ensure that the vital commercial functions were harmonized across the sites, although he had fundamental concerns about the Timbermaster ‘Work ethic’. He felt that the people were not ‘Bottom line focussed’ and had ‘Forgotten how to make a profit’. Despite his concerns and his responsibilities, Mike did not spend much time at Timbermaster he preferred to delegate his responsibilities.

Heritage had not always regarded Timbermaster in a disparaging way; in fact as Paul Cocker commented, for many years they had followed the Timbermaster lead, admiring their workmanship and envying the size of contracts won. It was only when Gerry Hill joined Ryecroft that Timbermaster became perceived as a vulnerable adversary, rather than an equal or superior. Its downfall was seen now as the consequence of ‘bad management’ and an inability to adapt. The fact that Heritage had survived and thrived in recent years was proof enough (both at Timbermaster and Heritage) that it (Heritage) was a superior organization.

When Stephen Anders talked about Heritage, he was equally unimpressed. His concern was that Heritage had low quality output and he had doubts about the competence of some of its managers, in particular Paul’s lack of experience in Marketing and Mike’s continual absence. He felt that the new company (at twice the size) needed people who could ‘run faster’ than the present incumbents. He also felt isolated and vulnerable, given that all his peers were ‘Heritage men’.

Unlike at Heritage, Stephen felt that he had the trust of the workforce and tried to gain their co-operation in the changes which he saw as being in the best interests of the company. Stephen said:

‘While some resented the takeover, others felt lucky to survive. I knew that we had reached a point when the MD was putting the keys in the gate. That was it. So, whether we survive or not, we have a chance now and we have to grasp it and move forward.’

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## *Partnering – In the Spirit of Cooperation?*

Whatever the source of the enmity between the sites was presumed to be, it was given new meaning through the introduction of partnering. Competition between the sites was seen as having ambiguous worth when it came to the integration of values and work practices. The Board said that they did not want ‘competing culture’, but they did want competition between individuals as this was a means of increasing productivity. Each individual at Heritage was given a partner at Timbermaster doing the same job. The positive slant on this approach was for each to support the other, passing on best practice. The negative slant on the approach was to weed out the lower performers and to create competition between individuals to improve efficiency and output.

While Stephen Anders and John Saberton shared responsibility for improving productivity across the businesses, it was John’s idea to introduce partnering; Stephen bowed to his greater judgement on the matter’.

Stephen asserted, though his words seemed to lack conviction, ‘The scheme was not intended to divide and conquer’. He added:

‘It was management responsibility to quash any suggestions that the scheme was intended to set them [*employees*] in competition with their opposite number. We must give them the perception that it is constructive and not simply a move to improve productivity, or to weed out the lower performers.’

Despite his reassurances, he knew that the employees had not accepted the positive interpretation that had been given to partnering. John had persuaded Stephen that partnering was a means of preventing competition between the sites; that is, if the sites continued to operate as separate and independent entities, they would inevitably be fighting for the same business, which was not seen as desirable from either a business or a personal perspective.

Partnering drew Heritage staff unexpectedly directly into the rationalization process. They had assumed that they had been through their period of pain and that now it was Timbermaster’s turn. Having performed their jobs diligently for a number of years, they resented being made to feel insecure again. People were not reassured by the messages of ‘Best practice and harmonization of working methods’ and the Board was aware that the workforce in general sensed a more sinister motivation behind the concept of partnering. As such, the feeling of enmity and non-cooperation was heightened by the process, despite this, productivity increased.

In addition to distrust between staff at each site, it is clear that there was distrust and discontent at Board level also.

Despite Gerry’s approach, all the Heritage men credited Gerry with turning Heritage into the type of company that could contemplate a merger with Timbermaster. They were very positive about his strategic vision, but condemning of his style of management which was at best described as ‘Awful’ and ‘lacking empathy’. To punctuate this point, despite Gerry’s admiration of the way Mike had responded to his demotions, Mike described this same period as the ‘Worst time of his life.’

## **The perspective of Managers and Staff**

### *Management and Systems*

From discussions with the management and staff at Heritage, two themes predominated: firstly, the infighting between Board members and its impact on the business, and secondly, the inadequacies of the systems.

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One manager expressed a cynical view of the situation at Heritage that reflected the comments made by others on the fighting between Board members, he said:

Here at Heritage, well it's just a sham, what I think they need is a real bastard to come in and sort them out. If they all had someone to hate, they would be all right and they would work together. At the moment they just defend their own patch. When I first met Gerry I thought that he would perform that function, he's dynamic and forceful. You know the sort of thing, if things weren't going well that he would be thumping the table saying, "I don't care what your personal differences are just sort them out". But that didn't seem to happen. My personal view is that he could just let them hang themselves, but it just seems to go on and on. Gerry should be giving them all directions, but he's not. I think the problem is they are all very insecure. Perhaps not Gerry, but the rest definitely are.

Knowledge of the difficulties at Board level seemed to be widespread. Participants generally chose to demonstrate the difficulties by citing examples of failings in the much vaunted systems. The whole thrust of management's approach to business was control of the process, and hence the costs, with a view to increasing productivity. The focus on systems and measurement, with a reliance being placed on the competence of the Heritage systems, (both procedural and technical), did not find favour with anyone. As was frequently commented, 'the systems don't work'!

Chris Miles (Production Manager at Heritage) gave chapter and verse on the deficiencies of the system, but felt that they would not be replaced as 'Egos' were at stake. There are a number of systems, (technological and procedural), which failed to do what they were purported to do, in terms of performance achieved or improving productivity. Members of the management team at Heritage seemed to be well aware of this, but they failed however to bring it to the attention of the Board because of the alleged tensions between Board members and the difficulties it would cause. Instead, it is argued that members of the management team made up for the deficiencies of the systems by 'Filling in the gaps', i.e. manually intervening to compensate for the inadequacy of the systems. Chris Miles, who expressed a great deal of sympathy for the views of the Timbermaster people, said:

'They were lead to believe that Heritage had all these wonderful systems and great commercial acumen, when the reality is its people like me and my production team that get them out of the messes that they create.'

While the Heritage culture has developed around the principle of hiding or quietly resolving problems, Timbermaster people tried to resolve them. However, the problems that they were striving to overcome were inherent inadequacies in the systems design that had not been clearly explained to them. By admitting that the systems had failings, it was argued, someone at Board level would have to have taken responsibility for them. Because of this lack of willingness to raise issues and take responsibility, problems were 'buried'. Several similar issues seemed to have been buried for the same reason.

Chris Miles provided another example with the approach of John Saberton to the achievement of this 'Holy Grail' figure of the 'True cost of production'. As part of the process of gaining an understanding of all the activities that go into making a product, Chris had instigated a system of process engineering. He argued that:

'While lots of companies are disbanding their engineering teams, I am trying to introduce a system whereby every process is logged and every tool used in every process is itemized. It's generally something that an apprentice would do as part of their training, but no one has ever done it here. Once you've done it you can assess times against routes and then you know how much everything costs.'



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Chris explained that until this exercise was completed the factory could not know its true cost of production, despite this. John Saberton (his manager) has claimed that a true cost of production figure had been established and this had been so vaunted that to dispel the myth would cause real embarrassment all round. Chris explained:

‘As part of the battle of ego between John Saberton and Mike Fawcett, John claimed that he had worked out the true cost of production. A claim he made in a show of bravado, to prove that he had achieved what he had claimed was a massive failing on Mike’s part. Having made his claim at a Board meeting, various members of the Board have told and retold the story (inside and outside the company). They have shouted and bragged about it, but it isn’t true. We cannot say what the true cost of manufacture is and if John’s claim was challenged he would say “If you say we can’t prove it, prove it”’

Chris could prove it but, as John was his boss, he remained silent. Other, similar situations were cited, but space does not permit them to be detailed.

However, many of these issues, in essence, emerged from the same problem; as Chris explained, the egos of Board members resulted in the company judging its successes on false claims of performance, which very few people were prepared to challenge. He said ‘People just keep their heads down and hope for the best, if management can get things sorted out on the quiet without getting the Directors or other managers involved, they will’.

On the other side of the coin, Timbermaster people struggled to make inherently flawed systems work. They believed, and certain members of the Heritage Board suggested, that they were deficient as the systems worked well at Heritage. The problems were perceived to rest firmly with the managers and staff; in this respect partnering work very much against the company’s interest. No one wanted to share their knowledge with a colleague who may eventually replace them. One manager expressed his feelings of inadequacy he tried to persuade his struggling team of estimators to keep pace with their counterparts at Heritage. Taking a leaf out of Gerry’s book, he had resolved to be firm and that he needed a show of strength to force the pace, unaware that he was fighting a losing battle.

The general feeling was that the Board were afraid of change. They had acted hastily in removing Timbermaster systems without appraising their potential value to the company. However, a retrospective appraisal of the efficacy of existing systems would involve members of the Board admitting that mistakes had been made in their commissioning. Chris Miles did not believe that the Board would be likely to do this and risk the admonishment of their fellow Board members. Chris said a number of other systems and administrative failings were swept under the carpet, rather than have anyone take control and resolve them. Each problem confronted would require someone losing face as the various Board members raised each issue in an air of brinkmanship. Chris felt that brinkmanship invaded all aspects of business, to a point where it would undermine the strategy that they (the Board) claimed so much to uphold.

### Conclusion

At its most basic Gerry’s use of fear and intimidation was morally questionable. However, he would argue no doubt, like the fictional character Vic Wilcox in the David Lodge’s novel ‘Nice Work’, that it’s a ‘management matter’, not a moral issue. This separation or compartmentalisation of self is something Gerry seems to manage well. Rather than consider his acts in any way immoral, he would argue that a failure to act in the best interest of shareholders was a dereliction of his moral, professional and even legal duty. From his perspective it is legitimate to treat employees like commodities or assets of the company and use them to best effect. For Gerry, as people unpredictable and unreliable, it is best to remove as many as possible from the company and replace them with machines.

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Gerry saw his role as quite clearly to serve the shareholders' interest and this required him to steer his employees efforts towards the objectives of productivity, efficiency and profitability. He has autonomy in the methods he adopted to fulfil this obligation and in doing so he chose a hard-headed, instrumentally rational approach to management. He has a keen sense of the nature of his role as leader and adopted wholeheartedly the socially prescribed purpose of business.

It is clear from Gerry's comments and those of some of his fellow Board members, that they felt that the community was best served by having a strong, well managed business. Consideration of the social or community implications of the changes at Timbermaster, in particular more redundancies, was not considered to be their concern. Ryecroft, as venture capitalists, had little or no interest in the way the company was managed, only its efficiency and profitability. Ryecroft had made it clear that it would divest itself of the business if it did not show adequate returns. (This it has subsequently done and H+T was disposed of in a management buy out). Gerry management style was aggressive and intimidating and he felt that these were desirable traits given the role he had to play. These characteristics no doubt enhanced his appeal in the eyes of those who employed him.

The dialectical relationship between identity and institutionalization is fragile and contested. The role mediates between the two aspects of the dialectic, in that it is through the objectification of the role that institutional order becomes 'real' and through the performance of their role that individuals secure their identity. However, because institutional order is socially defined, it can be redefined and this creates the potential for identity to be placed in dialectical tension with the new reality. This process was evident at H+T in particular through the partnering system.

The partnering scheme was John Saberton's initiative. He may have introduced the idea initially out of self-interest as he did not want Heritage to compete against Timbermaster in the same market. However, the scheme served two additional purposes: firstly it aimed to establish 'best practice' across the sites and, secondly, helped to identify the key performers, that is, those employees capable or willing to meeting the stringent performance targets set. The message to the staff, however, was one of integration and cooperation. The impact of the experiment was most acutely felt in the estimating departments. High performance levels were established, monitored and policed. Staff were under intense pressure to achieve them, with threats of demotion or dismissal for the under achievers. The pressure was experienced individually and collectively as individual failure impacted upon team performance. Timbermaster staff felt, and were, particularly exposed as they had both new targets and new, unfamiliar and unreliable systems to contend with. Although Heritage staff knew the shortcoming of the systems, and how to get around them, they were unwilling to share their expertise. The process of partnering heightened self-interest, the sense of competition and individuation. Individuals, staff and managers, doubted their capability, believing, as they were told, that it was not the systems, but the people who were at fault. Rather than take time to evaluate the alternatives, all parties look for granted the infallibility of the systems and believed in the fallibility of the people.

The policy entrapped staff and undermined the very rationality it was supposed to serve. People became secretive and self-protecting and only processed those order that would be undertaken with minimum of effort. More complex jobs were left to 'others' as the systems did not differentiate between jobs of differing complexity, just volume; even if the more complex jobs resulted in higher revenue.

If 'Instrumental rationality is defined by its opposition to emotionality as an alternative mode of experience' (Putnam and Mumby, 1993: 37), Gerry set a 'good' example of how to disengage the two. The managers at Timbermaster quickly learned to compartmentalise any thoughts of paternalism as this would be construed as a sign of weakness, they buried their concerns and 'toed the party line'. It has been made clear that there was no room for emotions. 'Reason, cognition and thinking become processes linked to rationality, while passion, affect and feeling become indices of emotionality' (Putnam and Mumby,

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1993: 48). If, like Gerry, his employees had been able to similarly disengage emotionality from rationality, they would have been less susceptible to his tactics and his power would have been neutralised. As it is, individuals cannot generally disengage their emotions in this way and thus emotions inadvertently serve a valuable instrumental role. However, Putnam and Mumby argue, 'Even if individuals manage their emotions, rationality 'appropriates this private sphere into the public' (1993: 41). Gerry managed to harness the emotionality of his workforce as a commodity for enhancing productivity. This placed emotionality (in this case fear and insecurity) at the centre of the dialectical relationship between the individual and the institution. Ordinarily the irrationality of emotion would not be tolerated at H+T unless, as in this case, it can be harnessed for instrumental gain.

It is also evident from the case study that another by-product of emotional control was the suppression of problems and disagreements, effectively 'eliminating the voice of employees and reducing upward information flows (Waldron and Krone: 1991:302). Issues that might otherwise have been addressed were not, unless they could be resolved quietly without reference to the Board. Thus at one level fear created and perpetuated problems by driving them underground (in an irrational way), but it also drove individuals towards covert methods of problem resolution; both mechanisms indirectly serving to perpetuate the perception of a rational orthodoxy and its success.

There is little doubt that Gerry was striving towards the commodification of labour. During his frequently visits to the factory, talking to employees, Gerry was gaining a feel for the mood of the business and also constantly looking for areas of slippage and wastage. His mechanisation of the factory has resulted in the removal of skills and replacement of them with machine minders. Some of the older employees, skilled craftsmen, lamented the fact that they performed simple repetitive tasks, but also appreciated that they still had a job. In the offices, a similar process was underway. Gerry had a team of programmers (consultants) developing bespoke drawing and estimating packages, which he hoped would replace his draughtsmen and estimating teams. He used his existing staff to trial the software that was to replace them. Despite their feelings of animosity, they were expected to be fully effective, prepared to use their skill and expert knowledge and full potential and work to the best of their ability. In an attempt to impress, many seemed prepared to do so.

By keeping a safe distance from emotional attachment to anyone in the company, Gerry was in a position to deny responsibility for the day-to-day matters and concentrate on the vision. As he had no friends in the company (by his own admission) he had little to lose with his brusque and abrasive style. Given his highly instrumental approach towards the tasks in hand, he would no doubt dismiss the notion that there was a moral or ethical case to answer. This distance both protected him and made him vulnerable: he was protected in that he was immune to the pain he caused others and could claim to have been misled by the information supplied to him by his subordinates; he was vulnerable in that no one owed him a debt of loyalty.

It is in the world of management and formal work where we expect to find the most refined form of rational, planned action (Knights and Murray, 1994), yet as this and other empirical works show, people, unanticipated events, personal agendas can disrupt the best of plans. John Saberton's false claim to have arrived at a 'true cost of production' implicated Gerry, and to some degree many of his staff, (perhaps not always knowingly) in deception, resulting in various degrees of moral entrapment. They participated in the production of information that led to misleading claims being made about company's performance. While Gerry and the Board publicly proclaimed that honesty had been made policy at H+T, deception at all levels was rife. Yet this was the model he wished to take forwards as a template for industry to follow.

Gerry acknowledged that he had taken the moral high ground in accusing the industry as a sector of 'Malpractice'. As Walton comments, 'The field of business ethics rests on the assumption that moral

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behaviour is important, but problematical for the organizational actor' (Walton, 1988; cited in Fineman, 1996: 551). Gerry would not sacrifice optimizing the performance at H+T in order to achieve his moral goal; it was not a 'morality' versus 'performance' dilemma. In fact, he saw the two themes as running in parallel and part of his argument to the industry was that not only was 'malpractice' bad for the image of the industry, it also cost money. His claims to have recovered one million pounds in lost revenue by improving performance would have appealed to his competitors and lend considerable legitimacy to his arguments. Gerry seemed also to genuinely believe that there was a moral imperative, which, if left unchecked, would put the reputation of the industry at risk.

Even so, his desire to for the moral reform of the industry was not benign. Although internally he could claim to have controlled malpractice, this would only be useful if externally validated. Bringing in third party inspectors provide legitimacy, but would have cost implication for his company and he wanted to be sure that his competitors were equally committed. Trade associations exert a powerful homogenizing pressure on companies, whether it is in the form of policy, regulations, quality or even behaviour. The trade association to which H+T belongs had been, for many years, advocating the ethical superiority of its members when compared with outsiders. However, 'saying' and 'doing' are different issues and Gerry, in effect, called their bluff by demanding that they prove their competency and superiority. Through the use of legitimating bodies, in this case the professional trade association and independent approval bodies, Gerry Hill aimed to propagate organizational norms which would regulate the behaviour of the professional managers and the principals of management within this organisational field. While DiMaggio and Powell argued that increased organizational efficiency does not appear to result from homogenization, Gerry's message to his fellow manufacturers was that it could, and he used H+T as a model to demonstrate how this transformation could be effected.

Gerry's approach and behaviour created for him and his staff a position form which it was difficult to withdraw without loss of face. His position on the moral high ground was only safe as long as his staff remained complicit.

Despite the dubious premise upon which it was based the companies that Gerry tried to influence did adopt quality and performance standards in line with his vision and which were aimed to address the issues that he had raised with them. At the time of the interviews, Gerry had persuaded all of the manufacturers in the trade association (which represented over 90% of the products sold) to participate in third party quality management schemes. Without the legitimacy and the external audit of their systems and manufacturing process, Gerry believed that they could adopt his model for symbolic purposes and may not progress it beyond superficial use (Bowerman, 2002). Gaining their participation, he felt this was a significant achievement and he took credit for it. He also took it as a sign that the seeds of an alternative reality had been planted, in that the trade association as a body, and its members individually, also took an active moral position against companies outside their ranks, as a means of demonstrating their superiority and competence. Their approach was, in fact, very similar in tone to one that Gerry had adopted to persuade them and was a stance that very much occupied the moral high ground...so it continues.

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**Globalization, Postcolonial Theory, and Organizational Analysis:  
Lessons from the Rwanda Genocide**

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## **Globalization, Postcolonial Theory, and Organizational Analysis:**

### **Lessons from the Rwanda Genocide**

In recent years, following Said (1979, 1993), there has been a growing interest in postcolonialism and organizational analysis (Prasad, 2003). This has been accompanied by a growing recognition that “globalization” consists of a series of relationships, many of which were built out of former imperialist practices and discourses that influence current organizational practices (Mills, 1995; Prasad, 1997). In this paper we explore these postcolonial relationships and their impact on organizational arrangements through an analysis of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. On the surface, as the recent movie *Hotel Rwanda* attests, the problem appears more in the realm of political science than organizational analysis. Yet the disconnect is part of the problem that postcolonialist analysis attempts to redress, namely, a fusion of political science with organizational analysis. The genocide in Rwanda was in large part the outcome of colonial legacies whose very translation into organizational action and inaction allowed it to happen. Those organizations included not only the Rwandan state, its various departments and the organization of Hutu extremists, but also the media, the United Nations (UN), and the numerous government agencies, and peacekeeping forces associated with the UN. While Rwanda’s history was shaped by overtly colonial forces, imperialist tendencies significantly linger within the institution of international peacekeeping and the organizations involved in this enterprise (Dallaire, 2003). Most fundamentally, the UN Security Council has cemented Western dominance in its structure and procedures. As a member of this organization, the United States characterized Rwanda as neither of sufficient strategic value nor sufficiently unique from Somalia to justify military intervention. The media continued to represent the genocide in Rwanda as tribal anarchy in a land not dissimilar to any other African nation. Through such interpretations by Western powers of people belonging to different races and ethnicities, the UN failed absolutely to perform its most fundamental role. This does not bode well for organizations operating within a global context. As the paper will show, the example of Rwanda has profound implications, including an inability for members of international organizations to see beyond the colonial paradigms of self-interest and binary opposition that contributes to a deconstructive cycle of representation and resistance, and the furtherance of the hegemony of imperialism.

# **Globalization, Postcolonial Theory, and Organizational Analysis:**

## **Lessons from the Rwanda Genocide**

### **Introduction**

Over the course of 100 days in 1994, approximately 800,000 Rwandans were killed in a genocidal campaign launched by Hutu extremists against Tutsi and politically moderate Hutu. This was the latest in a series of massacres that occurred between Hutu and Tutsis in the past half-century, the product a complex conflict that has spilled over into neighbouring countries and has cost at least three million lives (The Economist, 2004). “The [1994] Rwanda genocide would prove to be the fastest, most efficient killing spree of the twentieth century” (Power, 2002, p.334). During these few months, Western nations not only failed to act to halt the killing, but were involved in the period leading up to its commencement. “There is evidence that points not just to negligence, but to complicity” (Melvern, 2000, p.5). The most serious charges of organizational negligence may be laid against the United Nations (UN) and its most dominant members. In 1999, the UN launched an *Independent Inquiry into the Actions of the UN During the 1994 Genocide in Rwanda*, which concluded in its final report that “there was a persistent lack of political will by Member States to act, or to act assertively enough, which affected the Secretariat’s response, the Security Council’s decision-making, and the difficulties in getting troops for the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR)” (Mays, 2002, p.5). This essay seeks to understand both action and inaction through a postcolonial lens, to see how characterizations of this tiny African nation and the prioritisation of Western interests shaped decisions that only worsened this crisis.

## **Postcolonialism Introduced**

Postcolonial analysis is focused upon the persistence of Western imperialism within global institutions and relationships long after political decolonization has taken place (Prasad, 2005). Postcolonialism offers a critique of Western modernity and of globalization through a historical examination of the West's relationship to others (Prasad, 2005). This is not simply a theory of oppression and exploitation, but rather one of objectification, whereby the discourse of the West ontologically created a reality in which certain peoples were constructed as objects of control (Said, 1978). From this arose the idea of a superior European identity that spread throughout Western nations, continuously reinforced through diverse narratives ranging from economic and sociological theories of development to literature in which a superior identity was asserted (Said, 1978; Said, 1994). "Like the 'Third World' the 'Orient' is a name for something that at one level is real but at another level does not exist in that general form as an object of knowledge" (Young, 2001, p.389). It is through the pervasive distribution of Western ideas about the 'other' (subjects of colonialism, such as the Orient and Africa) that gives rise to the creation of an ontological 'other'. Furthermore, the 'other' is created as the concentrated opposite to all the privileged moral and aesthetic attributes that the Western nation attributes to itself (Prasad, 1997). The result is a cultural and political hegemony of Western ideas that is quite imperialist in nature (Said, 1978). Postcolonial critiques therefore seek to emancipate the 'a priori' history, culture and aspirations of formerly colonized peoples that have been lost in the West's interpretation of them that used a language of dependency and subordination (Said, 1994).

## **Imperial History of Rwanda**

Rwanda is a small, landlocked, mountainous, heavily populated African nation not blessed with significant natural or geographical resources. The people fell into one of three groups, and there remains debate amongst anthropologists as to whether such divisions represented ethnicity, class or simply occupation (Melvern, 2000). The first European explorers discovered a country that was ruled by a monarchy and had developed an intricate, feudal administrative structure. The colonial powers that existed at the time of the Berlin Conference in 1885 allocated Rwanda to Germany, which after the First World War was reallocated to Belgium under a League of Nations mandate. These colonizers, especially the latter, exacerbated the pre-existing feudal state through their idea that the Hutu and Tutsi belonged to distinct races (Dallaire, 2003). The Belgians deemed the Tutsi, who populated the ruling monarch and whose physical characteristics were deemed more European, to be a superior people, and instituted a formal classification system, complete with identification cards, based on both appearance and wealth (Melvern, 2000). Being the beneficiaries of such “pseudoscientific myths” (Moghalu, 2005, p.11), Tutsis embraced these distinctions that, over time, evolved into a story of historic domination broadly accepted by Hutus and Tutsis alike (Berkeley, 2001). Despite their numerical minority, Tutsis enjoyed an elevated status within Rwandan society that was demonstrated through such various privileges as occupation within the administrative hierarchy and admission to colonial, Church run schools.

While Belgians exploited the coffee and tea plantations in Rwanda, the forces of nationalism and racial antagonism grew from the primarily Hutu population that had been long ignored by the Belgian administration. “This situation fostered progressively increasing resentment on the part of the Hutu population” (Moghalu,

2005, p.11). Said (1994) noted that throughout history, there has always been some form of resistance against colonial empires that pursued a goal of self-determination. Hutu hatred toward Tutsi can be seen as the manifestation of opposition to imperial power insofar as colonial empires used the Tutsi to pursue their interests locally within Rwanda. Born from this were voices of extremism that rallied around the 'Hutu Power' mantra. In 1962, the wave of European de-colonization reached Rwanda and it became an independent republic, but not before the Belgians had changed their minds, believing that the Hutu were oppressed and deserving of power (The Economist, 2004). Given their numerical majority, a Hutu government was installed in a general election. Extremist pressures that were long building resulted in a massacre of Tutsis in December 1963 that foreshadowed future events. One racial dictatorship was replaced by another, and thousands of Tutsis switched places with Hutus as refugees in neighbouring countries (Melvern, 2000).

Although not a colonizer, France maintained an imperial attitude toward Rwanda, as it was geographically situated along the front line of the centuries-old Anglo-French rivalry in Africa (Melvern, 2000). As a member of the Francophonie, Rwanda provided a means for France to pursue its interests via a "cultural and linguistic crusade" (Melvern, 2000, p. 75). France provided weapons and training to the Rwandese Government Forces (RGF) and politically supported the ruling MRND (National Revolutionary Development Movement) party, while the French culture was in part nurtured through academic institutions in Canada and France (Dallaire, 2003).

Rwanda's history as a colonized nation cemented racial intolerance between Rwandans and led to several waves of citizens exiled from their own country. The most pervasive legacy of colonialism was ethnic resentment resulting from a desire

“for power and its perks” (The Economist, 2004). “Their extremism was the seemingly indestructible and ugly harvest of years of power struggles and insecurity that had been deftly played upon by their former colonial rulers” (Dallaire, 2003, p. 515).

### **The Legacy of Humanitarian and Developmental Efforts**

Understanding the genocide in Rwanda through the postcolonial lens helps to explain how the multitude of development aid organizations working in Rwanda in the years leading up to the killings played a crucial role in the processes that led to this violence (Uvin, 1998). Rwanda was viewed as a model of development in Africa, with good performance on the most usual economic indicators of development, including gross national product, exports, growth in the service sector, and energy production, as well as social indicators such as vaccination rates (Uvin, 1998). Development was used by the ruling MRND elites to legitimise their newly found authority after independence – indeed, the government owed its very existence to foreign aid money – and the discourse of development of the masses was pervasive during Habyarimana’s reign (Uvin, 1988). This is consistent with the historical tendency for nationalist elites to seek legitimacy from former colonizers by stepping into the narrative pattern of development used in the West, resulting in an extension of the hegemony of Western interests (Said, 1994). The political party was labelled a ‘development movement’, Parliament became the ‘National Development Council’, communes were devised as the engine for development, and all Rwandans were equally considered workers within this ‘revolution’ (Uvin, 1998). The early 1990s witnessed a dramatic rise in the amount of development aid poured into Rwanda, reflecting its popularity within the aid community (Uvin, 1998). Much of this

financial input came in the form of structural adjustment loans that were typically accompanied by stringent conditions requiring dramatic policy reforms (Uvin, 1998). Desired reforms ranged from electoral law to commodity pricing, from freer trade to 'civil society strengthening', and were embedded in these projects, reflecting the imperial will of the Western donors to subjugate Rwandan autonomy to Western interests (Uvin, 1998). Uvin (1998) cited various World Bank reports that presented Rwanda as successful in its development initiatives and credits the government with raising the state of the country's economy.

World Bank congratulations merely reflected the skill with which the Rwandan government was able to play 'the aid game', for despite the rhetoric, the reality of development served primarily to bolster the power of the elite ruling class (Uvin, 1998). The flow of foreign aid was tightly controlled, and a vertical state hierarchy strictly governed the behaviour of the impoverished masses that worked as agricultural and manual labourers within communal development projects (Uvin, 1998). What was overlooked by the aid community during this period was the crisis being experienced by the peasant farmers, whose coffee exports had been decimated by both drought and plunged world prices resulting from the collapse of the International Coffee Agreement in 1989 (Melvern, 2000). Further overlooked were the problems of mounting foreign debt payments, investments into the importing of weapons, inflation of the Rwandan franc that drastically increased the cost of living, the collapse of agricultural production, and rampant disease. (Melvern, 2000). By 1994, Rwanda had descended into poverty and destitution, and extremism flourished (Melvern, 2000). Those who cared to investigate would have witnessed the slow disintegration of Rwandese society (Uvin, 1998).

Despite this reality, foreign donors uncritically accepted the claims of the MRND regime to be both progressive and representative (Uvin, 1998). France was particularly active in the militarization of the MRND, providing far ranging support that included troops, advisors, arms and financial credit (Uvin, 1998). During the genocide, there were numerous non-governmental organizations present in and around Rwanda providing humanitarian relief to the thousands of victims and fleeing refugees that staunchly maintained a position of neutrality (Jones, 2001). Yet neutrality in the face of genocide is impossible; neutrality is a political position and in the case of Rwanda was harmful to the coherence of the totality of conflict management efforts (Jones, 2001).

The paternalistic assumption made in such development narratives is that Rwanda had a development problem to be fixed, and that the particular skills of Western aid institutions represented the solution. The futility of imperialist philanthropy cannot be perceived by the West due to illusions of omnipotence, a false belief that it can fix what ails an incompetent Third World (Said, 1994). Not included in this problem definition were the real issues of human rights violations, fear, ethnic identification cards and quota systems, and the oppressive presence of the state that were genuinely troubling to the Rwandese, and thus addressing such inequalities were never considered as part of the mandate of development organizations (Uvin, 1998). “No aid agency ever denounced the official racism” (Uvin, 1998, p.44). In what Nelson (1995) referred to as the myth of apolitical development, the World Bank and others maintained a technocratic perspective that treated as invisible the political realities of their policies. Human development, however, requires attention to be paid “to oft-neglected issues of empowerment, social cooperation, equity, dignity, security, and sustainability” (Uvin, 1998, p.105). A more elaborate definition suggests that:



meaningful development is not simply about increases in income but also about improved access to the means of production; reduction in insecurity and vulnerability, and the creation of a sustainable and hopeful future; empowerment through participation, justice, freedom, and access to information and education; overcoming physical weakness through access to health and nutrition; and social relations characterized by human dignity, cooperation, and a sense of equity (Uvin, 1998, p.107).

It is precisely through the subordination of human needs in a narrower discourse of development employed by Western based aid organizations that we can come to understand the colonial nature of their actions.

It is also relevant to note the prominent role of the Catholic Church within Rwanda in the lead-up to genocide, being the second largest employer after the government (Melvern, 2000). Surrounding the churches were schools, health clinics and printing presses that all enforced a quota system that restricted Tutsi participation within these social structures (Melvern, 2000). Prior to the genocide, the Catholic Church recognized that it itself has an unresolved issue of considerable ethnic tension within its own ranks, where promotion to the level of bishop was based on race (Jones, 2001). Catholic support for Hutu nationalism was so overt that the archbishop of Kigali was closely linked to the Hutu Power inner circle (Melvern, 2000). While the Church led some reconciliation efforts in the period leading up to the genocide, their internal preoccupation with overcoming racism made the Church less effective as a mediator of dialogue to reduce ethnic tension within the broader society (Jones, 2001). It is possible to see how, in Rwanda, the colonial approach taken by the church missions throughout the Third World, whereas former ‘savages’ became objects of “accomodat[ion] to the moral exigencies of Western Christianity” (Said, 1978, p.76), played an important contributing role in fuelling ethnic hatred. To shape the value system of Rwandan society to be more aligned with the West, the scope of the

Church's activities was necessarily far-reaching, but far from neutral on the important matters of class and equality.

### **Western (In)Action During the 1994 Genocide**

To understand the failure by the international community to act to prevent the 1994 killings in Rwanda requires an awareness of the decisions made by the UN Security Council with respect to the genocide. Chapter VI of the UN Charter provides for the creation of traditional peacekeeping operations whose mandate is to oversee the implementation of a peace agreement between two willing parties. Under the auspices of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the two racially divided sides within Rwanda reached a peace agreement in Arusha, in nearby Tanzania. Under Chapter VI, UN Resolution 872 authorized a small peacekeeping mission to oversee the implementation of the Arusha accords. This developed into the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), led by Canadian Major-General Romeo Dallaire, whose main objective was to oversee the establishment of a representative broad-based transitional government within Rwanda. The requirement for UN peacekeepers outlined in Arusha, however, was rejected by the UN as a cost-cutting measure, leaving Dallaire with grossly inadequate resources (Melvern, 2000). As well, there was a lack of continuity in leadership and strategic coordination during the transfer of responsibility from the regional OAU to the international UN (Jones, 2001). Furthermore, the UN came into the scene only after the Arusha mediations had concluded, and thus had no in-depth knowledge of the sensitivities involved (such as the presence of spoilers). All of these factors contributed to making the UN security guarantee contained within Arusha meaningless (Jones, 2001).

On April 6, 1994, UN Resolution 909 granted a six-week extension in time to the UNAMIR mandate, but again did not authorize an expansion of resources or authority. This fell short of the Chapter VII authority that Dallaire then sought, one that would have permitted the military enforcement of peace, for upon his arrival in Rwanda, Dallaire became increasingly aware of the genocidal preparations unfolding (Dallaire, 2003). Following the assassination of President Habyarimana later the same day, the genocide commenced in earnest, led by the extremist element within the ruling party. The entire administrative mechanism governing Rwanda was used to deliver a meticulously planned extermination of Tutsis, and all Hutus were implored and equipped to do their share. The presence of UN peacekeepers was used as a rallying point for the genocidaires – evidence of continued Western interference – and they became a convenient target upon whom blame for the death of the President could be laid. In the first 24 hours, ten Belgian peacekeepers had been killed.

The death of peacekeepers so early into this conflict was an ominous event for members of the UN Security Council who were scarred by the recent loss of life in Somalia in what was supposed to be a simple humanitarian mission. Belgium was insistent on an immediate withdrawal of its forces from Rwanda, but did not want to be seen as acting independently (Power, 2002). It found an ally in the United States, who “would not accept any resolution except one which withdrew all the peacekeepers” (Melvern, 2000, p. 163). By persuading other countries to leave, Belgium was better able to justify its withdrawal of soldiers to its own citizens (Moghalu, 2005). UN Resolution 912 was the product of secret meetings of the Security Council, resulting in a reduction of troops to only a token force of several hundred peacekeepers (Melvern, 2002). This led to the virtual collapse of UNAMIR as an effective force (Mays, 2002; Moghalu, 2005). “I expected the ex-colonial white

countries to stick it out even if they took casualties... The Belgian decision caught me totally off guard” (Dallaire, quoted in Power, 2002, p.367). “Ultimately, led by the United States, France, and the United Kingdom, [the UN Security Council] aided and abetted genocide in Rwanda. No amount of its cash and aid will ever wash its hands of Rwandan blood” (Dallaire, 2003, p.323). During this entire period, Rwanda held a non-permanent seat on the Security Council. The Rwanda ambassador informed the MRND of the weakness of the UN mission, and genicodal plans were confidently expanded from the capital district through the southern regions of Rwanda in which the majority of the Tutsi population were found (Melvern, 2000).

As international awareness of the genocide grew, the member states of the UN could no longer simply ignore the situation in Rwanda. UN Resolution 919, authorized well into the genocide, sought to establish an expanded UNAMIR II humanitarian mission to help protect the population. The Chair of the Security Council, however, admitted that the expansion was a fiction, as the resolution had been gutted by the US who was intent on successfully brokering a ceasefire before peacekeeping troops were committed (Melvern, 2000). Even then, the continued characterization of the conflict in Rwanda as a civil war between two feuding parties, and not genocide, contributed to the weakness of the Security Council (Melvern, 2000). Moreover, the fact that the US worked actively and effectively against an effective UNAMIR was one of the most significant failures, far exceeding the failings of the UN itself (Dallaire, 2003).

To further complicate matters, UN Resolution 929 authorized a separate French mission into Rwanda, dubbed ‘Operation Turquoise’. This operation was not integrated with the UNAMIR mission, and could be seen not only as a humanitarian operation but as evidence of France’s desire to protect its own interests and to prevent

the rebel RPF forces from taking control of all of Rwanda (Dallaire, 2003). One of France's main goals was to extract their own ex-patriots and government loyalists, including key members of the Hutu Power movement (Melvern, 2000).

## **A Postcolonial Analysis of Western (In)Action**

### ***1. The United Nations Security Council***

The context within which, and the process by which, the United Nations Security Council passed resolutions subjects it to postcolonial organizational analysis. The genocide in Rwanda occurred during a time when UN resources were stretched very thin. The amount of resources required in the former nation of Yugoslavia, to name but one conflict in which peacekeeping forces were engaged, proved to be exceptionally burdensome. The culture of cost cutting within the UN, due in large part to unpaid financial commitments made by developed nations, affected subsequent decisions pertaining to resource allocation (Melvern, 2000). For example, the US arrears at the time reportedly exceeded one billion dollars (Afoaku & Ukaga, 2001). Essentially, the UN was bankrupt and unable to develop the infrastructure necessary to support its expanding global operations with adequate staff, intelligence, control operations and contingency planning capabilities (Melvern, 2000).

Within this context, the use of the term 'genocide' to describe the killings in Rwanda was avoided to an incredulous extent (Power, 2002). Under the 1948 Genocide Convention, the first UN human rights treaty, any acknowledgement that genocide was occurring carried with it an obligation to respond. Article VIII of this treaty states: "Any Contracting Party may call upon the competent organs of the United Nations to take such action under the Charter of the United Nations as they

consider appropriate for the prevention and suppression of acts of genocide” (Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide). Not only does the word genocide, first coined by Raphael Lemkin to describe Hitler’s designs for the extermination of an ethnic group, carry a legal obligation, it further has been imbued with moral judgement (Power, 2002). To apply the word to the events unfolding in Rwanda was seen to place the member nations of the UN Security Council in the no-win situation of either losing military and political capital by engaging in conflict, or losing credibility by naming a horrendous crime but doing nothing to stop it (Power, 2002). Despite the fact that “the case for a label of genocide was the most straightforward since the Holocaust” (Power, 2002, p.362), the US seemed particularly keen on characterizing the Rwandan killings using a discourse with a more ambiguous meaning, and effected changes to Security Council statements. The language of civil warfare, where two sides are opposed in conflict, seemed less politically charged, and avoided a legal requirement to act that “was out of kilter with political and strategic considerations” (Moghalu, 2005, p.20). Even six weeks after the killings began and it was clear that genocide had, and was continuing to take place, the most critical language the US could muster was that ‘acts of genocide’ had occurred (Power, 2002). When famously asked how many ‘acts of genocide’ it took to make ‘genocide’, the spokesperson for the US State Department responded: “That’s just not a question that I’m in a position to answer” (Power, 2002, p. 364).

An examination of the decision-making process employed within the UN Security Council is also illustrative of the colonial tendencies of this organization. UN resolutions are the product of negotiated national interests, and the five permanent members within the Security Council have ‘double veto’ power that ensures their

interests are never compromised. Not only can the permanent members veto resolutions, but they also have the ability to determine which resolutions are subject to unanimous (versus majority) consent (Afoaku & Ukaga, 2001). When looking for objective rationale as to why these five nations – US, Britain, France, Russia and China – have such elite status, one is hard pressed to find any. There is no common denominator of economic power, military strength, population size, superior decision making abilities or even financial contribution to the UN; rather, the victors of the Second World War simply granted themselves a special privilege (Afoaku & Ukaga, 2001). Conspicuously absent from this list are all developing nations, those who are seen as undeserving of the status of equals and who have been historically treated as the objects of colonial interests by these great powers. At the 1945 signing of the UN Charter that institutionalised this veto power, “the rest of the participating countries were invited to endorse an arrangement which, in essence, was designed to serve the hegemonic interests of the elite states” (Afoaku & Ukaga, 2001, p.153).

In addition to the concern about representation is the concern about transparency. Much of the dialogue and decision-making within the UN Security Council occurs behind closed doors, diminishing the accountability of the ambassadors on the Security Council to the general public. Instead, these diplomats remain solely accountable to their own governments and negotiate from this position (Melvern, 2000). Furthermore, representing one’s country on the UN is a diplomatic position filled by politicians who are technical and military amateurs, ill-equipped to address the complexities of conflicts such as the Rwandan genocide (Melvern, 2000). The UN Secretary General, through his special representative in Rwanda, also poorly fulfilled the role of informant to the Security Council on matters pertaining to the

crisis in Rwanda, and little advice or recommendations were forthcoming (Melvern, 2000).

As a result of these criticisms, we can come to understand the UN Security Council as a mechanism used to advance the national interests of major Western powers through their policies and priorities with respect to international crises (Afoaku & Ukaga, 2001). Rwanda was not perceived to have any strategic or resource value to any world power (Dallaire, 2003). An inevitable decision to not intervene became possible to justify, in the minds of Western nations, by characterizing the killings in Rwanda as something other than genocide, something other than a massive humanitarian crisis. As a result, “the international tools developed over fifty-plus years to foster peace and security – such as the 1948 Genocide Convention, conflict resolution mechanisms, and UN peacekeeping – failed to provide even a shred of protection” (Jones, 2001, p.6). Amending the deficiencies in the Security Council in a manner that reflects twenty-first century political realities and seeks to promote equitable distribution of power and participatory decision-making through regional representation will inevitably diminish the privileged position of the great powers, and hence raise their opposition (Afoaku & Ukaga, 2001). This stalemate in progress toward reform was evident in the recent UN 2005 World Summit outcome document, to which member nations could only agree to the following:

We support early reform of the Security Council as an essential element of our overall effort to reform the United Nations in order to make it more broadly representative, efficient and transparent and thus to further enhance its effectiveness and the legitimacy and implementation of its decisions. We commit ourselves to continuing our efforts to achieve a decision to this end...(Resolution 153, p.33).

Instead of a strong, reputable, large and independent United Nations, perhaps member states are more at ease with a “weak, beholden, indebted scapegoat of an organization, which they can blame for their failures” (Dallaire, 2003, p. 90).



## ***2. The Role of the USA within the UN Security Council***

The preceding section reviewed the colonial nature of the UN Security Council by examining how both its membership and operating processes weaken its ability to represent varying global interests equitably. The intent of this section is to further develop our understanding of the failure of the UN to act during the Rwandan genocide by examining the particular role of the US. Such a focus on the US is necessary due to Dallaire's (2003) emphasis upon American failings, and because, as Power (2002) states: "the United States' decisions to act or not to act have had a greater impact on the victims' fortunes than those of any other major power" (p.xx).

Security Council deliberations about Rwanda occurred at a time in which the US had been humiliated by casualties in Somalia that led to the retreat of US forces (Barnett, 2002). In what became dubbed as the 'shadow of Somalia', Somalia marked a dramatic turning point in the American perspective toward peacekeeping operations that doomed Rwanda even before the genocide erupted (Barnett, 2002; Moghalu, 2005). For those who longed for the post-Cold War themes of unilateralism, television images of dead American soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu served to further entrench these views (Barnett, 2002). The word 'Somalia' took on a meaning entirely distinct from the country name. "*Somalia* could mean the need for the UN to get back to basics, to deploy peacekeepers only when there was a peace to keep and to decline the invitation to halt civil wars" (Barnett, 2002, p.39). Rarely discussed was the hypocrisy of the charges of incompetence levelled at the UN, for the soldiers in Somalia were there by design of US foreign policy and were operating under US command; nevertheless, in the context of a tremendous political fallout, the UN became a convenient scapegoat (Barnett, 2002). By blaming the UN, it became more critical to the longevity of the institution itself than the next peacekeeping

mission was successful. The early death of Belgian soldiers and the obvious lack of resources dedicated to UNAMIR cast doubt upon the success of this mission. “In other words, Dallaire’s peacekeeping mission in Rwanda had to be destroyed so that peacekeeping might be saved for use somewhere else” (Power, 2002, p.384).

Participation in a peacekeeping operation requires political will; the deployment of troops and equipment are not made mandatory with the approval of a peacekeeping operation (Mays, 2002). Somalia erased the political will of the US, for the fear of suffering casualties in a distant country that most Americans could not locate on a map was found to be unacceptable to the public (Mays, 2002). Peacekeeping took on a new meaning for the US administration – it was made sense of differently, as being a militarily, financially and politically risky operation. It was within this context that the Presidential Decision Directive No. 25 (PDD-25) emerged, which outlined limitations on future US involvement within the UN unless where strict conditions were met. While none of the conditions were deemed to be paramount, the first condition necessary for US support of any UN peace resolution is that “UN involvement advances US interests” (PDD-25). Furthermore, participation in peace operations would be limited to cases where “participation advances US interests and both the unique and general risks to American personnel have been weighed and are considered acceptable” (PDD 25). In a stark break from their imperial policies elsewhere, the US was now claiming to be unable to build the states of others, despite its obvious efforts to do just the opposite in such places as Latin America and the Middle East.

It would be naive to conclude that American politicians in the lead-up to the twenty-first century began to recognize the limitations to imperial vision and the tremendous cost of their overreach that Kennedy (1988) observed in *The Rise and*

*Fall of the Great Powers*. Instead, the American administration was thinking more about their voting constituents through this directive to conduct only casualty-free interventions and not take risks in areas of where little political capital is to be gained (Power, 2002). This position remains largely unchanged today. In his speech to the UN 2005 World Summit in September, President Bush maintained the American vision as an active agent for change in the world, so long as the change was consistent with America's foremost interests of economic growth through liberalized trade.

By expanding trade, we spread hope and opportunity to the corners of the world... Our agenda for freer trade is part of our agenda for a freer world, where people can live and worship and raise their children as they choose... through institutions of self-rule, which allow people to assert and defend their own rights (Bush, 2005).

President Bush articulated a typically colonial narrative that did not acknowledge that, within the remote corners of the world, there may already exist some interests deemed desirous by the people who live there. "There is always the appeal to power and national interest in running the affairs of lesser peoples" (Said, 1994, p.xxiii). At this same UN Summit, however, the US joined with other nations to successfully block language that obliged all members to respond to genocide (Kristoff, 2005). Instead, Resolution 139 of the UN 2005 World Summit Outcome document states that members "are prepared to take collective action...on a case by case basis" (p.31) should national authorities be proven to be ineffective in protecting their populations from genocide. For most members of the UN, this statement is a step backward from the Genocide Convention; for the US, however, it is entirely consistent, for when the US Congress finally ratified the Genocide Convention forty years later, it did so with such substantive caveats as to render it meaningless (Power, 2002).

It is the selectivity that is used in the formulation of US foreign policy that lends itself to a postcolonial critique. PDD-25 formalized the US position that

intervention must be related to their own defence or interests, and the lives of US troops assumed greater value than the lives of those Rwandans who could be saved by their peacekeeping efforts (Dallaire, 2003). Cost:benefit analysis became the new yardstick for measuring the worth of human lives that could be both lost in, and saved by, peacekeeping initiatives. Through this utilitarian calculus, the loss of 800,000 Rwandans in the most gruesome of deaths did not seem weighty enough. In the case of Yugoslavia, the Clinton administration was a strong advocate for a NATO led military intervention resulting in a bombing campaign aimed at halting genocidal killings by Bosnian Serbs. In contrast, the crisis in Rwanda was seen as potentially synonymous to Somalia, of insufficient political and economic interest to warrant action. Colonial discourse constructs the 'other' as a binary opposite of the colonial power, to whom such characteristics as being inferior, backward, savage, tribal, ahistorical and the like are attributed (Prasad, 1997). Indeed, the narratives used by the US to describe Rwanda and Somalia became remarkably similar, failing to recognize that these two nations had their own independent and unique history, culture, tensions and aspirations. Samantha Power quotes an unnamed senior US official who laments "when it comes to human rights, we have no problem drawing a line in the sand of the dark continent... but not China or any place else business looks good" (Power, 2002, p.385). As Dallaire (2003) stated in frustration, "too bad this slaughter was not in a market in Yugoslavia – maybe somebody outside Rwanda would have cared" (p.349).

Political societies, however, have the power to impart to their civil societies "a sense of urgency ... where and when matters pertaining to their imperial interests abroad are concerned" (Said, 1978, p.11). Political leaders have a circular relationship with public opinion, for constituencies are rarely aroused in the absence of political

leadership, yet the absence of public support is the leading excuse for inaction to genocide (Power, 2002). A current example is how the discourse of terrorism has become widespread in America as a cause deserving of popular support and decisive political and military action. The urgency of this has largely been fostered by constant reminders from senior public administrators – and eagerly reported by the media – that Western (American, British, and the like) interests are in jeopardy. Insofar as the US administration characterized the killings in Rwanda as tribal anarchy erupting from chaos in a distant land, not the ordered, planned and systematic extermination of a race of people, then the US media had no political message of urgency to convey to the population who, therefore, had no reason to encourage their governments to take decisive action (Dallaire, 2003). Surely the media failed to embarrass political leaders in their home countries into action (Dallaire, 2003). “The Rwandan genocide was having a hard time knocking ... American figure skater Tonya Harding’s criminal troubles off the front pages” (Dallaire, 2003, p. 349). Moreover, the ability of government to create this sense of urgency makes the Clinton administration complicit in this absence of any public pressure to act. “Humanitarian intervention, despite the phrase, is frequently guided by strategic interest. The U.S. administration under President Clinton judged it had little strategic interest in Rwanda” (Moghalu, 2005, p.19). As Dallaire (2003) notes, humanity itself was under attack in Rwanda, but insofar as the US did not perceive humanity to be of paramount interest, then the government had no reason to rally the public to support decisive action. “President Clinton and his advisors knew that the military and political risks ... were great, yet there were no costs to avoiding Rwanda altogether” (Power, 2002, p.335). “Not only did it not act, but worse, it blocked actions or initiatives that might have affected outcomes on the ground” (Moghalu, 2005, p.19).

Ten years later, the media's tendency to downplay genocide continued, as the genocide in Sudan earned a scant 26 minutes of evening news coverage by the three networks ABC, CBS and NBC combined during all of 2004; Martha Stewart received five times as much press (Ricchiardi, 2005). The reality of Rwandan (and Sudanese) genocide is that the victims are black, impoverished and perceived to be of little interest to Americans, and hence are largely ignored by media organizations (Ricchiardi, 2005). Beyond just the media, various sources of influence upon political leaders continue to not generate sufficient political pressure, contributing to a society-wide silence that is interpreted by those in power as a sign of public indifference (Power, 2002).

### ***3. The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)***

In November of 1994, the UN Security Council created the ICTR as a subsidiary agent of itself with the intention of prosecuting those responsible for genocide and other violations of international humanitarian law (Moghalu, 2005). This act constituted the only intervention in Rwanda by the international community, and was obviously an after-the-fact affair (Moghalu, 2005). This tribunal was the first of its kind in an international forum to successfully prosecute and punish genocide, thus creating a significant series of precedents in international law. Kingsley Moghalu, however, who was Special Counsel to this war crimes tribunal, offered a compelling argument that even this quest for international justice was not immune to the political and strategic negotiations between self-interested parties that constitute the fundamental nature of such global institutions. For one, the rationale for creating this tribunal relates primarily to the personal guilt felt by the member states of the Security Council who were keen to at last been seen to act; the US, for example,

played a vigorous a role in the creation of the tribunal as they did in the prevention of military intervention during the genocide (Moghalu, 2005). Second, the aftermath of the genocide did spread instability into the broader Great Lakes region of Africa due to the combination of a massive refugee crisis and continued ethnic conflict that spilled over Rwanda's borders. The hint of a threat to Western security interests emerged. Finally, the enforcement of international law by the tribunal itself was "a function of power relations in the international system" (Moghalu, 2005, p.5), guaranteeing that certain war crimes would be prosecuted and others not.

## **Discussion**

To understand the importance of Western inaction in Rwanda as it relates to broader organizational considerations, three summary points should be stated that are derived from the preceding analysis. First, as Moghalu (2005) concludes, "member states of the UN *decided* by their actions and inactions not to intervene in Rwanda" (p.22, original emphasis). Second, decisions made by member states of the UN were reached by independent considerations of what would be in their own political and strategic best interests. Third, these decisions made by the former colonial powers retained an element of imperialist thinking that not only subordinated Rwanda's need for assistance to the self-interest of Western nations, but also de-legitimized Rwanda as a subject of assistance due to its absence of significant strategic value for the developed world. Only France seemed to retain any interest in the region, and it continuously acted autonomously.

The combined effect of these three lessons from Rwanda call into question the potential for any sort of international community, perhaps rendering the society of states "more an aspiration than a reality" (Moghalu, 2005, p.23). The UN is perhaps

the clearest definition of an international community, bound together by member states “subscribed to a common program of purposes and principles” (United Nations Declaration). If the members of the UN, however, cannot place universally shared interests (such the abatement of genocide) over self-interests, than is there any potential for an understanding of society, bound by shared values, that spans national borders? In other words, one can rightfully question whether any organization operating in an international capacity can be expected to behave in a manner than may be inconsistent with the national interests of its constituents, if the UN cannot even succeed at this most fundamental of tasks. In an era of globalization, the extent to which organizations are genuine in their desire to develop international relationships that are mutually beneficial is thus cast into doubt. Indeed, a contrary relationship seems more likely, insofar as the continuously expanding forces of globalization will further institutionalize colonial relations, whereby characterizations of other nations are made relative to their possession of valuable resources and rates of consumption. The outsourcing of manufacturing to factories in Latin America and Asia that employ sweatshop labour provides support to a conclusion that colonization exists to this day.

## **Conclusion**

This essay sought to develop a postcolonial understanding for how the West was complicit in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, and why the West failed to act to prevent, or at least curb once started, the killings. The history of Rwanda as a former European colony left a legacy of ethnic division from which grew much hatred toward the privileged race. The discourse of development was, more recently, used effectively to extend the imperial hegemony of Western interests. When the genocidal killings commenced, the UN Security Council failed to act to protect the lives of



Rwandan citizens, but acted in a manner that primarily protected the interests of its dominant members. The structure and decision-making processes of the Security Council are biased toward this inevitability. The US played a particularly negligent role and acted repeatedly to both ignore the reality of genocide and to avoid any military or public exposure. In Samantha Power's Pulitzer Prize winning book, *A Problem from Hell: American and the Age of Genocide* (2002), she devastatingly concluded that US foreign policy with respect to genocide worked effectively as designed. It is a policy of non-intervention in the face of genocide, for despite successive Presidential pronouncements from Carter through to the present that 'never again' will genocide occur, "no US president has ever suffered politically for his indifference to its occurrence" (Power, 2002, p.xxi). The current absence of a powerful UN force to abate the ongoing killings in Sudan, a conflict characterized by the former U.S. Secretary of State as genocide (CNN.com), is the inevitable continuation of this policy.

Recommendations for change remain outside the immediate scope of this paper, but conceptually exist within three dimensions. First, from the perspective of public policy, there are many who have made thoughtful suggestions for UN reform (i.e. Kennedy & Russett, 1995) and for economic aid reform (i.e. Sachs, 2005). Second, from a moral perspective, there is clearly a powerful argument in favour of a responsibility to act decisively to prevent genocide. A deontological ethical argument would favour a duty to act in adherence to a universal moral principle that ethnic based killings are particularly reprehensible and reasonable risk should be incurred to safeguard humanity. It is not ironic to note that Immanuel Kant, seventeenth century philosopher to whom much deontological ethical theory is credited, joined others in proposing a 'league for perpetual peace', a lofty goal to which the United Nations

should continue to strive (Afoaku & Ukaga, 2001, 150). As well, justice provides a moral mandate for action, for the fruits of imperialism not been fairly shared. Third, from a paradigmatic perspective, world powers need to adopt a new frame of liberation, and look beyond circular narratives of imperialism and its nationalist response, each of which have great deconstructive power (Said, 1994). Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963) presents an account of the violence that results from a self-sustaining cycle of action and reaction produced by colonialism and nationalism. To embrace a new narrative of liberation is to look beyond, to listen to others, to treat others as autonomous peoples, to avoid characterization of others as subordinate means to Western ends, and to facilitate where possible the achievement of others' aspirations.

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# FILMING THE ALIEN

By Luc Peters (2006)

Organization is caught in its own clichés. According to the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze, the art-house film is the only thing to offer the possibility of escaping the cliché. This is due to its subversive potential which realises the option of believing in this world again. As we have lost our faith in this world and have been looking for various ways of escaping it, either physical, psychological or virtual, we have become alien. Put it differently, we are aliens. Despite our fascination for aliens, I believe we have to become human again. We can state that organization is a social construction of reality. That also implicates that we socially construct clichés. In order to de-alienate our social constructions, I suggest to turn to Deleuze and his work on cinema. In this work, Deleuze describes the history and evolution of film. He does this not specifically to analyse the representations of film, but to show the potential of film and how it changed within its history. From the period of Italian Neorealism, Deleuze states that a subversive potential entered film. This art-house film can be seen as a critical response to the Hollywood film. Besides drawing on the theoretical implications of Deleuze I will also analyse and describe a few films in order to shape a context, if there is any, to think about organization. Herewith I will call on a few other philosophers like Friedrich Nietzsche and Peter Sloterdijk, who are of some relevance to the topic. I will tune in on *L'Eclisse* from Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni, *Playtime* from French director Jaques Tati and last but not least I will say a few things about *The Big Lebowski* from American directors Joel & Ethan Coen. This is a film which portrays a new kind of heroism and the way nomadology makes a difference while ratio does not. Furthermore it shows that laziness is the way to success. The protagonist in this film is a bottom dog instead of a top gun. These films facilitate the opportunity to dispose of the cliché and are therefore inspiring and groundbreaking material to think about organization.



L'ECLISSE – MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI    THE BIG LEBOWSKI – COEN BROTHERS

## ALIENS

In the above image of the film *L'Eclisse* (1962) by acclaimed Italian director Michelangelo Antonioni we see two people, a young man and a young woman holding a purse standing in the centre of the picture. They are separated by a giant column. At their side are an elderly male and female who appear to have some sort of a relation with them. The elderly woman is also holding a purse, although a bigger one. Seated at the back we see another older male. By looking at this image and

not knowing the context or the setting of the film one could get various ideas of what the meaning of this image could be or in what way these people could or could not be related to each other. Are they queuing, or are they innocent bystanders of some sort of happening? Watching the film one learns that they abide in a huge and spacious room. The room has, due to its architectural representation, a traditional sphere. The monumentality of the column seems to be trying to push the actors out of the picture. The young woman is partly visible. The column is manifesting itself as the protagonist. The size of the column tries to give us the impression of the 'bigness' of the room. It could be quite small but the image tries to convince us otherwise. We see that the two women and the two men are separated by the column. Is the image trying to tell us that there figuratively is a gap between the sexes and is this a corporeal gap or one based on communication? Or is the column perhaps a phallus-like manifestation stressing male-dominance? We see that the two males are standing close to each other, while the women leave a gap between themselves. Are the women less attracted to each other than the men? Or do they trust their distance? We see that the younger persons are standing on the inside and the older persons standing on the outside. Could this be a statement of the young moving in and pushing the old out of the frame? We see the women holding bag-like purses. Could this be to emphasize women-slavery or are they the keeper of secrets which guarantee dominance? The men seem to be moving, the women seem to be standing still....

When watching the beautifully shot black and white picture, one learns that the staging is taking place in a stock-exchange building in Rome. The building used to be a church, a place of communal gathering. A place of unselfishness has been transformed into a dog eat dog space. The traditional artefact has gained a new role and the actors are trying to cope with that. The director Michelangelo Antonioni was originally an architect. When making films he envelopes the plot by the architectural surroundings. In the above mentioned *L'Eclisse* we could describe the architecture as the main character. We see characters walking in and out of the frame of the picture while the architecture remains in focus. The architecture seems to be the protagonist. The space matters. Or doesn't it? Although it matters, Antonioni tries to show us that it isn't the particular space that matters, but space in general. It is 'any-space-whatever' (Deleuze (1986). Or to put it more precisely, he is trying to show us the effects of architecture and the spaces it creates. According to Heidegger (1954) we create space when building. Antonioni is referring to the alienation of actors in their struggle to live with modern architecture. The way and tempo in which our architectural surroundings are subject to modernization is different from that of the actors in the modern surroundings. We are still living in tradition and therefore apparently longing for traditional architecture. Incrementally we have fallen victim to alienation.

One of the effects of this alienation is our inability to communicate. We see the actors struggling with their feelings and the way in which they could externalise their inner monologue. This results in an emotionally laden outburst of words which seemingly don't correspond with the original intention of the actors. They don't say what they want to say, because they have become incapable of doing so. As they are incapable of communication they are put in a position of constant misunderstanding. The characters are doomed to be strangers to one another. What can you do in such a case, supposing you want to get to know each other? What should be the reason of attraction to one and another? Related to our senses sound

in the form of speech is obviously not an option anymore. What remains are seeing, smelling, feeling and tasting. The main characters in *L'Eclisse* don't understand each other but they see each other and this supposedly forms the basis for their attraction. The eye gains supremacy over our hearing. The image in other words replaces the content. It is not what we mean, but what we supposedly reflect as an image. The perception of the imager decides what the content could probably be. This doesn't mean that the characters dispose of speech altogether. They probably don't recognize this new handicap and try to cope with this unknown and diffuse situation. As communication is out of order they try to arrange their inner monologue by being silent. The enduring silences are a form of communication. The silence therefore has a double function, on the one hand it gives characters some time to think about what they want to say, on the other hand it offers some rest. The rest could be used to look at each other and further feed the imagination. Silence as a way of turning our attention to the gaze is not per definition a bad sign. The films by contemporary Japanese director Takeshi Kitano, such as *Dolls*, *Hana-Bi*, *Kikujiro*, *Zaitoichi* or *Sonatine*, use silence in an extraordinary way. It distracts our senses, we see with different eyes and renew our interpretation of what we think is happening. Our clichés are put to the test. Antonioni doesn't let his characters gaze at each other. They almost constantly turn away their glances as if looking at each other would result in an uncomfortable situation. What Antonioni is showing is not especially the impossibility of communication for the characters in *L'Eclisse*, but for characters in general on and off screen. Modern man is obviously not able to communicate anymore. In *L'Eclisse* the silence seems to give the characters a feeling of unease. They are uncomfortable with the phenomenon of silence. Due to their stressy inner monologue and their incapability to cope with their physical surroundings they despise the silence. The silence nevertheless obtains a clear function and should be cherished. It gives people time to think. So instead of trying to break the silence and start blathering we should perhaps be quiet and enjoy our other senses. This absence of speech, this mystery of not knowing what to say or what the other could be trying to tell us, this uncertainty of what the other is, should not be avoided but as stated before, cherished. The mystery should be mystery and perhaps not be unravelled because then ..... the magic vanishes.

It is as if there is a reality beneath the reality we experience through sensual perception. Our reality is sort of multi-layered. There is a hidden question waiting to be answered. This is like the hidden questions in Akira Kurosawa films like *Seven Samurai* (1954), where the question is not: can a small village of peaceful peasants be protected from hordes of looting and raping bandits and can this protection be assured by the hiring of samurai? The question is: what is the role of the samurai in their present society. It is as if we have to look beyond the surface, that we have to evade the cliché. As art-house films can challenge us to seek and answer these secret questions, it offers us a new moving frame on our multi-layered reality. A reality which is moving as it is constantly becoming. This is also what Antonioni is trying to show us. He shows us characters and their acting in a carefully constructed architectural frame. He does this in such a way that this acting is our acting in general. It is not just limited to the screen, but is our everyday contemporary acting. We are acting like aliens, hence we are aliens. As we have always been afraid of aliens and have invented stories of aliens conquering our beautiful earth, their image is one of frighteners. We have been made to be afraid of aliens and we have thought of ways and drawn scenarios on how to act with them. As we are now learning that we ourselves are aliens, we have become frightened of ourselves and



our playing with each other. We don't trust each other anymore, because ..... how can you trust an alien .....to this no answer is yet at hand.

Resuming the above, only one conclusion seems to be justified:

## **WE ARE ALIENS**

For this statement we can come up with three reasons. First is that we have forgotten how to use our senses (Lemaire, 2002). Through the overkill in impressions we receive constantly and the ludicrous speed in which they are fired at us, we have installed some kind of a subliminal protection shield. Our senses have become lame. We have fallen to aesthetic muteness (Taylor, 2002). Through this we are no longer able to see details. These details make the difference. With no differences everything becomes the same. Not being able to see details could be considered the second reason of alienation. Without seeing or wanting to see details we are sticking to clichés. They give us a sort of security, a kind of emotional stability. As we are wanting to be different or make our career-mark, we start moving faster in preoccupation with ratio, the third reason of alienation. Ratio give us a sense of security in our social interaction. From animals we become rational animals who act as if they got one chance left in a nine live cat. One could ask is all this a bad thing? The answers could be ranging in a spectrum from 'hell yeah' to 'probably not'. We have stated that details make a difference and put us in a position of avoiding clichés. Those clichés however could be the reason of our existence. Besides that they supply us a little comfort in our alienation. They secure perhaps a little piece of mind.

According to the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk (2005) our main reason for being is laziness. We are in this world in order to be lazy. All clichés considering the topic of working hard being our main motivation, should then be evaded. Or probably not? Is it that getting into action itself as sole purpose seems illogical? The only reasons of resolving into action according to Sloterdijk are hunting for food, eating, drinking and fucking. The species of man should be maintained. Our existence has to be assured. Could this mean that the conformation to clichés is not a bad thing after all? The answer doesn't lie in yes or no. The problem is that we have forgotten what authentic laziness is and that laziness is an essential part of our being. Heidegger (1954) stated that being equals living. From this we can state that living is laziness. Our houses are therefore: 'containers of boredom' (Sloterdijk, 2005). Looking back at L'Eclisse we could conclude that the alienation brought about by the architecture is a sign of our incapability of living. The architecture generates: 'bad boredom'. It makes us restless. In order to avoid this we cling to clichés. Clichés can take care of the before mentioned peace of mind or to put it differently, a little piece in our being in this world. So instead of disposing of the cliché we should cherish it. That means conforming to the mediocre instead of deviating from the norm. In other words go with the flow and don't rock the boat. With this in mind we could consider it strange or even alien behaviour to notice that all we seem to do is rocking that boat. No easy flow but rapid white waters (Vail, 1989) is what we're constructing. Our laziness is traded for a restless drive which puts us in a 24-7 movement. As the Spanish sociologist Castells (2000) puts it: we have made the time, timeless. The solid basis of our being has become liquid (Bauman, 2000). We are constantly on the move. Sloterdijk (1999) who told us to champion laziness, acknowledges the fact of the 'automobilisation' of society. Most of our time we spend in our automobiles. So maybe it is our challenge to be lazy while we're on the

move? The traffic jams in which we are forced to stand still are perhaps closer to our being, namely being lazy, than our moving about. We are nomads and should perhaps start to realise that we have to become lazy nomads who should learn to live in our movement. Our houses, our 'containers of boredom', have slowly turned into automobiles. All in the name of progress.

One could say that this automobilisation is being overtaken by our becoming virtual. Our submerging into cyberspace makes us come to a physical standstill, while we are virtually on the move. This leads to a corporeal laziness, while our mind, eyes and hands are travelling at breakneck speed. This clash of laziness and exertion guarantees a new challenge to our being. Not having yet grown accustomed to our modern being we are faced with a new form of alienation. The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1989, 1986) has the opinion that we have to break through the cliché. This helps us seeing the world as it really is, namely appearance. What we consider real is not real, we see appearance as being real. As we have lost our ability of using our senses, we are not capable anymore of perceiving the world as it really is. This has led to us losing our faith in this world. Not in a world in general, but in this world. Escapism is therefore not the answer. It is our world, not some distant place in a perhaps virtual space where we should seek consolation. It is the world which Antonioni tried to show us in *L'Eclisse* from which we have estranged. Antonioni linked his statements to architecture. It is the modern architecture which is not bad as architecture, but is a manifestation of the modern life which we have not yet grown accustomed to. We are still bathing in our nostalgic clichés which feel secure within the boundaries of the traditional architecture. Within the traditional architecture Antonioni shows socializing, happiness, idealistic creativity and even love. We apparently like to fold ourselves in the realms of reassurance. The informal and familiar architecture of tradition seem to be preferred to the formal and strict surroundings of modernism. Progress is obviously still alien to us in such a way that we behave like aliens. Or we think we behave like aliens, because as a matter of fact we have to acknowledge that we are ... aliens.

The medium which Antonioni uses is film. It is precisely this medium that Deleuze considers capable of having the subversive potential of showing us the world as it is, namely appearance. Herewith a window is constructed and opened to help us believe in this world again. Let me try to explain a little of the line of thinking of Deleuze concerning film. Deleuze notices a change in film starting from the period of Italian Neorealism. We could say that from that period the art-house movie started to find its form. There is an evasion from traditional Hollywood films, where themes like heroism, the good defeating the bad, black & white plot-thinking, sequential story-lines and the believe in a happy end whatsoever. From the period of Italian neorealism directors wanted to show life as it really is. Without the glitter and the glamour but with all the sleaziness and despair that co-exists. They chose often for a sort of documentary style, which should give a more reliable view on modern life. There are not always happy endings and the plot isn't always logic and in a linear sequence. Deleuze notes the change in cinema through a different perception of time, which sees the image as made by memory. Through irrational cuts which deliver a different perception of time we see an image as the blurring of the virtual and the actual. Appearance and reality fuse unrecognisably and our identity is constructed by our memory. The sheets of the past and the points of the present construct our reality. Deleuze calls this the crystal image or *hyalosigns*. These *hyalosigns* show us the reality as it really is, namely appearance, or more precisely an

'appearance-reality'. This appearance-reality is shown via hyalosigns in the art-house film. Nothing seems to be what it seems. The art-house film shows us that we are aliens. Through this a subversive potential is unleashed which helps us to dispose of the cliché and regain our faith in this world. And isn't that a great thing .....

## **BORDELLO**

The film *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her ...* (1967) by unorthodox French director Jean Luc Godard, stages prostitution as a next phase in civilisation. In this world, according to the film, there is no other option than selling yourself in order to survive. Our struggle for life degenerates into seemingly unforced prostitution. This sole option is accepted without questioning. Prostitution isn't considered a bad thing, but a way of life, or more precisely, the way of life. The film is constantly trying to start. While it is in motion the audience is waiting for the events to happen, while on the other hand we see images of something which could be a story, something which might start at any time. While we see the actors act, we wonder about the context of their acting. At the same time, we can ask is there a context for acting. Are the foundations of our acting available, or do we have to act without a net. Do we crave the security of context or do we have to feel comfortable with insecurity. Godard touches on subjects as we have described with Antonioni and *L'Eclisse*. In *2 or 3 Things I Know About Her*, we see a new city which is not liveable because our points of recognition have disappeared. It is literally under construction. It is not clear if the construction means progress or decline. It is however constant construction. A construction which never seems to end, a phenomenon which we can probably identify with when observing our own day-to-day surroundings. The film takes place in a context without these points of recognition. We could say that the context has vanished. This context should supply a secure environment for acting. The city is full of holes which undermine its existence. The depth has vanished. The world can no longer do what film does, namely provide us with depth. Everything becomes flat and hollow. In order to survive in this world, one has to cross certain borders. The film shows us that we sell everything, even ourselves. The world has turned into a 'bordello'. Our only option seems to be selling ourselves in order to survive. As you sell yourself, you become part of the bordello. This is prostitution in its purest form. The exploitation of one man by another is prostitution. Our houses have become unliveable and therefore people have to become part of a universal bordello.

Deleuze sees the art-house film as the only option to see the world as it really is and with this deliver a subversive potential in order to dispose of the cliché. Deviation from the cliché-like norm seems to be the goal. Although goal is an unfavourable term, as goals will never be reached. Teleology is a utopia. Deleuze champions the nomad, he or she which is concerned with his surroundings and achieves goals, obviously without intention. Goal-drive is an illusion. As the world is an illusion this shouldn't be a problem after all. The problem is however that we consider the illusion real. We cling to the cliché that we can achieve 'any goal whatever', something which Nietzsche opposed to in aphorism 356 of *'The Gay Science'* (1882). We believe in context, in genres and in character. All these things are illusions as well. We hold on to these illusions considering them real and offering some anchor-points in our struggling for existence. We put more effort in sticking to context, genre or character instead of going beyond the phenomena and reaching for the underlying essences such as feelings and emotion. Character, context and genre should then be reduced to disciplined categories. The fact that they don't appear to be real

puts us in an emotional unbalance. We cannot cope with the world anymore, as we are not humans anymore, although we believe, or want to believe we are. We close our eyes for our alienation, because we have made ourselves afraid of aliens. We have become afraid of ourselves.

Let's give another example. In the film *Playtime* (1967) from French director Jaques Tati, we see a world which pretends to be modern. As in the film of Antonioni and Godard, architecture plays an important role. Buildings seem to have a significant impact on our behaviour. The way we act is influenced or even shaped by our built surroundings. It is our inability to cope with modern architecture, which in *Playtime* stands for the period of modernism, a period dominated by glass, concrete and steel. This architecture determines the liveable surroundings in which the actors seek for their parts to perform. We see, what Tati called, the 'Americanization' of society. It is society getting hollow. This leads to people buying the same 'modern' products and talking the same obviously meaningless language. The language isn't a form of communication anymore, but the expression of a cliché-like chatter in which people don't seem to understand each other but don't reach the point of acknowledging this. In the famous restaurant-scene in the second half of the film we see the modern architecture falling apart, showing the traditional architecture as the basis for the modern. When the traditional architecture, consisting of bricks and wood becomes visible, people adapt their acting to this. People start to enjoy themselves, dispose of their modern, plastic acting and seem to understand each other. The architecture becomes an actor, not just another object. The alienation disappears, although not entirely. Architecture isn't the sole reason for alienation. In the restaurant scene we see waiters looking for a backstage area. The restaurant is a frontstage in which every action is visible to the public-eye. We could say that a frontstage-area in general is for flirting with customers in order to seduce them by arousing their desires. Backstage is for rehearsal, an area for relaxation or an area where plans are forged. In the restaurant-scene it is shown that frontstage and backstage are blurring or one could say folding. Everybody is always visible for the other. We see and are seen. The observer equals the observed. Not big brother but little brother is watching you. When an artificial backstage is created we see the main aim of the waiter in question, namely feeding his alcoholism. Alcohol is a pleasant escape from, or maybe an enjoyable part of modern life. Another portrait of alcoholism is shown in the film *Do The Right Thing* (1989) from Brooklyn director Spike Lee. In this film which erupts in ecstatic aggression we see the local drunkard, who calls himself 'Da Mayor', being the only person who keeps his head clear in a situation where leadership and vision are required. The drunk is the only sensible person left in a situation created by alienation in a world occupied by actors who we don't want to identify ourselves with. There are no more role-models. Furthermore the actors don't seem to feel comfortable in each others presence. There is a constant tension where the images get in the way of living as it is obviously craved. The film takes place in one day, the hottest day of the year in Brooklyn. Besides the heat accelerating the events leading to ecstatic aggression, we see that it doesn't matter what day it is, because everyday is the same. That is also the case in *Playtime*. Everyday is the same, days fly by and our alienation seems irreversible.

Another interesting example of alienation is seen in 'Getting Any' (1994) by Japanese director Takeshi Kitano. One of the hottest directors on the scene today, who seems to be specialised in the original screening of situations where clichés prove to be obsolete. In *Getting Any* we see the film starting with the wrong title over an image of

a city at night. A guy stops his car to pick up a young female hitch-hiker. He proposes love making in his car. We see her wondered face fading to another image of the skyscraper city. The camera lowers to a red convertible in which we see the couple having sex. Next we see the face of the boy who just awoke in his bedroom. Was it a dream? Obviously. What would we normally do in such a situation? He comes to the conclusion that he needs a car in order to get laid. Next we see him with a car dealer, where he asks: 'I need a car to have sex in'! We see the protagonist checking out the backseat of a car with a female employee. He leaves the dealer with a brand new car in which he starts practicing with a plastic doll. Real girls however reject him. He doesn't understand why his dream won't come true and concludes that the car is the reason. A convertible should do the trick. In the meantime we see the uninspiring and chilly city where no joy seems to be found. From an honest looking salesman in a three-piece he buys a convertible which is said to be perfect for picking up women. After leaving the showroom the car falls apart, but our hero drives on with what is left and makes another move to realise his dream. He ends up crashing into an oversized billboard next to the freeway. The visualised desire he chases becomes his corporeal nemesis. His aroused dreams become his crude wake-up call.

Next we see him reaching the conclusion that he needs money to 'get any'. According to him money can be obtained with a gun. Through a coincidence he obtains one from a yakuza gangster. When robbing a bank however, the female clerk orders him to take a number and wait in line for his turn. We see him undertake several other attempts to gain money. Luckily for the amusing qualities of the film, without success. Next he tries acting. He feels that if he becomes a famous actor, his troubles with getting any will be over. He is offered a role as Zatoichi, the blind samurai. He pours oil instead of water over his body before entering a burning building, in order to save women and children. He ends up as a human torch. After that he is coincidentally hired as a yakuza hit-man, as part of a powerful gang. We see his yakuza boss acting as a gay strip-dancer. His attempts lead to the most peculiar situations without him getting any. We see people acting in the strangest ways, where our points of reference don't seem to fit. This feeds the humoristic quality of the film and offers us another view on cliché-like behaviour. We wonder if it, including life in general, is all a joke. Takeshi Kitano shows a world with twisted emotions. Where we expect emotions they're not. Where we expect noise we receive silence. Where we expect sensible acting, the acting is ludicrous. We see that goal-drive is an illusion despite the ridiculous perseverance of the protagonist. Our scripts of acting are of no use anymore.

## **LAZY NOMAD**

The last feature exemplifies the before-mentioned lazy nomad. The Big Lebowski (1998) from American directors The Coen Brothers, tries to show us the absurdity of contemporary life. In a multi-layered presentation they show us that clichés have become obsolete. The protagonist has given himself the name: 'Dude'. The Dude is portrayed as a modern day hero. He is no top gun but a bottom dog. In the opening sequence of the movie, a cowboy-style voice-over is asking himself what a real hero is:

**some- times  
there's a man--I won't say a hee-ro,**

'cause what's a hee-ro?--but sometimes  
there's a man.....  
and I'm talkin' about the Dude here--  
sometimes there's a man, well,  
he's the man for his time'n place,  
he fits right in there--and that's  
the Dude, in Los Angeles...  
...and even if he's a lazy man, and  
the Dude was certainly that--quite  
possibly the laziest in Los Angeles  
County....which would place him high in the  
runnin' for laziest worldwide--but  
sometimes there's a man. . . sometimes  
there's a man

The dude is a nomad. He drifts apparently meaningless through life. He does what he feels like doing with an honest compassion for his surroundings. He might be called naïve, but obviously not aware of it, enjoys being that. The motto of the Dude is: **'Just take it easy man'**. He doesn't want to rock the boat, no, he wants to go with the flow. His daily rituals consist of drinking 'White Russians', smoking dope and bowling. Without any intentions he gets mixed-up in a kidnap-complot. He becomes the main character because the kidnappers consider him to be the perfect scapegoat. The person who he is mistaken for is the 'Big Lebowski', a hard-working seemingly successful business man. He stands for the self-made man who despite his physical handicap, he is in a wheelchair, is goal-driven and successful. **'He achieved anyway'** as he claims himself. He is the exact opposite of the Dude, a person who hasn't achieved anything and probably won't ever do so. The Dude is forced, due to the kidnapping, to get into action and visit The Big Lebowski. His laziness is disrupted. When the two meet at the mansion of the Big Lebowski the following dialogue takes place, in which the Big Lebowski tells his programmed success-story and the Dude in all his sincerity stresses his own failure:

**LEBOWSKI:** Are you employed, sir?

**DUDE:** Employed? ah ha...

**LEBOWSKI:** You don't go out looking for a job dressed like that do ya? On a weekday?

**DUDE:** Is this a--what day is this?

**LEBOWSKI:** Well I do work sir, so if you don't mind--

**DUDE:** Yeah, I do mind. The Dude minds. This will not stand, ya know, this aggression will not stand, man.. ...

**LEBOWSKI:** every bum's lot in life is his own responsibility regardless of whom he chooses to blame. I didn't blame anyone for the loss of my legs, some Chinaman took them from me in Korea but I went out and achieved anyway. I cannot solve your problems, sir, only you can.

**DUDE:** Ah fuck it.

**LEBOWSKI:** Oh, Fuck it! Yes, that's your answer!

**That's your answer to everything!  
Tattoo it on your forehead!**

**LEBOWSKI: Your "revolution" is over, Mr. Lebowski! Condolences! The bums lost...My advice to you is, to do what your parents did! Get a job, sir! The bums will always lose-- do you hear me, Lebowski? THE BUMS WILL ALWAYS LOSE!**

The 'Big Lebowski' judges and stigmatises the 'Dude' for his laziness and the fact that he is unemployed. The way Sloterdijk champions laziness is obviously not appreciated by The Big Lebowski. Furthermore he stresses the uselessness of revolution to change things. It is always a personal thing which comes down to hard work and the achievement of goals. The body itself is no significant actor as he shows with the fact that he is disabled and in a wheelchair. The wheelchair, in other words not being able to use one's body is no reason for failure. Goal-drive is the only successful remedy. He presents himself as a role-model, a hero whose mirroring will inspire others. Salient detail is that The Big Lebowski is unmasked as a fraud at the end of the film. Goal-drive is an illusion considered real as we have seen and role-models will turn out to be frauds. His success is a façade. The lazy nomad, in this case the Dude is the hero in the end.

The 'Coen Brothers' film shows a clear image of characters which stumble from their secure world into a new and difficult to define situation. The conjunction of absurd situations disrupts the regulated life of the Dude. His motto: '**Just take it easy, man**', has lost its value. In the new and indefinable situation there has to be acted, choices have to be made. Someone who helps the Dude, is his bowling-buddy, Walter Sobchack. Walter is a typical example of someone who believes in defining goals in order to reach them. In a fierce discussion, Walter tries to clear their situation by appealing to the fact that there are rules and as long as everybody sticks to them, problems will not arise. He has a sense of values and standards which can divide the world in good and bad. It is an imaginary line which is not to be crossed. He verbalizes this as follows:

**'I'm talking about drawing a line in the sand, across that line, you do not.....'**

What these rules are, remains a mystery. On the bowling-court, a place where they abide regularly and where they try to discuss the current problems, Walter freaks out when he is convinced that someone didn't stick to the rules of bowling. He whips out a gun and after referring to combat in Vietnam, he is a Vietnam-vet, screams:

**WALTER: you're entering a world of pain.  
HAS THE WHOLE WORLD GONE CRAZY? AM  
I THE ONLY ONE HERE WHO GIVES A SHIT  
ABOUT THE RULES?**

His referring in a seemingly calm way to rules, turns into verbal aggression or bullying, the minute he doesn't get what he wants. If bullying doesn't do the trick, a gun is whipped out. The obvious hierarchy in behaviour seems to be, calmly and sensibly referring to rules, when that doesn't work, turn to bullying, when the bullying doesn't seem to be impressive, threatening with physical violence is the next step and last but not least ... the violence itself. In the above scene, Walter gets what he wants.

The bystanders look shocked and horrified. They despise Walters method of acting, but cannot come up with something to stand-up to this. Walter uses his verbal aggression, or bullying (Salin, 2003), also against his bowling-buddy Donnie. Every question he asks is responded by Walter with: **'Shut the fuck up, Donnie'**.

Walters bullying is outgunned by bowling-competitor Jesus Quintana, when he shouts from a distance: **"Are you ready to be fucked, man?"**. The verbal aggression chops off discussions and arguments the instant Walter or The Big Lebowski don't get what they want or when their arguments won't do the trick. If argumentation based on the dichotomy of good and bad won't work, bullying is requested and in the worst case physical violence. Threatening is however sufficient in most cases. Jesus Quintana challenges this aggression by starting the intimidation beforehand. Walter Sobchack is staged in 'The Big Lebowski' as someone who beliefs in military discipline, such as sticking to the 'rules', something which he refers to from 'Vietnam-context'. This is comparable to the military component in the machine-metaphor from Gareth Morgan (1986). His dedication and implicit faith in the 'rules' offer him a frame of security in a postmodern, pluriform and hard to handle reality. The 'rules' ease his doings and perhaps what's more important offer him a frame to justify himself and a method to be a top-dog debater. At various points he asks: 'Am I wrong'? It offers him a discussion-frame to command dominance. This dominance apparently comes forth from a masculine and militant desire to be important. In real life his arguments however fail the test, something which the Dude has no problem confronting him with:

**DUDE: Yeah. That's a great plan, Walter. That's fucking ingenious, if I understand it correctly. That's a Swiss fucking watch.**

**WALTER: Thaaat's right, Dude. The beauty of this is its simplicity. Once a plan gets too complex, everything can go wrong. If there's one thing I learned in Nam--**

Beauty lying in simplicity and the avoidance of complexity form the basis of Walters plan. His self-confidence lessens when the kidnappers, the ones which Walters plan refers to, launch their own alternative plan, which makes Walters plan impossible and make his self-confidence disappear:

**WALTER: No, we can't do that, Dude. That fucks up our plan.**

**DUDE: Well call them up and explain it to 'em, Walter! Your plan is so fucking simple, I'm sure they'll fucking understand it! That's the beauty of it!**

Walter, being Walter as he is won't give up and wants to realise his plan at any cost whatever, something which forces the Dude to say:

**DUDE: Fuck that! Walter I love you, but sooner or later you're gonna have to face the fact that you're a goddamn moron**

The defining of rules, structure, authority in the shape of hierarchy and a control-mechanism based on (physical) power to enforce order doesn't seem to work in real life, which is distinguished by changing situations, obscurity, unfairness and entanglement. Faith in teleology proves to be an illusion. The Dude is the one who makes a difference and turns out to be the winner in the end, even though he doesn't realise it. The hero is a bottom-dog. The Dude becomes the real Big



Lebowski, although he doesn't care about this and won't probably realise it either. He continues to be a lazy nomad and keeps on drifting and going nowhere. His motto: '**Just take it easy man**', is back in the driver-seat.

## Well ...

Besides its apparent aesthetic qualities the art-house films reviewed in this essay have given us some insight in our alienation. They have shown us that we have become, whether we like it or not and considering resistance is useless, ... aliens.

We can ask ourselves if the acting in the reviewed films, in which the action has no direct reference to organization, goes for organization as well? If not that would mean a clear distinction between our public and private life. That would imply that our acting changes drastically the moment we cross the border of the organization and enter it. That implies that there would be such thing as a border from which there is public agreement of where it is and what form it has. One could question if such a thing is possible. Meanwhile we're still ..... living in bordellos...

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# **No angels without demons: Why we cannot escape through CSR**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The paper puts forward an argument on how organizations, in the attempt to escape demons, may shut out the angels as well.

Two assumptions are taken for granted in the real economic world as well as economic theory. The first is that relative scarcity of resources is a major problem which needs to be solved through ever new ways of economizing, exploiting new resources, accumulating, etc. While of course this assumption is at the heart of the economic discipline, treating relative scarcity as a problem *as severe as* the problem

of absolute scarcity is wrong. It ignores the fact that material goods do compete with immaterial ones for our attention, time, and energy, i.e. the fact that continued resource accumulation always comes at a cost. The second assumption is that nobody can ever trust their work will be good enough, because there might be a competitor who outperforms you. Outperformance is the capitalist version of the survival criterion.

The combination of these assumptions is truly demonic. It can inspire great anxiety in individuals with tenuous sense of self, or self-esteem, as they feel they must compete relentlessly with everybody else for those scarce resources. Such individuals then look to an organization for resource security and imperatives about the “right” behaviour. They try to escape the demons through organizing – in fact, as Schwartz [2004] has shown, the ‘organization ideal’ can even take the place of their ego ideal.

The problem with this “solution” is that organizations are subject to the same ‘institutional imperatives’ [Ortmann, 2004] as individuals. Organizations, too, must outperform, accumulate and become ever more efficient, which means individuals may lose their job with an organization, and with it their sense of belonging and security. This is why individuals may go very far and take anti-social and downright illegal action if they believe this will secure their status as a member of the organization. Small and vulnerable individuals who join an organization to escape smallness and vulnerability are thus unlikely to form an organization which takes true corporate responsibility. They put the organization above all else.

True corporate social responsibility can be defined as thinking through consequences of corporate action, and acting in a way that (one believes) maximizes social benefit and minimizes social damage. It thus means taking on the task of deciding what to do, knowing that decisions can never be perfect and that one will have to respond to the consequences of the decision and action. This requires acceptance of one’s own imperfection and vulnerability – one’s own demons, if you will.

If, on the other hand, fear of scarcity and outperformance are the drivers of action, CSR tends to be a tag on organizational image to enhance the organization’s impeccability and thus its potential for ‘organization ideal’. The real challenge thus lies in accepting both your demons and your angels, so that humane action becomes a possibility.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Call for Papers to the SCOS Conference 2006 invites us to “rather than assuming a dichotomy between the good and the bad or between the beautiful and the ugly, ... to reflect on how these elements interrelate with each other in the context of organization”. The author of this paper is indeed convinced that in and out of any organizational action, both angels and demons may live and prosper at the same time. What I would like to put forward in this paper is a view on how, in order to fight two main assumptions of everyday life – demons, if you will -, organizations may shut out the angels as well. In other words, I would like to discuss how responsible organizational action may be undermined because the organization are obsessed with demons, and trying to escape them.

In today’s world of big and not so big business, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is something firms can hardly do without – that much is certain. What CSR is, exactly, is less well defined: Companies run all kinds of policies and programs under the headline. It seems that the symbolic or signalling value of CSR for organizations in many cases is more important than the value of the actual outcome of the CSR measure, if any such thing can be calculated at all.

In economics and management theory, the concept of CSR is controversial. Some authors defend the notion that ‘the business of business is business’, and that demanding CSR activities of companies is equivalent to charging them with a task they are neither competent nor morally obliged to perform. Thus, such a demand might actually do more harm than good.

I shall argue in this paper that common misinterpretation of the concept stems from two basic assumptions taken for granted in the world of business as well as in management theory, its intellectual mirror. These are: 1. the assumption of the scarcity of resources as the main threat, and 2. the assumption that nobody, and nobody’s work, is ever good enough. Both assumptions can be regarded as self-fulfilling, and in combination truly demonic, prophecies. I contend that unless both are overcome, CSR will remain a misunderstood concept.

## **CRITICISMS OF CSR**

Some people protest against the – in their eyes, misguided – notion that commercial businesses should care about much more than their own business. The

line of argument is that undoubtedly necessary tasks like protecting the environment or taking care of social issues should best be handled by other parts of society, legislated upon, etc. As long as organizations abide by the rules society has laid down for them, they are best at doing whatever they are here to do, which in the case of commercial companies is marketing their products and making a profit. In that line of argument, CSR programs run by commercial companies are seen as an instance of incompetent actors handling tasks others can do better, which is not welfare-maximizing. Indeed, if firms fail to take into account grave potential consequences of their CSR action, they can do great harm; and what is worse, in many cases they cannot even be held accountable for them. [For a discussion, see Robins, 2005]

A different way of criticizing companies' CSR programs perceived as meaningless or even harmful is to argue that these are indeed only face-saving, cosmetic measures to cover up reckless profit-maximizing. (The implication is that if only companies really put their heart and soul in it, these CSR programs would be a lot better – or even that companies should abandon the profit-maximizing altogether and put the CSR first.)

I contend that CSR, today, is commonly misinterpreted, which leads to rather fruitless debates. I put forward here an argument on why and how the misunderstanding of CSR happens.

## **ECONOMICS' SELF-FULFILLING ASSUMPTIONS**

I argue that there are two assumptions taken for granted in the real economic world as well as economic theory that require a critical examination.

### *The scarcity of resources*

The first is that economic resources are scarce – with the implication that this is a major problem. That this is a basic assumption taken to be true by economic actors will hardly be disputed. After all, economics textbooks teach us that the scarcity of resources is the very reason why we economize, calculate trade-offs, and so forth.

I am concerned here with why *relative* scarcity of resources is perceived as a *problem* to be (not quite) solved by millions of theorists and practitioners of economics. Why, in the words of Scherhorn [1994], is scarcity a 'cold star' bringing an unsettling message? We fight this message through technological progress, pushing back the frontiers of resource use by enhancing resource productivity or

exploiting new resources. And we fight it individually through economizing, working and consuming, trying to make ever greater personal profit and calculating trade-offs of one good against another, future against present consumption, etc. This is at the heart of economic theory: The economic actor will always prefer more goods over less goods (less scarcity over more scarcity), *if the costs don't exceed the gains* (which makes this assumption practically a tautology). [Scherhorn, 1994]

Granted, none of us would want to live in absolute scarcity, i.e. poverty. In the sense of providing for physical well-being and basic economic security, doing the economics (theoretically) and organizing to do it (practically) does make sense. However, as Scherhorn points out, it is true especially in the developed countries that costs of diminishing the enemy of 'scarcity' ever further beyond that (accumulating ever more goods) are neglected.

Material goods do compete with immaterial ones for our time, energy, and attention. All too often intrinsic impulses and motivation are undermined and destroyed by extrinsic ones, a process well established by psychological research. [See for example Lepper et al., 1973] The law at the heart of economics would have to be restated: The economic actor will always prefer more goods over less goods (less scarcity over more scarcity), a) if the costs don't exceed the gains or b) even if they do, but she overlooks the fact. [Scherhorn, 1994]

Why is it that in economic theory as well as everyday life, we tend to interpret relative scarcity not as 'a helpful warm light' illuminating the fact that we cannot follow material as well as immaterial goals all at the same time? That we need the immaterial ones as well, and that the material ones can only ever have priority in times of hardship? There may be many answers to the question. The one offered by Scherhorn – which I endorse – is that individual actors perceive relative scarcity as a psychological threat to their own – rather weak – self-esteem. [Scherhorn, 1994] This is where the second basic assumption that needs to be examined comes in.

### *Nobody is good enough*

In the developed countries, which could be thriving upon a wealth hardly any society ever experienced before, we live in a world where nobody, and nobody's work, can ever be good enough. Why? Because there might be a competitor who outperforms you.

Ortmann [2004] elaborates the point that for firms in the capitalist society, *outperformance*<sup>1</sup> is the criterion of viability and survival. It is an “institutional imperative... a principle of action, which cannot be rejected by individual actors or organizations ... without the danger of sanctions” [p.227]. Located somewhere between maximizing and Simon’s satisficing, outperformance is the capitalist version of the evolutionary ‘good enough’ (to survive). [Ortmann, 2004]

Capitalist competition means that there just *might* be a competitor who does it better. There might just as well be long periods where this is not true, but the mere possibility of being outperformed in future puts a pressure on actors to outperform their own performance of last year. [Ortmann, 2004] This is also known as the Red Queen Paradox. “In Lewis Carroll’s *Alice through the Looking Glass*, the Red Queen tells Alice that, even though they are all running at top speed, they really should not expect to get anywhere. This is because inhabitants of Looking Glass Land are obliged to run as fast as they can just to stay where they are and, to get anywhere, they would have to run ever so much faster.” [Fombrun, 1988:227]

An ‘institutional imperative’ [Ortmann, 2004:227] like this affects individuals both directly and indirectly (through their work as part of organizations exposed to it). Authors like Arno Gruen [1997:177] have emphasized the potential consequences of the fact that societies build on outperformance. What counts is not how well someone does in absolute terms (if a measure like that exists at all), but whether there also happens to be someone who does it better. Can anyone, then, ever be certain that they are good enough as they are?

### *Assumptions as self-fulfilling prophecies*

It is easy to see what assumption number one – on the scarcity of resources – and assumption number two – that outperformance is the key to survival – combined can do for psychological damage. If the life of a human individual were to be organized around the two alone, the relative scarcity of resources would indeed be the greatest threat to that individual’s self-esteem and sense of security, as she was competing for those scarce but vital resources with everybody who might outperform her.

This is my main hypothesis. The *combination* of the assumption that resources are scarce, but we all want ever more of them (which, as Scherhorn has shown, can only happen because we ignore the costs of that), *and* that only outperforming

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<sup>1</sup> German: Überbietung



everybody else will make anyone secure (for a short time), is fatal. It is just not possible (whether in economic theory or in practice) to use a strategy of satisficing, in the sense that 'I have enough resources now, and will dedicate my spare time to immaterial luxuries'. [Scherhorn, 1994] One needs to stay in the game of outperformance. Which, in turn, makes resources even scarcer. Which, in turn, makes the situation even more threatening. Which, in turn, increases the pressure to ignore the costs of accumulating ever more resources...

This vicious psychological circle is kept intact by feelings of shame, guilt and fear. Someone who did not wish to participate in the race for outperformance would feel ashamed and guilty. Someone who stopped accumulating an increasing amount of resources would feel anxiety. Social identity, social acceptance today hinge on outperformance and the (however fragile) victory over the 'threat' of relative scarcity. The assumptions taken for granted are, in fact, rather like self-fulfilling prophecies. From the status of assumptions that hold true under certain conditions but not others, they have gone to the status of haunting demons.

### **(NOT QUITE) ESCAPING THROUGH ORGANIZING**

That the I, Self, or self-esteem of many people today is severely threatened by perceived scarcity and the pressure to outperform can be safely assumed. [Heide, 2002; Gruen, 2002; Schwartz, 2004] If the individual suffers from her vulnerability and smallness in the face of these pressures, and feels guilt, shame, and fear, what does that imply for organizations?

Schwartz has shown that the individual, in a situation like this, may look to social institutions, and specifically work organizations, for security and sympathy. In fact, belonging to an organization provides an identity – for individuals whose sense of identity is 'tenuous in the extreme' [Schwartz, 2004:120]. The individual's ego ideal (Freud's specification of the person one must become in order to return to narcissism) takes the form of an organization, which Schwartz refers to as the organization ideal. [Schwartz, 2004:122] Of course, the group, or organization, is then essentially a fantasy, a projection – what Anzieu calls the group illusion. Individuals seek comfort in the fantasy of the group as a perfect mother. [Anzieu, 1984]

Guilt and shame can thus partly, though never entirely, be overcome through trying to do exactly what is asked of organizational members. Fear of resource

scarcity can also be kept at bay, as the organization endows its members with resources. [Schwartz, 2004] The thought of leaving the organization must then inspire fear of 'losing identity, a place in the world, a sense of belonging' [Flam, 1993:70] and protection from scarcity and pressure to outperform.

The problem with the individual's solution of 'escaping fear through organizing' is that organizations, in today's world of business, of course are subject to the same pressures as the individual. [Gabriel, 2003; Stein, 2001]

Stein sees a religion of the bottom line at work that forces organizations to discard with whoever has come to be regarded as 'no longer useful' – in other words, not good enough. Companies see themselves under outperformance pressure calling for sacrifices. In the face of relatively scarce resources, discarding the 'useless', the 'dead wood' renews the organization, makes it fit to fulfil its role for its members. This keeps the fantasy of the organization as an eternal, perfect mother alive for those inside. [Stein, 2001] The 'sacrifices' are, of course, some of the very same individuals who joined the organization to escape the pressure of scarcity and outperformance in the first place. The organization, for them, is not the safe haven it seemed to be, when it first took the place of ego ideal.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR (MIS)UNDERSTANDING CSR**

What does it all mean for CSR?

Small and vulnerable individuals who join an organization to escape smallness and vulnerability are unlikely to form an organization which takes true corporate responsibility. This is because one cannot act responsibly if one is not ready to accept one might be found guilty of mistakes. [Gruen, 2002]

True responsibility means taking on the task of deciding what to do, knowing that decisions can never be perfect and that one will have to respond to the consequences of the decision and action. This requires acceptance of one's own imperfection and vulnerability, and the fact that someone else might do it better. It also requires acceptance of the fact that environmental demands are contradictory and can never be satisfied all at once.

However, these are the very facts of life individuals with a 'tenuous sense of identity' and low self-esteem are trying to escape by joining the organization. It is vital to their fight against anxiety that the organization be ideal - the 'organization ideal' – not imperfect. They want to head off feelings of guilt and shame by doing what this

ideal organization asks of them, not respond to the consequences of their decisions and actions, i.e. be *responsible*. They want to labour under the illusion that they can overcome resource scarcity, thanks to the organization.

All these wishes clash with a notion of CSR that is more than a face-saving measure. Corporate Social *Responsibility*, in the original meaning of the term, would mean to think through consequences of corporate action, and act in a way that (one believes) maximizes social benefit and minimizes social damage. All too often, today, CSR is a tag on the organizational image, enhancing its impeccability and thus, the illusion of the organization ideal. It leaves evaluation of the company's everyday actions totally untouched.

If organizational members with low self-esteem live in constant fear of being forced to leave, they will try even harder to keep up the impeccable organizational facade. After all, only those who do not criticize the organization, but outperform internal competitors by being best at whatever the organization demands members to do, will be allowed to stay. This means you do not question organizational action, and you support the organizational image of an efficient, yet socially responsible company. Thus, it gets ever harder to break the vicious psychological cycles of escaping guilt, shame, and fear.

## **UNDERSTANDING CSR**

Let us restate an alternative definition of CSR.

*CSR is to think through consequences of corporate action, and act in a way that (one believes) maximizes social benefit and minimizes social damage. It thus means taking on the task of deciding what to do, knowing that decisions can never be perfect and that one will have to respond to the consequences of the decision and action. This requires acceptance of one's own imperfection and vulnerability. It also requires acceptance of the fact that environmental demands are contradictory and can never be satisfied all at once.*

Responsible action will not protect organizations from guilt. It will not necessarily (and especially not in the short term) polish organizational image. Responsible action might even mean companies have to leave core business fields, if action in those fields is judged to be irresponsible. It will not relieve the organization of the pressure to compromise between contradictory demands. In the language of

the Call for Papers to this conference: CSR will not relieve organizations of their demons.

Organizations tend to be most competent in their core areas of business. If they just add a CSR tag to their image, and carry out some face-saving, 'angelic' action that is at best loosely connected to their core competencies, critics will be right in saying someone else would have done a better job. I would like to argue that CSR should be a condition for any organizational action, and that CSR decisions are most important where the organization is most active. CSR is a frame of mind, not a smokescreen for hideous business practices or a way to escape guilt. Thus, 'true CSR' may not be helpful for marketing in the short run. But it may very well turn out to be the best marketing strategy in the long run.

### **LET THE ANGELS IN**

This is all very nice, but is it feasible – even advisable – in today's world of business? What about those self-fulfilling prophecies? If they indeed are 'institutional imperatives', what can the individual firm or human being do to resist, let alone change them?

The author of this paper has no ironclad arguments to offer in response. However, I have a suggestion to make on how economics and management studies, as a discipline, can best develop advice for management practitioners. The economics and management discipline needs to remember that it is, essentially, a cultural science. [Pfriem, 2000] As a social science, economics and management does not deal with phenomena as unshiftable and undisputable as gravity, but with cultural phenomena. CSR is one of them – and companies do regard it as necessary to run some CSR programme, however symbolic it may be, which may be a hopeful sign. That economics and management is a cultural science means that assumptions and institutional imperatives can be questioned, and maybe restated. Pfriem, for example, has been so bold as to state: 'The paradigm of scarcity is finished.' [Pfriem, 2000] It is not a brand new idea: Galbraith's classic 'The Affluent Society', in which the preoccupation of the economic discipline with poverty and scarcity is critically examined, dates back to 1958.

If the discipline questions its fundamental assumptions, it may be able to offer better advice on how business and its cultural environment, including civil society, can interact.

Also, awareness of the fact that management scholars and practitioners alike deal with cultural phenomena created by human beings leads to awareness of the importance of at least some degree of psychological understanding.

Psychoanalytically informed literature by authors like Schwartz [2004], or Kets de Vries and Miller [1984], and systemic organizational coaching can help us to understand what makes organizations vulnerable, inhumane, and neurotic, or generally not very able to interact well with their environment. This may also lead to advice on how to break the vicious circles and manage for a better understanding of, and action for, true Corporate Social Responsibility.

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**Narnia or a Republic of Heaven? C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman as  
Contesting Resources for Understanding Organising and Managing**

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## **Narnia or a Republic of Heaven? C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman as Contesting Resources for Understanding Organising and Managing**

### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

The youngest person in the department, the office, on the shop-floor, or at the shop-front, claims to have found a new research fund or niche, a better way of organising the work rota, a more efficient and less tiresome way to work the production line, or a more eye-catching way to set out a window display. The way this is responded to will determine whether or not, in 'Narnia' terms, this junior colleague experiences a 'Lucy moment'. In the second and most well known of C.S. Lewis's Narnia tales, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (LWW – Lewis, 1980), it is during their initial exploration of a house (or the first game of hide-and-seek in the recent film based on the book) that the youngest of the four children of the story, Lucy, becomes the first of them to find the land of Narnia, through the back of an old Wardrobe. She tries to convince the others of her discovery, but their attempts to verify her claim leave them unconvinced, and, initially at least, they fail to believe her. Worse, when one of the other children, brother Edmund, does find Narnia with her, rather than confirm her story he denies to the others, thus avoiding looking foolish himself and making Lucy look even more so. Similarly then, given a like negative reaction, our 'office junior' may be disbelieved and therefore relatedly, at best humoured, at worst, ridiculed. In the LWW Lucy is fortunate enough to be proved right, and the other children apologise for not believing her. Yet as Senor (2005, p. 33) points out, this is not the only time Lucy is not believed, the second time occurring in the fifth chronicle, *Prince Caspian* (PC – Lewis, 1991a), when she claims to have seen Aslan (the Lion, who is the key animal character in the Chronicles) when the other children don't. Further, what is particularly upsetting for Lucy is that the other children should be in a far stronger position to believe her. For, again as Senor (2005, p. 34) suggests, the first time Lucy asks them to believe her, she is challenging their fundamental beliefs about reality. The second time round they share so much more of her worldview; talking animals, animated trees, and at least one resurrection, but despite this, they reject her claim. Many a young worker will have experienced similar frustrations - if altogether less ontologically challenging.

This paper then, focuses on two popular sets of stories for their organisational and managerial insights; C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia*, and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*. There are several ways through which we can learn from fiction literature, either classical or fantasy; as Carr puts it: -

At all events, it seems that one key respect in which art and literature, like religion and religious parables, can contribute to the education of feelings and emotions is by calling our moral and other prejudices into

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<sup>1</sup> For reason of brevity, acronyms are used throughout the paper to refer to the books as follow:  
C.S. Lewis – LWW (The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe), PC (Prince Caspian), LB (The Last Battle)  
P. Pullman – HDM (His Dark Materials), NL (The Northern Lights), SK (The Subtle Knife), AS (The Amber Spyglass)

question, inviting us to re-evaluate our established emotional and affective responses from other normative perspectives. (Carr, 2005, p.148)

Another way to put it is that they fire the *moral imagination* that Werhane (1999) so links to better management decision-making. This matches Lewis's own profound faith in human imagination to uncover truth and bring hope, with "The longest way round is the shortest way home" being the logic of such an approach (Norris, 2002, p. xviii-xix). At least one of the great moral cynics knew the power of such fiction so well as to attempt to counter it himself, starting with *The Misfortunes of Virtue* (de Sade, 1993), a series of anti-morality tales, that turned the 'usual' stories on their head, though not demonstrating the excess of his later work. Even so, novels, or more precisely *children's fantasy* novels, are not usually associated with insightful lessons in life, managing and morality. Yet, because they allow imagination to cross real-life borders and boundaries, unleashing feelings, passions and prejudices we might otherwise think we control in our daily social interaction, these novels often teach us about ourselves more than we might realize. More specifically, the works of C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman discussed here bring out contrasting views around age, innocence and experience, 'other-worldly' and 'this worldly' imagination, responsibility, redemption, and hierarchy. We will still start with an examination of Lewis, and then Pullman, before concluding. For those unfamiliar with the novels, an outline of the stories is proposed in Appendix I and II.

### The Lion, the Virtues and Transactional Analysis

Lewis wrote LWW for his Goddaughter – Lucy – who, by the time he finished it he declared, was too old to read such fairy tales, but who, he went on, would one day be old enough to start reading them again. Lewis would seem to be champion here of two groups prone, in contemporary business conditions, to ageist assumptions. For him, rather, the youngest could be looked on positively as without pre-conceived approaches to experience but with plenty of imagination, while the much experienced may nonetheless be looking for imaginative ways of integrating the very complexity and variety of their experience. Yet both are likely to find themselves the focus of redundancy during intentional and unintentional organisational change. Yet that Lewis is as much if not more concerned with the content such different experiences have to offer is exposed by an example of Lewis's own slip into ageism from one of his non-fictional works –

"What would really satisfy us would be a God who said of anything we happened to be doing, 'What does it matter so long as they are contented?' we want...not so much a Father in heaven as a Grandfather in heaven – a senile benevolence who, as they say, 'liked to see young people enjoying themselves' and whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be truly said at the end of each day, 'a good time was had by all'." (Lewis, 2001a, p. 31)

That Lewis has wisdom expressed by an old Professor is to suggest that at least some of that spoken by elders is worth listening to, and it is probably the case that the point Lewis was trying to get across with the 'senile benevolence' comment was poorly expressed; he is trying to promote certain sorts of elder and child experience and trajectories of experience. Further, one of the implications if we accept the claim that we do not have automatic moral justification for 'anything we happened to be doing' is that *we need the virtue of temperance, or self-discipline*. Lewis's work then, not only focuses on magical worlds with other child/adult cross-over literature like *Lord of the Rings* and the *Harry Potter* series, but like them also, on the struggle to be *virtuous*, a struggle that a certain sort of child consciousness sees as particularly significant, and a certain sort of parental consciousness validates also as being so. We may ask where adolescent and/or other adult consciousness comes into this – we'll return to this shortly. Firstly though, what are the sort of virtues being promoted in the LWW and other Narnia tales?

Anacker (2005, p. 135-6) suggests courage, self-discipline, compassion, honesty, responsibility, friendship, and loyalty, among others, are Narnian virtues, whilst also claiming a list of vices, such as laziness, irresponsibility, cowardice, and dishonesty. It is easy to link these virtues and vices to the Narnian tales, with LWW exemplary; Edmund in his dishonesty about his earlier visit and meeting with the White Witch, as well as his lack of self-discipline in regard to the enchanted Turkish delight; Peter and Lucy in their cultivation of courage to help rid Narnia of the reign of evil, while Susan thinks all this is rather rash (to place this difference in an Aristotelian table of virtues and vices, where in the sphere of action and feeling, fear and confidence, rashness is excessive, courage the mean, and cowardice the deficiency – Aristotle, 1976, p. 104); a less generous interpretation of her is that she is encouraging cowardice. As for friendship, we see this in the relationship between Lucy and Mr Tumnus; and so on. For Anacker (2005, p. 132) also, the cultivation or lack of cultivation of the virtues creates three different character types; the *essentially good types*, such as Peter and Lucy; the *essentially and fatally flawed types*, such as the White Witch, and the *flawed but recoverable types*, such as Edmund. Having found that life with the White Witch was certainly not endless Turkish delight, Edmund is grateful at his rescue by Aslan's army, is counselled by Aslan, and then Aslan pays for Edmund's sins for him by being put to death by the White Witch. In this strongly Christian allegory, whilst Edmund is evidently sorry for his betrayal of his siblings, he needs Aslan to save him from paying the ultimate price to the White Witch; and also, as in the Christian story, Aslan comes back to life. Virtue in Narnia, as in work and life, is not all; there needs to be a 'good' to which virtue aims and underpinning its purpose, and for Lewis this is the reality of Christianity, and the eternal relationships it brings.

For the children both in the Narnia stories and reading them, an arena is being offered where they can confront adult like responsibility, working with an estimate of their own capacity to cultivate appropriate virtues; for adults reading these stories, they confront their own child like vulnerabilities when confronted with such responsibility. Such possibilities would seem to cry out

an understanding through transactional analysis and the ego states of 'Parent', 'Adult', and 'Child', first suggested by Eric Berne; Berne says an ego state can be described –

“...phenomenologically as a coherent system of feelings related to a given subject, and operationally as a set of coherent behaviour patterns; or pragmatically, as a system of feelings which motivates a related set of behaviour patterns.” (Berne, 1975, p. 17)

Harris (1970) adds a clear cognitive element to this, with it becoming particularly defining of the 'Adult' ego state, which is formed slightly later. For Harris (1970, p. 18-24) the 'Parent' is all the parental or 'substitute' parental 'teaching' that is given in during the early years of life, and while this includes moral codes and rules, it also includes rows, fights, cuddles, and kisses, and all the verbal and non-verbal communications around these. This ego state is defined by what is *taught*. The 'Child' (Harris, 1970, p. 24-8) is a simultaneous registering of all the internal responses to these parental events, including a sense of helplessness, confusion and a whole mess of *feelings* which are its core feature. Finally, the 'Adult' comes along a little bit later – from about the age the child can manipulate their environment and test out things for themselves. The defining feature here is their own thought, built upon exploration, and trial and error. The 'transaction' part of all this emerges through the communication and relationship with at least one other person.

We can apply transactional analysis to the LWW, but it is as relevant to the relationships between the children themselves, as to the children in relation to others in the novel or to the novels readers. The Peter to Edmund relationship is often a Parent to Child one, while during the early period of disbelieving Lucy, Peter and Susan had a Parent to Child relationship with Lucy, with Edmund wavering before joining the older two, though this changes when they all find Narnia. On the other hand, Susan seems to go into a Child ego state when uncertainties arise in Narnia, while Peter and Lucy adapt an Adult one. Such relationships could as well be understood in this way in the world of employment; Berne suggests –

“Some professionals earn a living by the public exhibition of a constant ego state: clergymen, the Parent; diagnosticians, the Adult; and Clowns, the Child.” (Berne, 1975, p. 35)

Interestingly, one claim as to the reason that Lewis is said to have turned to writing *The Chronicles of Narnia* is because a humiliating workplace experience turned him towards reliance on child-like faith rather than rational argument. During a meeting of the Oxford Socratic Club in 1948, Lewis's argument in *Miracles* (Lewis, 2001b) that naturalism, the claim that only physical reality exists, is irrational and self-defeating, was itself defeated by a rising academic of the time, Elizabeth Anscombe's reply (Anscombe, 1981). Lewis's argument ran something like this: “naturalism is true” is a rational truth claim, yet if that statement is true the statement itself must have an irrational physical cause, and therefore is not a rational truth claim. Anscombe countered that Lewis did not accommodate either distinction between 'reason'

and 'cause', or between 'irrational' and 'non-rational' causes, and that the origins of an argument are irrelevant so long as the conclusion follows logically from its premises. The result of this according to Wilson (1990) was, not only that Lewis reverted to writing children's stories, but that Lewis got in a childish revenge by using Anscombe as the character basis for the Green Witch (who tries to persuade the children that Narnia does not exist) in the penultimate book of the Chronicles *The Silver Chair* (Lewis, 1991b). Transactional analysis would really seem to have something to offer here!

However, both the claims to the 'Child' like Lewis, and that of transactional analysis need to be challenged. For sure, Lewis took Anscombe's criticisms very seriously and existentially, but rather than abandoning his non-fictional work of rational argument, he continued to write essays and revised previous work, e.g. *Miracles* in 1960, while his Narnia tales have also been argued as being in line with his revised way of thinking (Reppert, 2005). Lewis fully accepted the need for distinction between causes and reasons, he claimed for the need of rational thought to be possible, reason and cause needed to come together, i.e. not merely must a belief be supported by good reasons, but those reasons must cause belief; if this is the case, it refutes naturalism, which suggests a la Anscombe, only non-rational causes cause belief. As Reppert (2005, p. 268-272) goes on to suggest Lewis links faith and prudence in his Narnia tales; in LWW, Edmund is only foolish in believing what he knows not to be true in respect of the White Witch (LWW, Lewis, 1980, p. 83). Indeed, rather emphasising the 'feeling' aspects of the children's experience, Lewis is careful not to insult their intelligence – and it is here where we confront the contrast between Lewis's understanding of 'Child' and that of transactional analysis. For the way that Berne and others have defined the PAC conceptual framework is to reduce these concepts to a set of stereotypical characteristics that substantively cut across the ages of human development, rather than adopting a coherence of a broader set of characteristics centred round an approximate age range. The transactional analysis model seems to remain close to the Freudian superego, ego and id model, with all the problems that brings with it, not least the place for character-building via virtue cultivation. Further, sexuality is rather awkwardly strung between child and adulthood, and however much it may be believed there remains something in Freud's erotic stages of early life, the absence of the hormonally charged period of adolescence, and implications this may have for adulthood remains a key oversight. So much for transactional analysis; as regards the tales of Narnia, sexuality seems only of tangential relevance and but there *are* issues of gender in which this is embedded. For even if it can be argued that Lewis did not change his approach to Christianity, this is not to say he took kindly to his argument being so vigorously challenged by Anscombe; but perhaps any malice that Lewis held against her is not so much evident any specific tale of Narnia, but was immersed in a more general – misogyny.

#### Concluding Narnia: Reality and Hierarchy

"It's all in Plato, all in Plato: bless me, what *do* they teach them at these schools!' the older ones laughed. It was so exactly like the sort

of thing they heard him say a long time ago in that other world where his beard was grey instead of golden.” (LB, - Lewis, 1974, p. 154)

In the final book of the Chronicles, there is the death of Narnia as the children have known it and, for the three of them and their parents, there is death in a railway accident. Susan is not involved in the accident, and given this, in reply to criticism about Susan not being a ‘friend of Narnia’, Lewis has suggested she has time to change her ways, since the ‘shadowlands’ of the earth have not disappeared. Lucy is clearly distressed at the passing of the old Narnia, but given the passing of that and her own death, realises that where she is is like Narnia but where all is in a perfect form in comparison to how it appeared before. If this sounds rather like Plato’s contrast between appearances and the reality of forms, then that is because the Narnia tales not only make reference to his name but actually uses some of his ideas (Matthews, 2005). The old Narnia was a remarkable world, with its talking animals and such, but it is only with development towards its actual perfection that realisation of how remarkable it is can be made. It is a land of deep valleys, crashing waterfalls, multi-coloured mountains, of endless energy and no fear, and of indescribable beauty – and Lewis does not attempt to describe it. Yet there is one aspect of this perfect but therefore most real land that some may find rather odd – its great social hierarchy.

C.S. Lewis accepted the ‘pragmatic’ need for democracy and greater equality, but this was very far from making him an egalitarian. Indeed, rather, he believed that in our deepest and real selves, we distinguished ourselves as human beings because of our need to worship and for deference, with a hierarchy related to spiritual being (Lewis, 1990). This is not hierarchy for its own sake or non-specific sycophancy; Miraz, who becomes king in PC, achieves and maintains his kingship through the murder of his brother, dishonesty and corruption; this is not someone worthy of our respect, let alone worship. King Peter of Narnia on the other hand is honest, just, self-sacrificing, courageous, etc, *but he also reveres Aslan, and rules as his representative in Narnia* (Anacker, 2005, p. 138). Monarchy and nobility strongly feature in Narnia, and so in the perfected form of Christian spiritual life. Further, with the accent on Kings rather Queens in his scheme of things, this form might seem perilously close to Robert Filmer’s *Patriarcha* (1680 – in Laslett, 1949); after all, Lewis agrees with Aristotle that at least some men should be slaves, he just questions who is worthy to be master. In fairness, he is unlikely to have had in mind Charles 1 (king when Filmer actually wrote *Patriarcha* in 1637-8) indeed he may even accept that we need no earthly king so long as we recognise a need for one in heaven. This is not entirely clear. It would seem that our earthly life, in or out of organisations, is just the dream before the reality, the cover page and title of the book of our existence in a perfect reality well beyond our current state. Against this, for Lewis, a sexually charged period during adolescence and early adulthood seemingly provoked by women wearing trivial consumer products is an aberration in contrast to an eternal spiritual existence in which this activity is no source of pleasure. Similarly, earthly concern with equality is diminished by the great and worthy inequality of eternity. But perhaps we now need to consider a different set of stories – those of Philip Pullman.

## His Dark Materials: Overview of a controversial fiction

Philip Pullman is undoubtedly a successful writer in fantasy literature for children/teenagers and adults. His most famous, and what many readers consider his most achieved piece of work, is *His Dark Materials* trilogy (HDM). It is composed of *The Northern Lights* (1998a, NL hereafter), *The Subtle Knife* (1998b, SK) and *The Amber Spyglass* (2001, AS). HDM is also a rather controversial novel, in particular for its depiction of the Church. Pullman himself calls for comparison with C.S. Lewis only to better contrast his allegedly atheist position with Lewis's deeply allegorical Christianity, a view that has attracted many harsh criticisms (Hitchens, 2002 and 2004). Commentaries and interviews with Pullman have tended to comfort the idea that Pullman intends to offer a wide-ranging challenge to existing religious traditions and organisations (Bates, 2005), although the author's contestation of the (Christian) Church raises doubts as to his atheism (Rayment-Pickard, 2004). Likewise, Pullman seems at times so prone to defend his anti-clerical and anti-religious views that his legitimate reflections in the end lose clarity and strength. It actually seems that despite Pullman's vocal endeavours to reject Christianity, he produces his best when he draws upon Christian myths, but he is not so convincing when he 'preaches' atheism (Moloney, 2005).

It has been explained earlier that Pullman's and Lewis's respective fantasy work are often put in perspective of one another, to better contrast them. Probably the most notable difference lies in the narrative style of *The Chronicles of Narnia* on one hand, and HDM on the other hand. As Wood (2001 p.241) suggests, the narrator in HDM does not judge as much as he relates the facts past and present to the reader, as opposed to the "avuncular narrator [who] tutors his readers, specifically instructing them about how to react to characters and events in the tales" proposed by Lewis. In HDM, it is mainly up to us to reflect upon the characters' actions. Consequently, HDM chooses the more complex, darker road to morality than Narnia, engaging the reader's experience of moral appreciation.

## Innocence and Experience in HDM

HDM's children heroes, Lyra and Will, are clearly destined to play a critical role in the world's fate, but they do not and should not know so; actually, even the few characters who know that the two children will play a critical role do not really know what it is about. The recurrent idea is that the children, in particular Lyra, must act out of ignorance of their destiny if they are to fulfil it (NL p.310). It is a rather ironic move to put so much emphasis on fate and ignorance of one's destiny (even when one *could* know what lies ahead, e.g. AS p.524-525), whilst at the same time knowledge and freedom are what the rebels fight for (Wood, 2001, p.248). Actually, Wood (2005) explains that what matters is not ignorance *per se*, but rather the absence of the restrictive doctrine of existing educational system. Had Lyra remained at Jordan College where the action kicks off, her understanding of the world certainly would not have evolved the same way. The theme of innocence/ignorance versus experience/knowledge is central to HDM, especially through Pullman's re-

reading of the Christian tale of the Fall. Innocence and experience or knowledge are reinterpreted in the light of a decaying Authority, absorbed in the maintenance of His superiority over human beings. It is clear that Lewis's take on the issues of innocence and experience differs quite a bit from the more contrasted view of Pullman.

Pullman's characters are morally ambiguous. They are not heroic as we would expect them to be – i.e. morally praiseworthy, pure of heart and intention, and brave in defence of values and ideals. They are actually depicted with all their contradictions, weaknesses and ambivalences, and it might be why they seem so interesting, and why we become so attached to them even so when we don't agree with their choices – the characters obey a fundamental rule of fantasy literature in that they are 'realistic' (Moloney, 2005). What is of interest here is Pullman's revaluation of the implication of innocence as a virtue. Innocence has become largely associated with childhood in which purity, truth and goodness are the rule (Wood, 2005). This is how Lewis understands and cherishes Narnia's children. However childhood for Pullman is not this 'all pure and all good' picture, and innocence does not dispel the question of moral responsibility. Adult-Child relationships in HDM challenge the underpinnings of transactional analysis by emphasising an even state of power and necessity: "adults and children are human, and thus equally flawed. Both have the ability to make mistakes and to solve them; therefore they need each other, and the basis of their relationship should be mutual respect" (Giardina, 2005, p.148). As for the Parent role, it is absent in so far as neither Lyra nor Will have a 'normal' relationship with their parents: Lyra's parents are egomaniac and obsessed with power; Will never knew his dad, and his mother is sick and must be taken care of. In fact, adulthood seems widely flawed with "cynicism, ambition, and greed", and HDM young characters moved from childhood to "the adult world of compromise and self-discipline and self-sacrifice" (Chabon, 2005, p.13). For Pullman, there is no 'golden age', and growing up is as beneficial as it is excruciating.

Innocence should be taken as a state of non-experience, more precisely of non-consciousness of the moral weight of one's actions (SK p.292). Hence innocence is not purity, but ignorance. Indeed, when first introduced to Lyra, we witness an 11-year-old tomboy, curious and adventurous, undisciplined and impulsive (e.g. SK p.171), as well as a self-confessed liar (e.g. SK p.107, AS p.276), almost irresponsible and clearly oblivious of the consequences of her acts. To that extent, Lyra is not a pure child, but she is innocent in so far as she does not possess knowledge of the world (Wood, 2005). She however loses her innocence (the process of growing up) as she learns about life, the world, and her task and duty through her journey to the North and across other worlds. Her innocence as a child is tainted with moral issues, although she does not consider them fully or at all. Growing up, i.e. gaining knowledge of what happens in the world and in oneself, is viewed as liberating by Pullman. To eat the fruit, to learn about good and evil is not so much a Fall as a progress, albeit not an all pleasurable one. In Wood's words:

"Pullman strongly suggests that to fall from innocence is not to become guilty, but simply to become conscious of responsibility as a sentient



and moral being. Sin, shame and death come with consciousness not because consciousness is evil, but because we then understand our own actions and their potential effects upon others in a way we did not when we were innocent.” (Wood, 2005, p.21)

In the case of Will, things are not so clear-cut. A 12-year-old boy from ‘our’ world, Will has had to learn responsibility from a young age, taking care of his mother since he realised that “those enemies of his mother’s were not in the world out there, but in her mind” (SK p.9). Will’s character loses his innocence quite early and harshly, first by realising that his mother is sick and requires constant care, then by accidentally killing a man. His knowledge of the world, in particular how to protect oneself from the world, develops early out of necessity. Whereas Lyra is the spontaneous and courageous leader, Will becomes a brave, reliable warrior quite unwillingly. Indeed, he does not enjoy killing and fighting, although he does it remorselessly when the situation is life-threatening. Even if he does not grasp the entirety of the moral consequences of his acts (i.e. the killing of the man who broke into his house, SK p.7), he still is fully aware of how it affects his character. Will is not moral in a deontological way – he certainly does not abide by the ‘Thou shalt not kill’ motto. Nonetheless, he demonstrates undeniable moral maturity since he knows that whatever he does becomes part of who he is – i.e. he understands that experience is character-building, something Lyra discovers much further in the story. To use the Virtue Ethics framework (Aristotle, 1998), Will seems to possess more ‘*phronesis*’ (i.e. practical wisdom) than Lyra at the beginning of the story, which allows him to make more rational, reasoned decisions as to the course of actions than spontaneous Lyra. This does not mean that he will be more ‘moral’ (some of his actions are indeed morally disputable), but his grasp of what he ought to do and what he ought to be is led by a certain wisdom gained through his life-experience. Hence, whilst both children demonstrate equal courage, Will’s experience makes him more wary and reflective than Lyra, although she can rely on the alethiometer to guide her choices.

Pullman indeed provides some of his characters with truth-telling devices that help them determine what to do in critical situation. These devices (e.g. an alethiometer, a set of I Ching) are alimanted by the Dust. At first, Lyra learns to read the alethiometer quite naturally, instinctively – yet she loses that faculty when she becomes the ‘Eve-again’ and discovers sexuality. This suggests that whilst innocent (ignorant) she could use easy moral guidance which in actual terms relieved her from making delicate moral decisions; however, when she gains knowledge of the world of senses and the grey areas of moral choices, she loses in return the ability to rely on a truth-telling device. By entering the world of grown-ups, Lyra is ‘obliged’ to take her moral responsibilities (although we do not witness her doing so). Only a life-time of experience and learning can allow her to master the alethiometer’s readings again (AS p.520). Paradoxically, since the alethiometer ‘protects’ Lyra from making moral choices, she learns about morality not from first-hand experience, but from what she is told and taught by others. She does not grow up morally through moral experience, since she’s guided throughout the story, as if “Pullman does not want Lyra to taste the real fruit of experience, which is

moral ambiguity, or to be mired in the messy business of human moral choices” (Rayment-Pickard, 2004, p.75). It therefore seems that in spite of his declared agenda, Pullman attempts to maintain some degree of innocence (i.e. the ignorance of the real-life cost of moral choice and moral compromise) amidst the otherwise desirable process of learning and moral awareness.

### Daemons and the struggle of ‘being yourself’

One of the most interesting elements Pullman introduces in HDM is the daemon. The term daemon is not itself new, but is sufficiently imprecise to allow for a loose interpretation of its meaning. As Bird (2001) points out, the animal daemon in HDM is usually of the opposite sex to its human counterpart, in the spirit of the Jungian idea of the animus/anima. The daemon is both independent and full part of the person. It represents the soul, it illustrates the very intimate character of the person, but despite its existence outside the body, it cannot live without the body. Positioning himself against the Church’s claim that the soul/spirit is superior to the body/matter, Pullman poses the body and soul as interrelated (Bird, 2001). The human beings who have been submitted to ‘intercision’ (that is, literally to be cut from one’s daemon or one’s soul) are only half-human, incomplete, severed (NL p.215). Furthermore, Dust only attaches itself to those whose daemon has settled in one shape, usually around the age of puberty (NL p.285). This illustrates why ‘Matter love[s] Dust’ (AS p.476) just like Dust loves Matter (Bird, 2001). Consciousness and knowledge only take their full meaning when embedded into bodily experience through senses. In other words, the soul and body cannot be fully apprehended in a separate way, and only the two perceived as one can reveal who the person is.

We can learn from this an important element for organisational life: that people cannot leave their soul at home when they go to work, else they are not themselves. Emotions and sensitivity should be accounted for in the workplace because they are intrinsically linked to human nature. This claim is not new, but is worth being stressed in the light of still new accounts of the corporate world as ‘pathologically’ egoistical, self-interested and soul-allergic (e.g. Bakan, 2004). Echoing recent concerns that emotions have been neglected in both management and praxis (e.g. Haidt, 2001; Hine, 2004), Pullman’s world pictures the importance of the soul in the determination of self. Big corporations’ employees or bureaucrats compelled to strip off their personality and put on the corporate uniform (sometimes literally) recall the half-dead people cut from their daemon, indifferent, almost robotic (NL p.240). Removing someone’s daemon is like “the destruction of the human being’s identity as a human”; similarly, bureaucratic corporations’ attempts to remove employees’ personal feelings from the workplace can be assimilated to this “descent from ‘human being’ to ‘non-being’” (Bird, 2001, p.117). Furthermore, a human being without her daemon does not attract Dust anymore, and therefore becomes deprived of that vital energy that makes human beings human, and that fosters fear, imagination and free will (SK p.209). In their enquiry on spirituality in corporations, Mitroff and Denton (1999) observed that organisational actors hold back to devilish corporations asking them to ‘sell their souls’. On the contrary, they aspire to being themselves at work as well

as at home. Pullman's metaphoric writing is a powerful illustration of a phenomenon Mitroff explains as follow:

"First and foremost, people want to bring their whole selves to work, the 'complete package', so to speak. They are extremely frustrated with and tired of having to leave significant parts of themselves at home and pretending that one can do it. Most people report that they can bring only their brains to work, and not their deepest feelings and emotions, let alone their souls. But this has the direct consequence that organizations do not reap the full creativity of their employees, and employees do not get the opportunity to develop themselves as whole persons. Both seriously impact the ability of organizations to compete effectively in the global economy." (Mitroff, 2003, p.376)

The Church in HDM actually condemns the possibility to express oneself fully, hence its plans to have as many people as possible undergoing intercision to, in effect, suppress true free will. It is suggested that those adults who have undergone intercision are highly effective task achiever (e.g. Mrs Coulter's bodyguards or Bolvangar's staff in charge of the intercision process on abducted children), because they are no longer able to care for what they do or don't do. There is no such thing as intercision in real-life, although the insistence on work performance (implicitly requiring employees to model their behaviour on the successful ones, compromising their own values to endorse those of the corporation) shares some similarities with the process. A fantasy novel, HDM raises the very real question of the acceptance of people as a 'whole' in social and organisational settings. It draws the attention back to our readiness to compromise who we are (i.e. our values, our aspirations, our soul) for the sake of following what an authority decrees.

#### A Kingdom or a Republic of Heaven? On obedience and hierarchy

On the theme of obedience to authority, again, Pullman takes the opposite view to Lewis. In Narnia, the children obey to Aslan and work towards the saving of Narnia's world. In HDM, on the contrary, Lyra and Will pursue their own agenda no matter what others say or order. Even those who help them and care for them have to first do as they want – including going to the hopeless world of the dead. Obedience is certainly not described as a necessarily good thing throughout the trilogy, and the whole story actually starts with Lyra disobeying the rules of Jordan College. As Wood (2001) stresses, disobedience provides better outcomes than sticking to the rules. Neither Lyra nor Will, in fact none of the characters demonstrate a deep commitment to a higher authority. They rather tend to ground their actions into their innate sense of right and wrong, a sort of natural morality whose values overrule what 'should' be done, be it what an authority or fate requests. What matters most to HDM characters is what feels right, not what rational thinking calls for; disobedience is not sought as an end *per se* but is the ineluctable consequence of doing the right thing. Strangely, when Lyra and Will reach the stage of 'grown ups' after having discovered their feelings for one another, they eventually obey angel Xaphania who tells them they have to live apart from each other in order to prevent a similar crisis to happen again. But

Pullman's trick is to introduce the technical fact that one can only live one's full existence in one's original world. Therefore, if Lyra and Will 'obey' the angel, it is not so much because they *know* it is the right thing to do, but because they could not *emotionally* bear to watch the other decay at still an early age (AS p.516). There is no judgement on obedience and disobedience – just like his characters, Pullman lets the readers make their own view on what the right thing to do is and how to know it. He nonetheless points out that feelings and emotions have as much a place as reason into the decision-making process.

Disobedience and cunning are at crucial times necessary to defeat malevolent cunning – for example when the angels rebel against the Authority after having discovered that He lied about His creation of the world and the Dust. But Pullman does not clarify his view on disobedience further. If disobeying is at times the right thing to do, sometimes the pursuit of 'good' ends sacrifices morality. Consequentialists might understand Lord Asriel's use of 'evil' means (e.g. killing Lyra's friend Roger to open a window to other worlds) to fight what he thinks of a greater evil, but Lyra condemns it and the readers are left to make up their mind on the sacrifices required to defeat a pre-totalitarian authority. Through Lord Asriel's voice, Pullman claims that the Kingdom of Heaven should be replaced by a Republic of Heaven. Yet, little is said about what the Republic of Heaven would entail, besides the fact that it should be built in each of the now closed worlds (AS p.548). On the other hand, the Kingdom of Heaven is more clearly depicted, albeit in a very negative way. The Kingdom's Regent, Metatron, is a particularly ambitious angel. The Authority's project, driven by the fact that "conscious beings of every kind have become dangerously independent" is to let Metatron interfere in human affairs and notably "set up a permanent inquisition in every world, run directly from the kingdom" (AS p.63). This is notably what Lord Asriel and the rebel angels fight against.

The Church organisational chart can be summarised as follow from what HDM indicates: at the top, the Authority reigns, although He has delegated almost all His powers to the Regent Metatron. Metatron supervises the Magisterium (i.e. the supervisory board of the Church) which oversees and coordinated the actions of various bodies. The Church agencies include the General Oblation Board, led by Mrs Coulter and in charge of eliminating Dust to eliminate sin; its main rival, the Constitutional Court of Discipline; the Society of the Work of the Holy Spirit; and the College of Bishops. The General Oblation Board is most referred to in the trilogy, but none of these agencies are specifically described. We only know that there exists great rivalry and power struggle between the various agencies, and that at times the agencies within the Church might not share the same agenda. Overall, the Church is painted as corrupted, compromised, secretive, in brief as 'evil', and its representatives are no better (Rayment-Pickard, 2004). It is enough, however, to suppose that HDM Church's organisational structure shares similarities with the existing Christian bureaucracy in our modern societies.

In a dated but significant article, Constatas (1958) discusses the two forms a bureaucracy can take, and provides an interesting explanation for the failure of the Kingdom of Heaven project. Constatas reviews Max Weber's seminal work on bureaucracy and suggests that a bureaucracy can evolve into two

main shapes: charismatic or legal-rational. Grounding her discussion into examples that include the Catholic Church, she demonstrates that a charismatic bureaucratic organisation is bound to become “irresponsible and totalitarian” because of its implicit claims of moral authority, whereas the legal-rational bureaucracy, which “may be annoying, stupid, slow-moving, too complex, ad finitum” does not threaten human beings’ freedom because it does not pose any moral claim as such (Constas, 1958 p.408). Charismatic bureaucracies are structured by dogmas that cannot be questioned. The authority is not the person’s but the office’s, nonetheless the appeal to charisma directly implies that science is restrained by ideology (since science benefits rationality, it goes against the legal-rational model), and that ideological commitment takes over technical competence in the recruitment of bureaucratic agents. It appears clearly in HDM that Pullman’s view of the Church is very close to a corrupted charismatic bureaucracy, with scientific research being submitted to the Magisterium’s censorship (SK p.130), and in which believers are rewarded by power for their endeavours in defending the Church’s interests. Interestingly, Lewis’s view of hierarchy embraces the third type of power structure Weber identified – the traditional model, almost patriarchal in spirit. Narnia is certainly not a legal-rational world, but it could be argued that Aslan acts as a charismatic leader, for he represents the moral authority in Narnia. However, Lewis’s rationale for sustaining a traditionalist hierarchy rather than a charismatic model purposes the avoidance of such totalitarian excess.

Since not much is said about the Republic of Heaven, it is difficult to appreciate its potential benefits, and we’re left with more questions than answers about the ‘what’s next’. It is suggested at the end of the third book that each inter-world window must be closed, and therefore that the Republic of Heaven is to be built in each world separately. The task ahead of Lyra and Will in their respective world is mainly to educate people based on the knowledge they gained. Whilst in the world of the dead (a ‘prison camp established by the Authority’ AS p.35), Lyra and Will freed the spirits by opening a window and letting them disintegrate back into elementary particles (the perfect illustration of the ‘from Dust to Dust’ Christian credence). Where hopelessness and evil reigned, Lyra brought the truth by telling her true story, and then charged the Harpies (guardians of the gates) to guide the newly arrived spirits up to the only window that shall remain open in exchange of their true life-story (AS p.334). Consequently, the children assume the task of telling people to make sure they have something to tell about their life when they die – a call to make the most one’s existence in order to have enough to pay for the return to the elementary. Thus, building the Republic of Heaven seems to entail a focus on the ‘here and now’ rejecting the idea of an overseeing moral authority, and disqualifying the concept of life in the after-world as in religious orthodoxy. In organisational terms, hierarchy is seen as a potential harm to freedom, personal growth and long-term innovation and efficiency; alternatively, openness, communication and ‘story-telling’ are perceived as positive elements.

## Conclusion

Fiction literature is inspiring because it uses images and metaphors to highlight what works and what does not work in real-life. Whatever lessons they offer, we are free to take them on board into our daily work. To that extent, Lewis's and Pullman's novels provide contrasting view on the state of human growth and the future of organisational structure. Whilst for Pullman authority and obedience are not virtues de facto and people can be better off listening to their sense of right/wrong, for Lewis it is desirable to acknowledge the need for a moral authority and be satisfied with one's place in the hierarchy. According to Lewis, equality is something we might need by default but not by ideal, and roles are clearly defined; according to Pullman, equal relationships are desirable with that implying to accept the complexity of people's characters (i.e. there is no clear role nor clear boundaries). Lewis sees growing up as the loss of innocence and pure virtues; Pullman sees growing up as the full grasp of moral responsibility.

Overall, HDM seems to offer a more complex alternative to individual actors than Narnia's world. Moreover, some insights from HDM echo growing concerns about the need for spiritual development and self-completion in the workplace. Fiction novels do not provide practical solutions to real-life problems; neither do they intend to do so. However, because they are not bound by reality constraints, they can picture existing issues and explore matters in a more thorough and challenging way than academic research. It is worth being attentive to what fiction tells us, because it can make us more knowledgeable about ourselves, our limits and capabilities, and apprehend life in a more innovative way. At least on this point, Lewis and Pullman agree: great things happen when we're ready to accept challenges to our taken-for-granted beliefs. There is no age limit on imagination.

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## Appendix I

### The Chronicles of Narnia reduced: The primacy of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe

Of the Chronicles of Narnia, we have already noted the particular renown of LWW, and it will be a prime focus here, because much of what Lewis wishes to say and the themes he raises in the narrative form of the Chronicles are raised within it, and it is likely to be the most familiar to the reader; there are also six other tales to which this piece cannot do sufficient justice, but some of them will be occasionally referred to as they draw out particular themes. In order for the reader to get a 'feel' for the Lewis type tale, it is probably worth doing a brief resume of the LWW.

Four children of the Pevensie family, (eldest to youngest) Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy are evacuated from London during the Second World War, to avoid the air raids. They stay in an old Professor's house 'in the heart of the country', with a housekeeper, Mrs Macredy, and three servants who are named but are not mentioned again in the story (!). As mentioned above, it is Lucy who first discovers Narnia through the wardrobe, a seemingly cold, wintry land, where by a lamp-post she meets a talking Faun called Mr Tumnus, who finds it equally strange but fascinating to be meeting a 'daughter of Eve'. They get on so well that Lucy accepts his invitation to go back to his house for tea, but it is there that the Faun has to confess that having met her, his original plan was to kidnap her for the Queen of Narnia, who has wished to be informed of all 'sons of Adam', and 'daughters of Eve' who venture into 'her' land. Mr Tumnus, however, has had a change of heart, informs Lucy that the so-called Queen of Narnia is a White Witch who has turned Narnia into a permanent winter-land without any Christmas, and helps her get back to the lamp-post so she can find her way out of Narnia, despite the potential threat to himself if the Witch finds out he's not disclosed Lucy.

Lucy returns to Narnia a second time, and is relieved to find Mr Tumnus still alive and well, but unbeknown to her, Edmund has followed her into the wardrobe, but not closely enough to find her when he arrives there. Instead, he encounters the 'Queen of Narnia', who while at first frightening him, 'befriends' him with a hot creamy drink, and his favourite sweet treat, an especially enchanted version of Turkish delight. While Edmund eats and drinks she manages to get much relevant information out of him, such as the existence of his brothers and sisters, and that his sister Lucy has already been to Narnia, and met a Faun called Mr Tumnus. While Edmund remains keen to have yet more Turkish delight the Queen tells him he can have as much as he likes, and eventually become a king, if he brings his brothers and sisters with him to her house the next time they come. Only shortly after the Queen has gone, Lucy appears, overjoyed her younger brother has found Narnia too, telling him of her reunion with Mr Tumnus and his apparent escape from the White Witch. When Edmund enquires further about the White Witch, Lucy tells him of her claim to be the Queen of Narnia. Without

revealing his encounter with her, Edmund suggests to Lucy that Fauns can't be trusted, but then changes the subject to the matter of getting home.

Part of Edmund's short-term plan of not disclosing his meeting with the White Witch is to deny the existence of Narnia altogether, so once more Lucy's claim about Narnia is undermined in front of the other children. Yet it is not long until, while escaping one of the groups of visitors to the old Professor's house, all the children end up not only in the wardrobe – but in Narnia. As a gesture of apology to Lucy, the children ask her what she would like them to do, and unsurprisingly she suggests they all go to visit Mr Tumnus, but as they approach his house and witness its front door ripped off its hinges and smashed, they realise something terrible has happened. Amidst the vandalised ruins of his home, they find a note from the Queen's secret police telling of Mr Tumnus's arrest for the high treason of fraternising with humans. The other children's first encounter with talking animals occurs shortly after this, the meeting with the Beavers, who not only fill in further an account of the arrest of Mr Tumnus, but the prophecy concerning the arrival of four humans and the demise of the reign of evil (thus explaining the White Witch's interest in the children), and the coming of Aslan, the Christ-like Lion, who will help all this come about. Yet while this discussion has been going on, Edmund has slipped off to see the White Witch, and the other children have to accept he has betrayed them. The best course of action for the sakes of *all* the children and Narnia itself, it is decided, is to meet up with Aslan so as to defeat the White Witch.

After the children's meeting up with Aslan, and an initial skirmish with some of the White Witch's Wolves, Aslan sends some of his army to chase those fleeing the battle in order to find the White Witch, and rescue Edmund. This object is achieved, and a changed Edmund is re-united with his siblings, but the White Witch demands a meeting with Aslan, to make her claim on the need to meet the requirements of the 'Deep Magic', a claim that seems to suggest all such traitors as Edmund are hers to kill; so he should be given back to her. Aslan concedes she has a point but he negotiates a deal with her – he will be sacrificed and killed instead of Edmund. The White Witch accepts the deal, but then, with Aslan bound to a stone table of sacrifice, she tells him he has been a fool to trust her word and she will kill Edmund and rule Narnia as well; she then delivers her fatal blow to him. Yet the White Witch is not as knowledgeable about the 'Deep Magic' as she supposes, and while she goes off to seemingly defeat Peter, Edmund and Aslan's army, Aslan comes back to life, to the astonishment of Lucy and Susan who bear witness. Aslan then frees all those turned to stone in the witch's castle, and then goes on to join Peter and Edmund in the defeat of the White Witch and her army. With the White Witch dead, Aslan oversees the coronation of the four children as kings and queens of Narnia, a land now free of endless winter. They have many happy years of reign there before they eventually find their way back out of Narnia through the wardrobe, only to find that what has been decades in Narnia has been no time at all in the 'real' world. On speaking to the old Professor, he informs them that they will find their way back to Narnia again one day – as indeed they do.

## Appendix II

### His Dark Materials – A Learning Journey

In a nutshell, HDM trilogy takes place in various parallel worlds and follows two children, Lyra and Will, through their attempt to save the world from destruction and chaos consequential to Lord Asriel's tentative to defeat the Authority (i.e. God) and Its Church bureaucracy to establish a Republic of Heaven. HDM are rich of secondary characters ranging from gypsies to witches, from armoured bears to angels to an ex-nun turned scientist, who usually endeavour to help the children but that may pursue their own agenda as well. Lyra and Will are the main characters of the trilogy, not least because we see them grow up, change and mature in the course of the books.

The first book, *Northern Lights* (NL hereafter, known as *The Golden Compass* in North America), takes place in a parallel world of ours. It introduces Lyra, 11 year-old resident of Jordan College in Oxford, and her daemon (incarnated soul) Pantalaimon. Lyra has spent all her life in Jordan College cared for by the scholars, playing around with her friend Roger and fighting other kids in Oxford. Neither her father Lord Asriel (whom she believes is her uncle) nor her mother Mrs Coulter have shown real interest in her so far. She only discovers they are her parents in the course of NL.

The story starts with Lyra hiding in a wardrobe to watch Lord Asriel's presentation of his recent expedition in the North. Her sense of right and wrong is first shattered when she witnesses the Master of Jordan College trying to poison Lord Asriel. Because she reveals herself to Lord Asriel to save him from poisoning, he lets her hide into the wardrobe and uses her to watch the scholars' reactions. She thus learns about Dust for the first time – Dust (*aka* dark materials, elementary particles, sraf, etc...) are eventually defined as 'particles of consciousness' at the origin of everything living form, including the Authority (i.e. God). It is what the Church wants to destroy because it associates it with Original Sin; it is what Lord Asriel wants to destroy because it believes it would defeat the Authority and death itself.

Later, whilst Lord Asriel's gone back to the North, Lyra discovers her friend Roger has disappeared but is prevented from searching for him as Mrs Coulter, a particularly beautiful and enchanting lady, takes her to perfect her education. Before she leaves, though, Lyra is given an alethiometer (i.e. a symbol reader which tells the truth) by the Master of Jordan College, which, she later assumes, she needs to bring to Lord Asriel First under the spell, Lyra soon realises the evilness of Mrs Coulter through her daemon's cruelty, and she escapes. In the streets, she learns about the 'Gobblers' – people from the General Oblation Board, a Church Agency lead by Mrs Coulter – who abduct children and bring them to the North to do some experiments. She thus sets herself to rescue her friend Roger and leaves for the North with the gypsies. During the journey, Lyra learns to read the alethiometer, meets amongst others Serafina Pekkala the witch and Iorek Byrnison the armoured bear, whom she helps regain his armour and later his throne. Once in the North, Lyra witnesses the process of 'intercision' (i.e. cutting one's link with one's daemon) to which the children are submitted in Bolvangar, an experimental

centre run by the General Oblation Board. Lyra manages to free the captive children and find Roger, then heads to the armoured bears' kingdom to help Iorek claim the throne again and meet Lord Asriel, imprisoned there. However, Lord Asriel kills Roger to open a window to another world by cutting him from his daemon, and Lyra, desperately feeling guilty, follows her father to prevent him from destroying Dust.

*The Subtle Knife* (SK), second book of the series, starts in our Oxford. We meet Will, a 12 year-old boy caring for his sick mother, who accidentally kills a man. Trying to hide from the police, Will discovers a window open into the World of Cittagazze, in which he meets Lyra. Cittagazze is full of Spectres, shadows which absorb the life essence of people. Spectres are only interested in adults because Dust settles on them much more than on children. In Cittagazze, Will becomes the unwilling bearer of the subtle knife, which has the ability to open windows through various worlds (we learn afterwards that each time a new window is opened, a spectre is created – hence no action is innocent). Back in Oxford, Lyra meets Mary Malone, an ex-nun-turned-scientist, who works on elementary particles. Eventually, Mary Malone goes through the window and later settles in the world of Mulefa (some strange sentient creatures confronted with the leak of Dust that destroys their environment). Lyra and Will start their journey to find Will's father (whom they found just before he is killed) whilst other characters help them in some ways.

*The Amber Spyglass* (AS) is the final opus. It introduces in details the story of the Authority, the first angel who emerged from Dust. The Kingdom of Heaven appears to be based on a lie, as God told all the other angels created after Him that He created the world, The Authority being old and tired, angel Metatron (previously a man with great appreciation of earthly pleasures) officiates as the Regent on His behalf. Metatron aims to control more fiercely human affairs, whereas Lord Asriel wants to free human beings from the Authority's oversight. Eventually, the Kingdom of Heaven is defeated, God dies of exhaustion and Asriel and Mrs Coulter join forces to kill Metatron. In the meantime, Lyra and Will go down to the world of the dead and free the spirits, then emerge back in the middle of the battle between Metatron's forces and Lord Asriel's army and allies. They escape into the Mulefa's world, where Lyra fulfils the prophecy by becoming 'Eve-again' and therefore reversing the flow of the leaking Dust – i.e. saving the world. Not the traditional happy ending, Will and Lyra have to sacrifice their love and live apart from each other in their respective world, since each window should be closed except for the one out of the world of the dead. Here, they shall make sure they live their life fully and create enough Dust to prevent another leak to threaten the world's future – and they're expected to build the Republic of Heaven dreamt of by Lord Asriel.

# Making work for idle hands? How the devil can help us understand the adoption of mobile information artefacts

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## Abstract

Mobile information artefacts are an increasing presence in the pockets and palms of professionals. One study considers that the implications for workers can be 'very positive' (Breu, Hemingway and Ashurst 2005); in devilish terms the artefacts are found to constructively occupy idle hands for which the devil would otherwise find work. Another study considers that the implications for workers can be a 'dual-edged sword' (Towers, Duxbury and Thomas 2005); in devilish terms the artefacts are found to be neither a candle for God nor a poker for the devil. This paper develops such discussion by appropriating devilish terminology to explore the narrative of mobile information artefact adoption.

Just as Satan tempts Jesus, these mobile information artefacts promise us the world: they are, in the words of the PalmOne sales pitch, 'For work. For play. For life.' (Shaw 2004). In the past "technology pay" was offered as an inducement for the adoption of information artefacts (Noon 1989); no more is this required. For just as Satan can masquerade as an angel of light, this artefact is not (just) a tool of production, it is a tool of consumption. It can be used to play music and games, it has the status of a consumer product and it delivers aesthetic value, for it's not just smart it's pretty too.

This masquerade has implications for the pattern of adoption: on the basis of past experiences (e.g. Noon 1989) one would have expected initial worker opposition to the information artefact followed by resigned adoption. Now workers themselves may propose the mobile information artefact; once acquired there follows a phase of play and exploration but then resentment – when the word 'blackberry' brings pain rather than pleasure (Hodgkinson 2005). Satan's deception is exposed: in return for the temporary satisfaction of their surplus desire – manipulated by marketing – they have consented to disruption of their work-life boundary. They may even be addicted to their "crackberry". But if mobile information artefacts are the work of the devil there is some hope: just as Jesus resists temptation, perhaps we can also.

## Introduction

Yeah I've been working a week, I'm shot  
Yeah I've been working a week for what?  
Just living for the weekend  
(Hard-Fi 2005)

From popular music to academic literature, work and life are considered largely distinct. Spatially distinct, for home is the preserve of life, the office or factory of work. Temporally distinct, for the week is the preserve of work, the weekend of life. Their relationship is purely monetary: the week of production provides for the weekend of consumption. Popular music tends to take the latter as its primary concern. Academic literature, until recently, took the former: now it is concerned with 'the world of media and shopping malls, bedrooms and brothels' (Eagleton 2003 p.3) as consumption has aroused considerable interest 'throughout the social sciences' (Miller 1995 p.1). It 'does not seem to represent merely an additional accretion... Rather, in many cases the topic of consumption seems to present a fundamental challenge to the basic premises that have sustained each discipline up to the present' (Miller 1995 p.1).

Unlike geography and literature, the field of Information Systems (IS) seems to have resisted the fundamental challenge presented to it by consumption. A surprise considering that a key reason for this return to the 'grand narrative' (Miller 1995 p.1) is the shift from a production-led to a demand-led market economy, a shift enabled by the use of information systems by retailers (Miller 1995 p.7). This is not to say that studies of consumption do not exist, rather that they are limited in number and discrete in scope. For example, one study discovered unexpected emancipatory consequences of eCommerce for car buyers (Cecez-Kecmanovic and Janson 2005). However, it did not connect this with attempts – largely unsuccessful – to discover emancipatory consequences of information systems for employees (Janson and Cecez-Kecmanovic 2003).

Of pressing concern for consideration of consumption and production is the increasing presence of mobile information artefacts in the pockets and palms of professionals. Accompanying the person from home to the office and back, such artefacts disregard and disrupt the work-life boundary. One study considers that the implications for workers can be 'very positive' (Breu, Hemingway and Ashurst 2005); in devilish terms the artefacts are found to constructively occupy idle hands for which the devil would otherwise find work. Another study considers that the implications for workers can be a 'dual-edged sword' (Towers, Duxbury and Thomas 2005); in devilish terms the artefacts are found to be neither a candle for God nor a poker for the devil. This paper develops such discussion by appropriating devilish terminology to explore the narrative of mobile information artefact adoption.

## Some pertinent points from management, spirituality and religion

Centred upon the Management, Spirituality and Religion (MSR) Interest Group of the Academy of Management, there are an increasing number of scholars relating management with spirituality and religion. With reference to scripture, biblical studies and modern theology, this section will explore some pertinent points from MSR and how they may impact upon – and be impacted by – the study of the adoption of mobile information artefacts.

### *Production and consumption; work and life*

A key text relating religion to management – or at least capitalism more generally – is Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1930). Buchholz summarises Weber's conception of the Protestant Ethic as the 'maximization of production and minimization of consumption' (2000 p.77). In the Protestant countries of Northern Europe, and their colonies, the emphasis was on hard work for the glory of God, whether such work was inherently secular or religious. Such sentiment may be found in the work of the Anglican clergyman and poet George Herbert:

A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgery divine;  
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws  
Makes that and th'action fine.  
(Herbert 1982)

In the post-war period a work ethic persisted but 'consumption activities became separated from whatever moral limits and justifications the Protestant Ethic provided'; it was 'no longer relevant to a consumer culture that emphasized instant gratification and increased consumption' (Buchholz 2000 p.80) as 'companies fed the consumption binge with a proliferation of products that appealed to every taste that could be imagined' (Buchholz 2000 p.79).

Mainstream MSR 'represents a return to or even a revival of the Protestant ethic' (Bell and Taylor 2003 p.344) 'by emphasizing work as having the potential to fulfil all human needs, including physical, mental, emotional and existential needs' (Bell and Taylor 2003 p.337). In some respects it goes even further for it 'de-emphasizes the significance of non-work domains as contexts in which spiritual growth can be located' (Bell and Taylor 2003 p.337). The implication of this is that 'the maintenance of a work-life balance ceases to be a problem' (Bell and Taylor 2003 p.337).

A more (Anglo-)Catholic theological approach by Milbank retains a scepticism towards consumption, recognising surplus desire, value generated through the creation and manipulation of consumer preferences, whilst, in drawing upon Marx, recognising surplus value generated in production. This 'dual generation' (1990 p.192) of value means that both consumption and production require critical attention.



How might mobile information artefacts provide for employee's life needs? Do they alter the work-life balance? Does this matter? How are they implicated in the generation of surplus desire and surplus value?

### *Critical and/or performative*

Mainstream MSR proposes 'positive relationships among the qualities of spiritual leadership, spiritual survival, and organizational productivity and commitment' (Fry 2005 p.621). It assumes 'that spiritual and economic aims can be made commensurate' (Bell and Taylor 2003 p.345) and that 'complementary personal and organizational transformation is...achievable' (Bell and Taylor 2003 p.345). There is little recognition that the interests of labour and capital are – or at least should be acted upon as if they are (Milbank 1990) – antagonistic.

In developing a more critical perspective on MSR Bell and Taylor (2003) make use of Foucault's work on reason (1981) and power (1982) whilst Gabriel (1997) draws upon Adorno's psychoanalytic work on leadership (1950). However, use has not been made of Adorno's work on the culture industry in conjunction with MSR.

How might such use inform the study of the adoption of mobile information artefacts? How can demonology help understanding of the – potential – antagonism between labour and capital?

### *People and artefacts*

The use of 'information technology to spread the "Words of God"' by the evangelical Churches in the United States (Ali, Camp and Gibbs 2000 p.352) and the Vatican (de Vaujany 2006) has been revealed. However, the use of information artefacts to spread the work of the devil has not been explicitly explored from an academic perspective. Perhaps not a surprise, for even within theology and biblical studies demonology is a minority concern; at regular intervals calls are made for it to be re-appraised and appropriated (Ling 1961; Green 1981; O'Donovan 2000).

Where devilish terms have been adopted, the devil has been personified, for instance, 'the senior management team...represent the organizational devil' (Ford and Harding 2003 p.1147). However this need not be so. As Ling explains: 'while the ultimate source of temptation is Satan, much, and, possibly, all temptation, in the event, is experienced as coming *not* directly from a personal spiritual adversary, but rather in ways which merit the description, "socially mediated" temptation' (1961 p.62). Such mediated temptation may take the form of an apple in the Garden of Eden (Caird 1956 p.38); it may also take the form of a mobile information artefact.

How can mobile information artifacts represent – or spread the work of – the devil?

## Bargains old and new

From Falstaff to Faust, individuals have struck bargains with the devil. Such bargains are rather different in nature to those traditionally struck for the adoption of new technologies. Pacts with the devil tend to balance – or not – the pleasure of consumption now with the pain of labour later; pacts with employers tend to balance – or not – the pain of labour now for the pleasure of consumption later. These latter pacts have tended to be collective, and have tended to commence with the employer proposing a new technological artefact, initiating the bargaining process. The employee would then oppose the artefact, but after a period of negotiation would be appeased by a concession such as ‘technology pay’ (Noon 1989). From thence on, the employee would be resigned to its adoption. Such a pattern is prevalent as an assumption behind much of the literature whether of a managerial or more critical orientation. Such a pattern may still be relevant to most new technologies. However, in the case of mobile information artefacts such a pattern is being supplemented, if not supplanted. This section explores the adoption of mobile information artefacts by applying the three characteristic activities of Satan: Satan as tempter, Satan as deceiver and Satan as destroyer (Ling 1961 pp.61-64).

### *Temptation*

How are employees tempted to adopt mobile information artefacts? Certainly not with time or money: technology pay is near forgotten and mobile information artefacts capture downtime, intensifying work. Employers present the artefact itself as the concession, a benefit for the employee.

You’d be amazed at some of the things we came up with: free phone and reduced call charges.  
(Orange 2006)

A dazzling financial package like this certainly helps... A laptop and a mobile phone \*...

\* Graduates joining the Finance Professional Programme are not eligible.  
(Lloyds TSB 2006)

A benefit that Lloyd TSB’s finance graduates give up for that other employee “benefit”: professional development.

Some employers, rather than paying you to adopt the artefact, let you pay to adopt the artefact, giving you the benefit of saving the tax.

Been thinking of splashing out on a handheld computer for personal use? Well, now you can... Paid over a two year period all handheld PDAs [personal digital assistants] are with a warranty and benefit from tax free status.  
(AstraZeneca 2006)

Such schemes may shortly end (Collinson 2006) but their creation points to a (con)fusion of consumption with production. If it is for personal use, why is it tax free, unlike other products for personal use? If it is for organisational use why should the employee pay at all? It may be that employees have internalised their employer's objectives and seek 'biographic solutions to structural contradictions' (Ulrich Beck cited in Bunting 2004 p.xxv). However, it may be that mobile information artefacts, to a greater extent than the new technologies of old, permit a variety of uses of varying benefit for employer and employee.

Since the first software product in 1966 (Campbell-Kelly 2003) information artefacts have been put to different uses than those intended at the time of purchase. The magnitude of difference between these uses has, however, increased, especially since the advent of networked computers in the 1990s (Greenbaum 2004). An information artefact purchased for maintaining accounts could then be used to send email. As well as communicating with colleagues email can be used to communicate with friends and family. Later on such an information artefact could be used to shop online or download music and videos. The use of a production-provided information artefact for consumption can be a form of resistance, misbehaviour or dissent as it is an example of appropriating 'materials for some other purpose than the productive process' (Thompson and Ackroyd 1995 p.616). As such it can circumscribe the totalising rationalisation of the labour process. Mobile information artefacts extend this potential for consumption, for they can be used outside the office, away from the gaze of colleagues and managers. The smaller screen may even enable use for consumption within the office: a backflow of life into work to counter the intended flow of work into life. Some employers foresee or have experienced problems (Sørensen and Pica 2004); others see that such use for consumption may not preclude – and may be the prelude to – use as management intended.

It may be that the employer acts as something of an '*agent provocateur*' (Caird 1956 p.36) encouraging the adoption of the artefact, the eating of the apple. But if the employer experiences problems perhaps they are not themselves identifiable with the serpent. Much of the advertising for mobile information artefacts plays on the fusion of consumption and production capabilities, for instance, for the PalmOne: 'For work. For play. For life.' (Shaw 2004). Vendor advertising, rather than the systems developer (Howcroft and Wilson 2003), plays the Janus role: one head proclaiming that the artefact is a productivity tool for the employer; the other that it is a consumer good. Consumption now drives acceptance directly, for instead of financial inducement the inducement is the consumption potential of the mobile information artefact – can the artefact let me store music, play games, communicate with friends and family? – and the mobile information artefact's own status as a consumer good.

In an era when company cars or suits are no longer a sign of professional status community health visitors and psychiatric nurses – in wishing to keep

up with the Joneses – have demanded mobile information artefacts because ‘as always, GPs seem to be better equipped’ (Amicus 2002 p.5). Although bargains for mobile information artefacts may initially be individual they become collective through emulation, as employees break the tenth commandment, coveting that which belongs to their neighbour (Exodus 20.17). Further evidence of the mobile information artefact as consumer good – and of employee agency in appropriating them – is found in the sales of Motorola pagers in the early 1990s. Motorola changed the colour of their pager from basic black to bright green, a change that ‘actually cost...nothing could get...fifteen bucks extra per unit’ (Former Head of Motorola’s Pager Division cited in Postrel 2003 p.66).

### *Deception*

Shortly after the apple has been eaten or the mobile information artefact has been bought the deception is exposed. Whatever value – aesthetic or otherwise – ascribed to the mobile information artefact, the engagement phase of anticipation and the honeymoon phase of play and exploration are the prelude to resentment, when the word ‘blackberry’ brings pain rather than pleasure (Hodgkinson 2005) as the employee says farewell to downtime and time off (Jacques 2006). They run up against the ‘unmeetable payment-due dates’ (Baudrillard 1996 p.161) for the productivity promised to the employer by the other head of Janus and appropriated by the employee in their business justification; they suffer as they would with post-consumption blues:

We are tempted to believe that certain achievements and possessions will guarantee us an enduring satisfaction. We are led to imagine ourselves scaling the steep sides of the cliff face of happiness to reach a wide, high plateau on which to continue our lives; we are not reminded that soon after reaching the summit we will be called down again into fresh lowlands of anxiety and desire.

(de Botton 2004)

Sensitivity to the creation of surplus desire requires attention to that forgotten (f)actor in the adoption of mobile information artefacts: the vendor. Adopting Adorno (Adorno 1991; Horkheimer and Adorno 2002), one can picture the vendor manipulating the consumer’s idea of a product’s worth to them – its use value – through the medium of advertising which deceives under the guise of enlightening. Such manipulation helps to create the surplus desire that enables the product to sell at its exchange value: use value is the alibi for exchange value (Baudrillard 1996). Both the organisational use value, the consideration – or prediction – of what is best for the employer, and the personal use value, what is best for the employee whether in their work or non-work life, are influenced by vendor discourse. Such an application of the thought of Adorno assumes that mobile information artefacts are cultural artefacts, however, this is justified for the software and computer industry is considered to form part of the creative economy according to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (cited in Warhurst and Thompson 2005). It is also evidenced by the ‘interpretive flexibility’ (Pinch and Bijker 1987) that such artefacts enjoy.

### *Destruction*

As with the introduction of desktop visual terminals in the early 1980s (Storey 1986) variation continues to exist in the extent to which companies adopt new technology and the degree to which they realise its control possibilities. An employer may provide a PDA; used without a mobile phone or card and independently of an office computer this is essentially an automated Filofax. Due to the lack of central control over mobile information artefact adoption (Sørensen and Pica 2004) – whether by the technology, human resource or finance functions – the artefact may well end up hidden at the back of a drawer, never to be used again. In this case there will be little disruption to the work-life boundary, minimal advance of the frontier of control between employer and employee and no erection of – or extension to – a Foucauldian panopticon.

However, their use may be more destructive. The use of mobile information artefacts may be monitored – just as employers have subjected email communication to surveillance and restriction (Duane and Finnegan 2005) – and this can incorporate into production one's outside life. Employees may be provided with a Blackberry and be expected to check their emails at home and on holiday, synchronise their device with their desktop in the office – thereby enabling surveillance by support staff – and make available their calendar – thereby enabling monitoring of their work arrangements by colleagues. The Lutheran theologian Tillich defines the demonic as 'the perversion of the creative' (1936 p.77). The creativity of the consumers of mobile information artefacts is eroded as their loss of downtime means less time for reflection, for those quieter moments – such as a train journey (Silf 1998) – when a divine spark ignites a new idea. Satan 'deceives men [and women] into following courses of action which are contrary to their own true welfare, that is to say contrary to the development of true personality...which thus ultimately brings men [and women] to destruction' (Ling 1961 p.64). If the creative potential of the employee is not realised, if their attention to non-work life is diminished, then the mobile information artefact (and its vendor) may be said to bring the employee to destruction.

## **Models and lifecycles: implications for information systems**

This devilish approach to information artefact adoption reveals shortcomings in the models used to predict – and plan for – information artefact adoption and the lifecycles or phases used to structure the production and consumption of such artefacts.

### *Models of adoption*

Most researchers investigating the adoption of new technologies select a model from the eight available ‘off-the-shelf’: the theory of reasoned action, the technology acceptance model (TAM), the motivational model, the theory of planned behavior, the model of personal computer utilization, the innovation diffusion theory, the social cognitive theory and the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT). TAM, the most commonly selected until very recently, forms the basis of several studies of mobile information artifact adoption (Yu, Yu, Liu et al. 2003; Breu, Hemingway and Ashurst 2005); UTAUT, which seeks to supercede the other models (and more) forms the basis of several others (Anderson and Schwager 2004; Garfield 2005; Ristola and Kesti 2005).

Whichever of these models the researcher chooses, they are choosing a managerialist frame. The authors of the UTAUT, for instance, declare that it ‘provides a useful tool for managers to assess the likelihood of success for new technology introductions and helps them understand the drivers of acceptance in order to proactively design interventions (including training, marketing, etc.) targeted at populations of users that may be less inclined to adopt and use new systems’ (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis et al. 2003 pp.425-426). Managerialism is explicit in the intention for it to be used by – and serve the purposes of – management. It is also implicit in that it assumes that the manager will be initiating the adoption of a new technology by others. This does not permit the possibility of employee-initiated adoption, as is proposed here for mobile information artefacts. It may well be that the employees who have the power to initiate the adoption of mobile information artefacts are managers, but that it is their own adoption that they are concerned with.

These models are a packaging of selected elements of reference disciplines such as ‘psychology, and sociology’ (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis et al. 2003 pp.426). The elements selected may, within the reference discipline, be far from universally accepted, for instance, TAM is strongly behavioural. A common emphasis in all of the models is that adoption is planned and reasoned. The devilish approach to information artefact adoption reveals that emotionality as well as rationality (Avgerou and McGrath 2005) has a part to play and that the outcomes of information artefact adoption are difficult to predict.

*Lifecycles of production and consumption*

This devilish approach to information artefact adoption reveals the shortcomings of the stages of adoption conceived in the fields of IS and Industrial Relations (IR). The Systems Development Life Cycle (SDLC) is the standard expression of the IS development process. It usually consists of ten phases which may be structured sequentially e.g. Structured Systems Analysis and Design Methodology (SSADM) or iteratively (after adaptation) e.g. Rapid Applications Development (RAD):

1. Initiation Phase
2. System Concept Development Phase
3. Planning Phase
4. Requirements Analysis Phase
5. Design Phase
6. Development Phase
7. Integration and Test Phase
8. Implementation Phase
9. Operations and Maintenance Phase
10. Disposition Phase

(Department of Justice 2003)

The existence of such phases may be argued for on logical grounds (Weaver 1998) i.e. one must plan (phase 3) before one implements (phase 8). However, the specificity of these phases also reflects the 'pernicious form' (Braverman 1998 p.227) of the division of labour that arose in the systems development industry. Such a division of labour no longer exists today when most large-scale systems, such as those for Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP), are customised rather than custom-written. Customisation provides for little control, enabling, for instance, the roles of systems analyst and programmer to be largely re-united in the role of systems developer (responsible for, as a minimum, phases 4 to 6). Without the logic of the division of labour behind it, these software developers pay "lip service" to the SDLC and the methodologies based upon it. If this is the relevance of the SDLC to the customisation of large-scale systems it is unlikely to prove relevant in its current form for the adoption of mobile information artefacts.

An alternative conceptualisation of technological change may be found in the field of IR, consisting of three stages:

1. Initial planning of technological change
2. Selection of equipment/system
3. Implementation of change

(Williams and Steward 1985 p.64)

Produced to assist in the analysis of the 'application of new technology' (Williams and Steward 1985 p.58) in general, rather than the development of custom-written software, this conceptualisation may be better-suited to the definition of information systems accepted in the IS discipline: 'any hardware/software capability employed within organisations to do some task' (Orlikowski 1988 p.23). However, this conception does not look through the factory gate to the extra-organisational influence of the vendor nor does it

display concern for what might happen after the implementation of change, for instance, when the devilish deception is exposed and the employee is destroyed.

## Conclusions

It is hoped that this paper succeeds in providing for the possibility of identifying new bargains, bargains that might follow a pattern such as this:

1. Temptation: the play discourse of the vendor appeals to the employee who may then propose the artefact, the employer being appeased by the productivity discourse of the vendor.
2. Deception: the employee finds that just as Satan can masquerade as an angel of light, this artefact is not (just) a tool of consumption, it is a tool of production as they run up against the 'unmeetable payment-due dates' (Baudrillard 1996 p.161) for their productivity.
3. Destruction: the word 'blackberry' brings pain rather than pleasure (Hodgkinson 2005) as in return for the temporary satisfaction of their surplus desire – manipulated by marketing – they have consented to disruption of their work-life boundary; they may even be addicted to their "crackberry".

This enhanced employee agency might suggest that the bargain favours the employee, enabling them to consume use value for themselves as opposed to producing exchange value for their employer. However, despite the employee's intention, the result, due to their being deceived, may be a new form of Protestant Ethic maximising production and minimising consumption as their work life encroaches further upon their non-work life. The difference with this Protestant Ethic is that it is not the gratification that is deferred but the dissatisfaction. In addition, the situation of the employment relationship within relations of consumption may result in the employee (and with them the employer) entering into a new relationship of exploitation where the (con)fusion of consumption and production results in a bargain only for the vendor.

But if mobile information artefacts are the work of the devil there is some hope: just as Jesus resists temptation, perhaps we can also, and if we can, the devil will have no hold over us (Ling 1961 p.61). However, the path of 'radical discipleship', 'unmasking and resisting' (Myers 1988 p.452) such deceptions, is rocky and far from straightforward:

Even if the ruses involved in the extraction of surplus labour and surplus desire were to become "fully transparent", it is still perfectly possible that the majority could be persuaded to accept... this mechanism of seduction, for it is true that it alone guarantees the kind of society which capitalism delivers, with its further worship of all forms of empty, sublime equivalence.

(Milbank 1990 p.193)



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## LEADERSHIP AND MORAL HARASSMENT: PERVERSITY WITHIN A BRAZILIAN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

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At first it may seem strange the association of these variables: leadership, moral harassment and perversity. However, what leads us to group them pertains to the existence of a contemporary society based in games of the win-lose kind, despite the wide promotion of the need for a win-win game. Routinely traditional literature on leadership brings an approach that elucidates very little about its exercise, and thus we believe this literature to be unable to introduce proper answers to the leader's activity.

On the current literature on leadership it is common to see the beginning of the texts with affirmations that it is impossible to define what is leadership or who is practicing it. We believe that such difficulty lies in the inability to look at the object from a standpoint that is different from the traditional, for example, the symbolic, sociologic, synergic aspects that comprehend the leader's performance. It is true that we cannot deny the existence of people who stand out among the others, however, the analysis of these people requires a lenses which deepens the view on issues not yet investigated or relegated to the background due to the interests.

Another fact, also interesting, to observe in the beginning of the texts on leadership is the adoption of verbs on the infinitive in an attempt to conceptualize it or define it, like a leader does - they can start with sentences such as: *"to lead people to carry out tasks"*, *"to make people follow you"*, *"to show the way"*, *"to indicate, to coordinate, to execute"*, etc.'. All those terms are verbs of pure asymmetric action, and this asymmetry furnishes the leader with a sensation of supreme power of a God, of an immortal.

Not forgetting the narcissism aspect as a drive for domination, seeking to subdue or destroy the other. Obviously that with all the power emanating from the "word", the leader seeks ever more to increase his area of performance, and also to dominate even more, and bearing in mind the wish to accomplish these intentions, he does not fail to adopt behavioral and moral elements. This means the conspicuous use of sadism as a perverse way to ratify his power.

Aiming to contribute to the debate on this issue, we will analyze through the paper the acts of moral harassment of the top management of a Brazilian organization against its own community, with the goal of dismissing some employees of the organization and afterwards a reconstruction discourse begins again for those who survived the process of staff reduction. Add to all of this an almost collective "blindness" to the perverse aspects of this management. The relevant aspect of this work is the understanding of the use of violence within the Brazilian organizational context.

As a methodologic strategy we went to various communication media at the time; we interviewed people involved in the decision; we analyzed discourses, *"deconstructing"* and comparing, in order to finally build an analysis of how this type of performance is imbued in the Brazilian culture, how it replicates and causes impact on the development of organizations. We must stress that for security reasons of the researcher we have changed the names of the actors and the organization.

## FIRST REFLECTIVE CONSIDERATION

On his text about “instincts and their vicissitudes”, Freud affirms that *sadism consists on the exercise of violence or power over another person as an object*, and this concept gets ever more prejudiced due to the context that this instinct, next to or within its general purpose refers to an effort towards a quite special purpose – not only to humiliate and dominate, but also to hurt. Freud argues that the infliction of pain does not originate from a role among the intentional actions coming from the instinct.

The author makes an excerpt to demonstrate that the object of the scopophilic instinct does not represent the “eye itself”; and that the organic source on sadism is possibly the muscular system with its capacity for action, oriented unequivocally to another object different from itself, even if such object is part of the actual individual’s body. Thus there is a transformation of loving decurrent from the polarity between *activity* and *passivity*, as the individual demands the inversion of loving in order to be loved.

Consequently, Freud draws the attention for the two classes of instincts: the sexual instincts or Eros, the more conspicuous and accessible to study, comprising the unrepressed sexual instinct so to say, and the instinctual drives of repressed or sublimated nature regarding the goal deriving from it; and also the self-preservation instinct, attributed to the ego, as opposed to the sexual objectal instincts. The second class of instincts, more difficult to identify, recognizes sadism as its representative.

Freud affirms that the sadistic component of the sexual instinct would be the useful instinctual fusion; and sadism, which becomes independent as perversion, would be typical of an unfusion, not leading to extremes. From this point, Freud realizes that, for discharge purposes, the destruction instinct usually in Eros’s disposal.

In 1924, Freud calls the instinct a destructive instinct, a domination instinct or a desire for power. And part of the instinct is made available to serve the sexual function, with an important role to play. This is the actual sadism. And with a closer investigation, one can perceive the difference that exists between an unconscious extension of morality, of this kind, and moral masochism. Freud confirms that on the first, the emphasis lies on the intensified sadism of the superego to which the ego submits.

When he starts his text on sexual aberrations, Freud starts by analyzing sadism and masochism, reminding that the propensity to inflict pain to the sexual object, as well as its counterpart, which are the most frequent and significant of all perversions, are called active (sadism) and passive (masochism). Regarding sadism, he reveals that its roots are easy to be indicated on normal people, because

*the sexuality of the majority of males shows a mixture of aggression, tendency to subdue, and its biologic importance might lie perhaps in the need to overcome the resistance of the sexual object in another way that is not by means of courting. Thus, sadism would correspond to an aggressive component of the sexual drive, autonomized and exaggerated, moved by displacement to the preponderant place.*

Generally the concept of sadism oscillates from a merely active or even violent attitude towards the sexual object to a satisfaction that is exclusively conditioned by the subjection

and harm inflicted. In a strict sense, according to Freud, only this last extreme case deserves the name of perversion, and this perversion, in its active or passive forms, is generally connected to a same person. The pleasure felt by causing pain to the other, induces to the pleasure of joy when causing any type of pain, and this is because, according to Freud, the *sadist is always and at the same time a masochist*.

### **The aspect of neurosis and perversion**

Freud has affirmed that good part of the opposition to his theses were evident due to the fact that sexuality, from which he derived the psychoneurotic symptoms, was considered coincident with the normal sexual drive. However, he believed that psychoanalysis would teach even further, by showing that the symptoms would not in any way appear only due to the so called normal sexual drive (at least not in an exclusive or predominant way), but they represent the converted expression of drives called *perverse* (in the broader sense). Therefore and in part, symptoms are formed at the expense of *abnormal* sexuality; thus neurosis is, according to Freud, the *negative of perversion*, because the sexual drive of the psychoneurotic allows to discern all the aberrations studied as variations of the normal sexual life and as pathologic manifestations, and Freud distinguishes three characteristics:

(a) In the animic life of all neurotics (without exception) there are motions of inversion, of fixation of the libido in people of the same sex, which can explain male hysteria.

(b) In the unconscious of the psychoneurotic it is possible to demonstrate, as shapers of the symptom, all the inclinations to an anatomic transgression, finding among them with particular frequency and intensity those who claim for the mucous membranes of the mouth and anus the role of genitals.

(c) A role that stands out among the shapers of psychoneuroses symptoms is played by the partial drives, which most times appear as pairs of opposites; the pleasure of seeing and exhibitionism drive, and the cruelty drive on its active and passive forms. It is also through this connection of the libido with cruelty that loves transforms into hate, affectionate motions into hostile motions, which is the characteristic of a high number of cases of neurosis and, it seems, of paranoia in general.

In another moment Freud indicates some particularities of the facts analyzed above:

(a) Every “active” perversion is followed by its passive counterpart; those who are exhibitionist in the unconscious are also, at the same time, *voyeurs*; those who suffer the consequences of the repressed sadistic motions find another reinforcement for their symptom on the sources of the masochist tendency.

(b) In the more evident cases of psychoneurosis it is rare to find the development of only one of these perverse drives; most of the times there is a great number of them and, in general, traces of all of them. But the intensity of each isolated drive is independent from the development of the others.

According to Hirigoyen (1998) an “individual can reach success by destroying another through moral harassment”. And this happens even if it ends with a real psychic death. Such fact occurs in families, couples, the company or in the political and social life, and the blindness of society before these types of violence is dreadful.

Everyday we are assaulted by perverse acts on a constant way that can seem to be the norm, beginning with a simple lack of respect, involving lies or manipulation, and only when we are hit directly is when we consider it unbearable. Thus the aggressor and the narcissic perversion are distinguished.

The perverse behavior of the leader evidences a distortion in relation to what is being divulged by the classic leadership theory when it presents, most of the times, results of research carried out with managers at the top of the hierarchy of private and public organizations, widely ignoring the performance of leaders in political/social contexts of major relevance for the societies under their influences. Generally the characterization of leadership sticks to the positive and divining aspects, which highlight the perspective of the leader's immortality.

The conditional issues to experience a context of exploitation of his subordinates pass by a situation of recognition of the leader as Hegel described on the master/slave relationship, because there lies a relationship of eternal war where there is no direct interest on the death of the vassal, as he must survive in order to recognize the victory of the master. Sartre reminds that for groups to exist it is required that other groups exist, and thus there is the same relation between the master and the slave. The fight between men and States, the fight for recognition, is known as the "master-slave dialectic". And thus Araújo (1991:143) reminds that in "the group context, the desire for recognition is the ultimate foundation of collective narcissism and the desire for power. It manifests itself essentially through the domination drive, that is, through the desire to subdue or destroy – in reality or symbolically – the other (the collective other)".

Regarding the *Aggressor*, Hirigoyen (1998) says that "every individual going through crisis could be led to adopt perverse mechanisms<sup>1</sup> to protect himself. Therefore traces of narcissic personality are common (egocentrism, need for admiration, intolerance to criticism), not sounding, therefore, pathologic. On the other hand, we are led to manipulate the other in order to get advantages, thus we experience a transitory destructive hatred. However, what distinguishes us from the perverse individuals is the fact that those behaviors or feelings are only transitory reactions, followed by remorse or regret (Hirigoyen; 1998:149).

About the Narcissic Perversion, Hirigoyen affirms that "the narcissic perverse individuals are those who, under the influence of their own grandiosity, rehearse the creation of a connection with a second individual, attacking, mainly, all the narcissic integrity of the other in order to disarm him. He also attacks the self love, the trust on oneself, self esteem and the belief in oneself from the other. At the same time, they seek, in a certain way, to make believe that the connection of dependency of the other towards them is irreplaceable and it is the other who asks for it" (Op. Cit. 151). Thus the narcissic personality of the individual is described by some symptoms:

- A sense of grandiosity of its own importance;
- Absorbed by fantasies of unlimited success, of power;
- Thinks he is "special" and unique;
- Has an excessive need to be admired;
- Thinks that everything is owed to him;

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<sup>1</sup> A autora nos conta que a palavra 'perversão' apareceu em 1444 na língua francesa (do latim per-vertere: retornar, reverter), definido como a mudança do bem para o mal. Atualmente, no senso comum, a palavra perverso subentende um julgamento moral.



- Exploits the others on interpersonal relations;
- Lack of empathy;
- Always envies the other;
- Has arrogant attitudes and behaviors.

From these symptoms arises the perverse being, who is characterized by:

- Megalomania;
- Vampirization;
- Irresponsibility;
- Paranoia displayed as:
  - Hypertrophy of the self: pride, feeling of superiority;
  - Psychoridity: obstination, intolerance, cold rationality, difficulty to show positive emotions, disdain towards the other;
- Suspicious: exaggerated fear of the other's aggressiveness, feeling of being the victim of the other's malignance, distrust, jealousy;
- Falseness of judgment: interprets neutral events as being directed against him.

## **A BRAZILIAN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT**

XYZ Bank is currently a State financial institution with a national performance since 1906 when it acquired the present business name. Since then this bank (created in 1808) has participated vividly of the Brazilian history and culture. Today, it is the biggest financial institution in the Country, a conglomerate composed of the commercial bank, 11 integral subsidiaries, 6 alliances, pension fund, tourism company, Foundation and Cultural Center, with over 4 thousands points of assistance in the Country and around 70 thousand employees and 13 thousand trainees. Abroad, it is represented by 22 branches, 7 offices, 5 subsidiaries and 3 sub agencies.

XYZ Bank, regarding its structure, fits what Weber (1968) has described as aspects of the bureaucratic structure through the following interdependent ideas: 1) continuous organization of posts, connected by rules; 2) specific competence area, implying differentiated tasks, authority from the responsible and instruments defined for coercion; 3) the organization of the posts follows the hierarchy principle; 4) the rules that regulate the exercise of a post can be norms or technical rules; 5) the administration board should be separated from the ownership of the means of production and administration; 6) absence of appropriation of the post by the occupant (he behaves in the job under the guidance of the pertaining norms); 7) registers in documents, in writing.

The vision of a Man at XYZ Bank those times was the vision of the organizational-functional Man, in an environment where the control and supervision of the work were made by hierarchical superiors who had the formal authority and used the norms and routines which were written on the Manuals of Consolidated Instructions. Anything that was not written on those manuals could not be executed. The procedures were standardized and did not require much creativity for the execution of tasks. The role of the human resources department was restricted to the assistance to legal requirements and demands for training, aimed at preparing the employee for the post (training). Generally speaking, one can say that the old organizational structure of XYZ Bank was departmentalized by role, turned inwards, with little synergy with the external environment and outdated paradigms. The organization was

seen and accepted operationally as a militarized structure. And they used to say that both the Army and the Company constituted the only institutions in the Country where the low income people could ascend by merit, for their dedication and skills.

Although the structure was extremely hierarchized, the employees felt comfortable because they would confuse "work with social life, work with family". As most of them had stability at work, the whole life of the employee was a corporate life, according to a survey in the organizational climate of the Company.

### Time for changes at the Company

In 1981, it was authorized to practice all the operations allowed to the other financial agents. As a consequence, it started the process of opening subsidiaries, products and services diversification and intensification of the effort for inveigling funds. Since 1995, the Company, within the context of fierce competition and deep adjustments, has been reinforcing its competitive position with investments in technology reappraisal of the credit process, revision of its network of dependencies, seeking client loyalty, concentrating on more profitable businesses and reduction of expenses with staff.

The Management which took over in February 1995 said that the private banks had adapted easily to the low inflation regime: they closed down non profitable branches, reorganized others, reduced their board of employees, invested heavily on automation. This same Management started the implementation of a set of actions to revitalize the company. The goal, according to the predominant discourse at the time, was to seek a thin, agile structure, adjusted to the perspectives of new directions to the Country and which would allow facing future scenarios. These actions have been included on the so called Adjustments Program 1995-96 (XYZ Bank, 1995). One of the actions promoted, in July 1995, was the dismissal of about 13,400 employees, with the Plan for Voluntary Leave (PDV).

PDV was launched, ironically, through a "textbook"<sup>2</sup>, distributed to all Bank employees. The document said that although the program "includes only part of the staff, with the decision to give it to all employees, the administration counsel seeks to act with transparency and respect".

On an inverted vocabulary, the employees fit as dismissable are called eligible, which, on the dictionary sense, are those who could be elected, normally through voting or ballots, to take a role or develop certain functions. Here is the whole presentation of the document:

"Dear Employee,

The Bank is changing – we have an important communication: XYZ Bank is launching a plan to reduce its staff through the voluntary leave program.

This means that the Bank stimulates certain staff segments to present themselves to leave in exchange for a package of financial and non-financial incentives which was designed to be of interest to an expressive number of people.

This textbook presents and explains everything that is essential in the program.

To dismiss employees is something that is not part of the Bank's tradition and thus could cause perplexity.

The Bank is changing.

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<sup>2</sup> Segundo o Dicionário Aurélio, "1. Livro para aprender a ler. 2. Compêndio elementar ou rudimentos de arte, ciência ou doutrina: *cartilha de música; cartilha cristã*. 3. Fig. Maneira de ser e viver; padrão, modelo: *Casou-se, e vive segunda a cartilha do marido*. **Ler pela mesma cartilha**. Ter a mesma opinião, doutrina ou teoria."

Changing with the main goal to survive and keep the employees that are required to ensure the good performance of the organization.

The Bank cannot assure jobs.

Besides, the decision concerns various concrete reasons and facts, such as:

- The Bank is placing itself more and more as a “market Bank”
- We have commitments with thousands of shareholders to produce profit
- There is surplus of staff in many areas
- Automation, modernization of processes, elimination of bottlenecks and simplification/debureaucratization will produce expressive gains on productivity almost immediately
- Complementary projects will elevate even more these productivity gains within a year or a little more
- The Bank has been accumulating losses within the past months, having reached in 1995 an amount over R\$ 1,7 billion in losses until May
- The payroll, in the amount of R\$ 6 billion a year (salaries plus duties) represents over 80% of the administrative expenses, being a duty that is ever more difficult to honor
- Many programs, such as recovery of delinquent credits and inveigling campaigns, are giving good results but are not enough to cover the costs.

The staff and payroll issue is just one of the zones in which the Bank is working. This effort is requiring sacrifices on many areas and the engagement of many employees.

The decision to propose volunteer leave is decurrent from the urgency to make the organization more efficient and less costly.

We want, though, to make this with a high level of respect for the employees, with ethics and within advanced labor relationship standards.

We ask you to read and re-read with attention the following pages.

To the eligible employees the reading will aid on the reflection and making the option.

To the others the reading will expose with sincerity the details of a project that is relevant for the Bank's life and will show how your colleagues are being treated, as well as widening the conscience of all about the present moment and the directions of the organization.

We count on your goodwill.

We are available for queries.

Managing Counsel”

The press releases highlighted the high expenses with staff, widening the perception that the employees received salaries of “kings”. However, the announced ideal number of attachments – 15 thousand – was not reached, so a folder reinforces the leaving message: it is called “Make your dream real”. The document talks about the advantages of leaving the Company and keep counting on the training for “transition on the professional life”. The training centers, where only the employees prized for good behavior would take courses, start to be offered as “career guidance centers”, promising to “train people to make their dreams real - even the more ambitious and distant - towards a new step, a new time”.

Focusing on the organizational result, the Company redirected its form of managing human resources; and through the Human Resources Managing Plan it established elements which give the Company's strategic vision, allowing the simultaneous development of issues of distinct natures: structural issues complementing the conjuncture and short term action proposals complementing the long term actions. The Bank is ruled by an image of a modern and successful company. The new role of the HR unit was established: “to attract, develop and keep professionals who ensure the productivity of knowledge and information and the competitiveness of the Conglomerate”. It is implied that the Bank's professional is the actual competitive differential. Although people are considered an organizational resource, they are different from the other resources, as they have the ability to think, create and get committed with the organization.

For the **policies and guidelines**, the following fundamental principles were established:

- Ethics on internal relationships and with clients, in all types of performance of the organization, with the public power and society in general.

- Focusing on the client and on the result, as the referential for planning and strategic staff actions.
- Results culture, as a way to increase productivity and make the future vision viable .
- Quality at work and life, with effective improvement of client assistance, respect to the society's cultural values and preservation of the environment.
- Prospective spirit, harnessing the strategic vision and the performance with a future perspective.
- Commitment and motivation, through the establishment of a solid partnership between the Organization and its staff, aiming to reach the goals and interests of the Company.
- Valorization of the person, acknowledging his condition of a whole being, with a critical conscience, and a social individual.
- Democratization of the work relations, through transparency in the processes of deliberation and decision, equal opportunities for participation, administrative horizontalization and cooperative work.
- Professional improvement, from the development of abilities, professional relations and the effective valorization of knowledge.
- Leadership as the foundation of the structure and management.
- Partnership as a way to enhance the knowledge and development of XYZ Bank.

It was not enough to change the organizational policies and guidelines. To leave a bureaucratic rational model for a entrepreneurial-strategic model, various mechanisms aimed at managing performance were adopted. To give a touch of modernity, the old Functional Performance Evaluation gives place to the Professional Development Administration (GDP), focusing on the generation of results. At the GDP, the Bank's performance, dependency and individual performance are analyzed. The optimum level is that where the individual reaches 100% of the goals established.

There have also been changes at promotions for time of service and participation on profits and results. According to interviews, "Antiquity means a post" becomes an outdated paradigm. The promotion for time of service was practically extinct and the remuneration by occupation became the emphasis. During the studies that led to the adoption of focus on remuneration by occupation, it was noticed that the Bank used to remunerate occupants of high responsibility posts below the market average; and the retribution paid to occupants of less complex posts exceeded considerably the market practices. That is, those earning more, were earning, in fact, little. And those earning less, were actually earning a lot. The reasoning based on cynicism prevailed.

The Participation on Profits and Results (PLR) should be an extra incentive for the employee to improve his performance. Based on the budget of the Company and the Unit where the employee works, and the GDP, the employee can increase his remuneration, once every semester, in a way that is differentiated by roles. In the past, the PLR was the same for all roles.

With these reformulations, says the discourse of Management, the Bank "stimulates the reward by merit". Also is becomes outdated the view that the good employee is the one who fully dedicates to the Bank. A few years ago, the employee who studied was seen as someone uncommitted with the organization. They were stigmatized and it was difficult to reach higher posts. In a certain way, through many years, the Bank stimulated the inertia of its employees. On a rhetoric turning, the employee with a degree sees again the chances for ascending

quickly. Instead of a feeling of justice, the change ends up confusing the real directions that must be taken on career management.

The Bank invests on the “employability of the employee and at the same time on the enterprisability of the organization”. During the first years, the Company granted 4,600 scholarships on the Graduation Program, 800 scholarships on the Specialization Program, 253 scholarships for master degrees and 39 for doctorates. But the investments in training still attend the segment of managers of the conglomerate. The Company makes available for the segment of technicians and managers, MBAs elaborated on partnerships with universities and training centers on the market.

From the assumption that managers are important agents of changes, the Company, as well as offering training, identifies and selects internally the new managers. But it still retains the path of political connections. This does not mean that the political side of the issue has been abolished. The political forces are still part of the Organization, which remains highly hierarchized.

According to interviewed HR staff, a survey on the organizational climate was made after the PDV and it was observed that the employees of XYZ Bank were showing low self esteem decurrent from the clash between the following variables: honesty, pride, ethics x low salaries and social devalorization. Although the employee was honest, proud of belonging to the Company and identified with the social role of the Bank, the salary and the social status were not the same as they were in the past. Besides, after the PDV the uncertainty and fear shook the stability that the employees believed to have for a long time. A new era was starting at XYZ Bank.

On a big and complex company like XYZ Bank, however, there are contradictions and dilemmas. At the same time that the market requirements regarding employees training is sought, the Bank, through a program called Professionalization<sup>3</sup>, proposes thoughts on the spiritual dimension of Man:

*To place fundamental issues and to capture the depth of the world, of oneself and of each thing constitutes what is called spirit. Spirit is not a part of the human being. It is that absolute moment of our conscious totality, experienced and felt within another bigger totality which involves us and transcends us: the universe of things, of the energies, of people, of the social-historic and cultural productions.*

The change process is a constant condition in the contemporary world, particularly on the turmoil of the banking sector. Added to the turmoil, the technologic factors that are required to make the Company more competitive, and there is a growing need for professional improvement for the employee. With growing investments in technology to replace human labor, a certain irony can be examined when the Bank actually says:

*Gone is the time when discussions on the precedence between structure and strategy consumed the time of companies: besides the fact that the major factors that rule the transformations are, frequently, outside the operational environment, it is the people who, ultimately, demand and consolidate the processes of change.*

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<sup>3</sup> Através de fascículos periódicos distribuídos a funcionários inscritos, o Programa Profissionalização trata de assuntos como megatendências no mercado de trabalho, globalização, níveis de emprego, reinserção do indivíduo numa economia estável, *check-up* profissional, carreira, sucesso, âncoras, sistema de gerenciamento de talentos e oportunidades e sentido do trabalho, entre outros.

One can see that the studios emphasize the importance of human resources, highlighting the subjective factors that differentiate the complex Man from the organizational-functional Man and the vision of this complex being is ever more alive in the contemporary organization who wish to remain “entrepreneurable”.

This standpoint allows to see Man as a being who can answer to a great diversity of guiding strategies, depending only of his own motivations and abilities, changeable according to the context – thus there isn’t a single correct guiding strategy that could support all the people in every moment.

A study made at the actual Company shows as the main cause of deaths among the employees aged around 40 the cardiovascular diseases. In second place is cancer, particularly lung cancer, caused by tobacco, and other stress related diseases, which today are so frequent among the Bank employees. Just look at their pay slips to verify the pay squeeze to which the employees are being submitted. Also, the entrance of the Company in all segments of the banking market, highly competitive, has caused the work routine of the Company’s employees to be stressing. The volume of service rose and the salary fell, in the adjustment to the market.

## SECOND REFLECTIVE CONSIDERATION

Chandler (1976, p. 13-14) concluded on his studies that the changes in the structure were related with the business strategy, explaining why the various organizational forms result from different types of expansion and can be better understood considering the expansion of the company as a *strategy* and the organization to administrate it as a *structure*. Then he defined the strategy as the establishment of objectives and long term goals and the adoption of action courses, as well as the allocation of the resources required to reach these goals. And the structure was defined as the modeling of the organization by which the company is managed, involving the lines of communication, authority, the flow of information and data through these lines. The deduction from this thesis is that the structure follows the strategy and that the more complex type of structure is the result of the connection of various basic strategies. Expansion without structural adjustments can only lead to economic inefficiency. And on this issue Oliveira and Curvello wrote:

*If we consider the evolution of the administrative thinking and the stages of environmental change, we can say that the bank has gone from a stage marked by the preoccupation with the organizational **structure**, where the paradigm were the big and solid companies, with giant and stable structures, marked by a centralization of the administrative power, to another stage marked by the business **strategy**, where the company is seen as an articulated whole, which can be continuously changed, whenever the environment requires” (Oliveira, 1988, p. 18 and 23). The company ceases, therefore, to worry strictly with the productive process, with the internal services, to turn to the external environment (...) (Curvello, 1993, p. 10).*

Inserted on the scenario of recapturing the growth of the Brazilian economy in a stabilization environment, the business modernization of XYZ became the Company’s discourse, fabricating a new type of manager who, according to Carvalho (1998:9).

*(...) managers are, essentially, the real human resources administrators. Their vision of the individual, their models of Man condition their actions. If the manager sees people only as production resources, their major concern will be maximizing this*

*resource, in terms of physical measurable product. (...) If, on the other hand, the manager has a humanistic vision, he get a broader understanding of nature and human motivations, as well as the influence of the external social environment on the organization about people's behavior (...)*

The reintroduction of a reinvigorating discourse for the corporate image and the self esteem of those who stayed reveals a perverse characteristic, as, according to Hirigoyen (1998) the company is an environment that encourages the perverse methods when the ends justify the means and it is ready for everything, including the destruction of individuals to reach its goals.

Moral destruction has been present in the family for a long time, as well as in the company, and when we refer to the current moment when people are more connected to their jobs, the exercise of moral harassment becomes easier. To Hirigoyen (1998) it is within the company, when power and perversity meet, that violence and harassment appear; there aren't major perversities found, but minor everyday perversities that are banalized, as the moral harassment within the company refers to every abusive conduct evidenced by "*behaviors, words, acts, gestures, writings, and they could hit the personality, the dignity or the physical or psychic integrity of a person, putting her job at risk or degrading the work environment*" (Hirigoyen 1998:67), even because the psychological war in the work environment regroups two phenomena: the abuse of power, quickly unmasked and not accepted forcibly by the employees; and the perverse manipulation, more deceitful and which causes more damage.

The threat of unemployment is not the only way to explain the submission of individuals to the harassment. There is also a perverse process on the psychological aspect preventing the victim from reacting. Thus in the company there are different stages of harassment with the common point being the refusal to communicate, using:

- Refusal of direct communication;
- Disqualifying: refers to remove from any one every quality of speaking and repeat that he is not worth anything, until this eventually leads him to think about it;
- Not giving credit;
- Isolation;
- Underestimation;
- Causing "negative" behavioral reactions;

We must stress that moral harassment in the company is based on the exercise of power from its abuse and the perverse manoeuvres that occur through the use of the other's weaknesses, leading him to doubt about himself in order to destroy his defenses (disqualifying);

The transformation process of XYZ Bank includes what Hirigoyen (1998:102) calls robotization or objectification of individuals allowing the intensification of moral harassment and, paradoxically, the individuals always hope for better days. Organizations adopt various means to get rid of an employee regarded as inconvenient, even if there have not been any complaints about him:

- He can be eliminated through the excuse of the economic structure;
- By assigning a task that is difficult to be executed and then the weaknesses are sought, so that the excuse of incompetence can then be used;
- Moral harassment can lead him to ask to leave.

To take advantage of the other's weaknesses is revealed as common fact which is even privileged within the business or politics contexts.

The narcissic perverse loves controversy, and it able to defend a point of view one day and then defend opposite ideas on the other, precisely to shock, but if the partner does not react adequately, he insists on the affront. On the other hand, the victim of this violence does not react as he tends to forgive the other, and by the insidious way in which the violence is installed, particularly for trying to place the other on a situation of doubt regarding his own feelings and thoughts. The victim feels as if he is losing his identity (Hirigoyen; 1998:129), because comes on the scene the maxim "sharing for better reigning", putting individuals in situations of war, jealousy and disagreements to take advantage of this and prevent that both, together, articulate a single reaction against the narcissic aggressor.

The managing space on the organizations constantly experiences a series of challenges on its daily routine, and taking into account the contemporaneity of the organization world in which the adversities present put the manager in a direct confrontation with the environmental stabilities in a devastating way, one must think about the personal limitations of this actor when dealing with such transformations.

According to Bolle de Ball (1989) *"to define participation is a troublesome difficulty as this term has specific meanings within different languages and within different local populations and industrial relations systems"*, and in this aspect Sievers (1994) discusses the difficulties to implement participation on the Western organization, and because it involves a series of other variables (co-management, maturity, devilishness, self-idealization, image, life, death), as well as the historic conditions of life in the Western world, the author hypothesizes that the participation has been occurring as a collusive dispute towards immortality, as it is used as an instrument for motivation and reduction of resistance against new methods and processes, and thus the instrumentality of the use of participation becomes evident, which raises suspicion about the true intention. Such situation contradicts itself, according to Sievers, by verifying what happens in countries such as Sweden, Norway, Germany or Israel, where the distances from the power are small, and thus the decision is taken jointly between the manager and the subordinates. On what has been shown about participation, maturity means the *"symbolic ability to deal with and dominate the devilishness made by the winning part"* (Sievers, 1994)

The anxiety that builds from fantasies concerning the hierarchical levels, places on the individuals the feeling of defeat and subjugation. It also creates a fear concerning the power reached by the employees, through the false impression from the managers that if the participation of employees on the decisive process and work conditions is allowed, they will also wish to interfere on the choice of products, distribution of profit and finally to take hold of the company<sup>4</sup>. This fear become more evident when Sievers finds one of those responsible for this situation: the content of American literature on participation, and realizes a trend to reduce the emphasis of participation as an effective administrative tool through which a higher level of commitment and contribution can be reached. So managers are led, compulsorily, to view participation as something that is representative and good, with which the employees should identify, as long as they realize and accept that it is good for them. But *"the distance between managers and workers comes from the guilt felt by managers because of the conscience of the discomfort decurrent from the power that is assigned to them"*

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<sup>4</sup> "It's not really that we're against participation! But, you know, if we allow the workers to participate, this would ultimately mean grabbing the tiger by tail. That bring us into a situation in which we as managers are no longer in control of where the tiger will lead us!" (relato de um gerente alemão em Sievers, 1994).



(Argyris, 1958:115) and from this arise the reckless attitudes and behaviors, which increase the conflicts between the parties, and such distance between managers and workers acquires an aspect of organizational devilishness, in which there is a self-idealization of oneself and a devilishness of the other, that is, a deformed perception of the environment by the prominence of individualism. This context stimulates resorting to the so called world of the winners.

The fragmentation of relationships also hits a split between life and death, where death is denied, as the context of mortality or immortality in the organization is compromised in an implicit way. Survival of the organization implies on the health of the shareholders involved, with a tendency to believe in the immortality of the organization, disregarding death. Immortality is a scarce resource, therefore available only to a few lucky fellows; therefore, immortality of the company and its “leaders” can only be reached and maintained at the expense of the mortality of its subordinates.

Thus this search for immortality hinders participation, causing a dispute where the winners’ culture should be installed, compromising the motivation of the subordinates, due to the fact that is it agreed upon a personal process of the manager, and this process follows a personal principle.

## **THE CHARISMA ISSUE**

Charisma unfolds as a significant characteristic in both cases, although on the political case the fact is better defined and exercised without pilfering. Charisma can be considered the highest point of individuality, an exceptional subjectivity that remains completely alone. Carrying on, the author affirms that if we consider charisma as a revolutionary social power or merely a state of rupture or disorder in the relations – a street gang or a mob of pirates – we should also recognize that the charismatic social authority supports itself as a relationship between an individual and a group. Charisma can be considered a shared experience. Then he affirms that a charismatic authority cannot be supported on the absence of an interdependent relationship between it and the group. (Falco, 1999:72)

Despite the adversity, the individual agent of any member systematically undermines the structure of the group as a whole. This is the paradox which defines the charismatic group as at least governed by symbols of its own grace and power. The ambiguity is systemic and all the time charisma is a synonym for exceptionality, rare and extraordinary status in the society. In Weberian terms, the charismatic leader is outside the usual path, but it is possible to affirm that the charisma discourse has its origin on the mutual dependency economy and a two-way government system).

Falco recovers the ideal Weberian types of authority: traditional, charismatic and legal-rational, the charismatic being considered endowed, according to Weber, with a certain individual quality by virtue where he is regarded as extraordinary and treated as if involved with the supernatural, super-human, or at least specifically exceptional qualities or powers. According to Falco, the charismatic leaders can triumph or fail based on an emotional externalization in an exchange with his followers, a dynamic interdependency.

The charismatic leader, on the Weberian sense of pure charisma, should have a mission charismatically recognized by the enraptured group of followers, but the presence of the charismatic leader will be strange to the normal social organization (traditional) because charisma comes from the being as an answer to extreme or extraordinary circumstances,

usually crises (Falco, 1999:79). Charisma represents a barometer between subjectivity and domination, and goes beyond the border between order and chaos. Therefore the existence of a social disorder allows to the charismatic leader the possibility to develop contexts of dependency by introducing new symbols to found his existence: cosmic, social or political order. But the charismatic leader is dangerous because he or she will be absorbed by symbols and this situation increases the isolation of the charismatic element before the tragic. Thus Falco argues that the charismatic leader needs a group to exist, without which he or she is nothing,

*and soon will be prisoner of his own condition of charisma, thus there is an interdependency, a system of mutuality, and breaking this mutuality destroys the group system and all the social, political, legal functions or any other function that the group depends on. However, conversely, the survival of this mutual relationship threatens the individuality of the charismatic leader (Falco, 1999:84)*

Some form of self-illusion is a required component for the charismatic leadership. Acknowledging the absence of fragments of a supernatural aura both for the individual in the centre of the charismatic group and also the idealized symbols of the original charisma because tragedy captures the imagination as something irresistible, being the same process that generates disorder, so Falco reminds that the “true tragedy for charismatic leadership is the appearance of order, the ordinary social life”.

## **AN APPROACH BY MELANIE KLEIN**

Klein (1959) reminds that the individual needs to be investigated on his development from infancy until maturity. Thus the development of the individual should be explored from a psychoanalysis, on a gradual stage since early infancy. Klein stresses that Freud discovered the Oedipus complex first in the adult and then was apt to trace it back to infancy, but we should also be aware of the fact that the Oedipus complex theory is based on a Western industrialized society marked by the hegemony of capital.

The first hypotheses of Klein are that the experiences of the newborn, both the processes of adjustments to postpartum, anxiety and persecution nature. The discomfort experienced through such experiences is balanced by the comfort felt from good forces and, according to Klein, it allows to the child the first love relationship with a person or object. Thus the hypothesis is that the child has a conscience of the innate unconscious of the existence of the mother. Therefore the ability to love and the sense of persecution have deep roots in this recent mental process of the child, focusing initially on the mother.

From these contexts Klein informs that the destructive impulses arise, varying from one individual to another, even on favorable circumstances, and besides one must consider the child's development and the attitudes of adults as a result of the interaction between the internal and external influences. This generates a dispute between love and hate, but the acceptance of food and affection can overcome the innate aggressiveness, leading to a harmony with frustration. These conditions pass by the Ego and the Self, the ego being the organizer of the self by the repressing control of the impulses and maintains the relationship with the external world. And the self, or id, according to Freud, works as a hole in the personality, particularly when it refers to instinct.

From the Ego and the Self, we can work the processes of introjection and projection, where introjection is “the meaning of the external world, their impacts, the situations the child goes through and the objects found, are not experienced only with the external, but are absorbed by the self and become part of the inner life” (Klein, 1959:293), and Projection, which occurs simultaneously, implies that there is an ability in the child to attribute to others around her the feelings in many ways, predominantly love and hate. Klein warns that in any case, introjection and Projection are rooted in childhood and are not only infantile processes, reminding that an inner world is built as part of reflection with the external world. This means that the double process of introjection and projection contributes to the interaction between internal and external factors. For Klein (295), if the relationship between introjection and projection is not dominated by hostility or overdependency, and it is well balanced, the inner world is enriched and the relationships with the external world are improved.

When describing child development, Klein emphasized particularly the importance of gluttony. Because gluttony acts on the character development and also influences the adult attitudes. The role of gluttony can be easily observed as a destructive element in social life.

All these considerations built by Klein have been recovered as an attempt to explain a little about the behavior of the leader within his context and thus better understand how leadership is developed on the cases presented, above all because Klein included on the text the following reflection on leadership:

*Where gluttony and envy are not excessive, even an ambitious person finds satisfaction helping others to give their contributions. Here we have one of the attitudes of a successful leadership. This can be observed at the baby ward. The same applies to school life where some times only one or two children have an attitude of a beneficial effect towards the others with a moral leadership based on friendship and the cooperative relationship towards the other children without any intention to make them feel inferior.*

*Returning to leadership: if the leader – and this can be applied to any member of the group - suspects that he is the object of hatred, all his antisocial attitudes are augmented by his feelings. We think that he is a person unable to stand criticism because once his persecution anxiety is touched, he is not only a victim of suffering, but also finds it difficult to relate to other people and can even put in danger the cause towards which he is working, in any stage of life this could happen; he will display an incapacity to correct mistakes and learn with others. (Op. Cit., 302)*

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

With the goal to make this text short and as simple as possible, we opted for introducing the theoretical context that we consider reasonable to explain the analyzed cases. We perceive the Freudian perspectives on sadism and the Kierkegaardian perspectives on irony as substantial to form the analytic chest of the research carried out around the case, involving an organization of national performance, which develops its perversity and violence by means of a sadistic subtlety. In the case observed, the primacy of a leadership addicted to behaviors that are invasive and uncompromised with the other's reality.

We think that the exercise of leadership should be a shared activity, as there is nothing that could define it or justify it as something individual and lonely. The activity of leadership as we enunciated at the beginning of the text is dominated and determined by an American literature which vision and understanding is anchored on individualism and particularism

starting from a divinization of the being in charge of this leadership. On the other hand, the establishment of leadership to an individual only excludes the possibility that others may eventually practice it, so the dominant literature on the subject eliminates the possibility of a decentralized, distributed leadership.

On this perspective of distribution of leadership, Canetti (1995) mentions facts on the choice of kings in African tribes, where the whole process happens through a decision of the community on a ritual, through which the future king is submitted to every kind of humiliation and suffering before his community in the sense of “paying” for the mistakes made by the dead king. In this tribe there isn’t the possibility of a deposed king, just a dead king. Naturally dead or dead for not fulfilling the needs of the tribe. Thus if, for instance, a drought occurs, this is responsibility of the king; if the harvest is bad, it is the king’s fault; if there is hunger in the tribe, this is the king’s fault; so all the grief suffered by the tribe is the king’s responsibility, and for this he can be killed, and another one is chosen immediately. In this case, we note that there isn’t a big interest in being the king (leader) of the tribe, once he will be blamed and punished for the misfortunes that may hit the tribe.

Differently from this context of some African tribes, we cannot see the same situation on the organizational environment. In this context, the search for leadership by the individual and exercised by an individual is predominant and the source of major battles on the dispute for power, above all for the simple fact that we do not attribute responsibility or punish the mistakes and misdemeanors committed by the leaders. The absence of a legitimate process for choice of leader, of culpability and the confidence that there will not be a punishment gives to these leaders the ammunition they require to abuse of irony and sadism over his subordinates, which is constituted as an institutionalized violence due to the use of the patterns, laws and resources established at the public, private and social institutions.

In order to equip with “legitimacy” the leadership exercised in the case, the leaders involved use charisma, bureaucratic authority, exaggerate on narcissism and neurotify their environments. Charisma is routinely related to the divinization of the individual which detains it, anchored on three bodies: spiritual, political and physical, articulating magic properties to pragmatic policies (Falco, 1999), however, this superstructure in just one body, which works as a *locus* for a battle between the sacred/profane, allows the emergence of tragedy, because the charismatic leader only manages to get space on the rise of disorder when there isn’t emotional balance to distinguish between good and evil.

The strength and the intention of this research is to make evident, at least we intend, the facet that is normally hidden on the exercise of leadership in the contemporary industrial Western world, not listed or mentioned in the traditional literature on the subject. It is only possible to find a more critical standpoint in the researchers belonging, identified or who sympathized with the radical humanism, an ideological position which, due to the current ideological hegemony, is not easily available on the traditional media. Thus we are urged to raise the discussion on the issue, which is ever more imperative in our society. And its importance lies on the fact that the current idea of leadership in exercise has not been contributing successfully to the development of society due to the impositions excused by globalization.

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# ***Organizational Insanities and the “War on Terror”: Ideology as a Psychic Prison***

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## **Abstract**

Although modern presentations of organizational decision making stress the importance and need for rationality and objectivity, the true character of organizational decision making may however rest in the domains of ideological social constructions affecting perceptions and assumptions, and heavily influencing, if not determining the process of policy formulation and implementation. Consequently decision makers tend to see the world as they wish it to be, or as they fear it to be, rather than making an attempt to determine what it really is. Extreme forms of ideological determination can also manipulate or manage reality in an effort to conditions and situations on the ground that can serve to affirm their ideological constructs.

This paper examines the role of ideology as a psychic prison in which perceptions and assumptions of reality are distorted, mangled and often oversimplified. Consequently, such developments tend to have undesirable and often disastrous consequences. The Bush Administration’s “war on terror”, and the ideology energizing Radical Islamist (RI) organizations opposing the US in Afghanistan and Iraq, will be examined as examples of ideological psychic prisons binding both parties in an ideologically constructed classical Manichaeic world view consisting of “devils” and “angels”. In this fantasy world each “side” considers the other as the “evil” to be targeted for destruction.

Ideologically determined policy is seen as responsible for the creation of the “War on Terrorism” as an instrument for the realization of the Bush Administration’s policy objectives, and its conception of US national security. The study will focus on the degree to which the “war on terrorism” serves to rationalize and justify US hegemonic designs and interventionism around the world, as well as establishing “national security as the dominant concern of domestic affairs. Our analysis will use insights from Critical Systems Theory, ideology theory, and Gareth Morgan’s concept of “psychic prisons”.

## **Defining the Ideological Environment**

This paper defines ideology as a special form of socially constructed reality. It is seen as a distortion of socially constructed reality aiding and defending the power and control of ruling elites and classes over the ruled. In this sense, ideology becomes a political construction determining power relations in society. Therborn (1980) defines the role of ideological formations in at least three interrelated dimensions:

"1. Ideological constructs tells individuals what exists, who they are, how the world is, how they are related to that world. In this manner, people are allocated different kinds and amounts of identity, trust and everyday knowledge. The visibility of modes of life, the actual relationship of performance to reward, the existence, extent and character of exploitation and power are all structured in class-specific modes of ideological formation.

2. Ideology tells what is possible, providing varying types and quantities of self-confidence and ambition, and different levels of aspiration.

3. Ideology tells what is right and wrong, good and bad, thereby determining not only conceptions of the legitimacy of power, but also work-ethics, notions of leisure, and views of interpersonal relationships, from comradeship to sexual love ( Therborn, 1980:172)".

## **Ideology as a Psychic Prison**

Ideology as a political distortion of socially constructed reality, benefits those in positions of power. It not only "legitimizes" domination in the minds of the dominated, it also places the true believers in positions of power, inside what Morgan calls a "psychic prison", a space where believers become trapped in favored ways of thinking which are internalized and overdetermined deep in their unconscious:

"Favored ways of thinking and acting become traps that confine individuals within socially constructed worlds and prevent the emergence of other worlds. As in the case of Plato's allegory of the cave, disruption usually comes from the outside. But the hold of favored ways of thinking can be so strong that even the disruption is often transformed into a view consistent with the reality of the cave" (Morgan, 1997). A good example of this is the phenomenon of "group think" where group illusions and perceptions create a dynamic that usually leads to some kind of disaster. The Bay of Pigs fiasco is considered as a prime example of this situation. (Janis, 1972).

Manifested in organizations, this can lead to limited and distorted levels of policy variety and complexity. Policies are then formulated in ways disconnected from world realities, and ungrounded in any meaningful understanding of environmental changes affecting policy problematics at hand. Such situations can easily lead to policy consequences often unexpected, undesired, unplanned, and ultimately disastrous.

True believers, trapped in the psychic prisons of their own fantasies, fears, obsessions, and desires, have great difficulty in dealing with cognitive dissonance from information that threatens to negate their fantasy worlds. Inhabitants of psychic prisons cannot thus be expected to act “rationally” or even “logically” in the idealized meaning of those terms. This is because such concerns are filtered and modified through overdetermined ideological and psychologically shared constructs. Concepts such as logic and rationality then become tools for legitimizing policy choices and decision, instead of determining the legitimacy of such actions, as conventional organization theory would prefer.

Inhabitants of psychic prisons often create the “enemies” that they need to oppose. Targeted populations considered as the “enemy” are then constructed into the anti-thesis of the ideology programming their hearts and minds. The targeted enemy then becomes everything that needs to be destroyed, opposed, reformed, changed, or negated. Such depictions and constructions need not be based on facts, rationality, or logic.

The existence of these “enemies” is seen as threatening favored beliefs; their destruction therefore becomes a crusade for self-affirmation, and a sacred mission for the true believer. For example, organized religions have invented the concepts of “Satan”, “blasphemy”, and “heretics”, authoritarian systems talk about “enemies of the state” and “traitors” as entities to be eliminated or contained.

Historical examples include the problems of the Catholic Church with Galileo, the problems of Creationists with the Theory of Evolution, and the problem that racists and sexists have with Human Rights and Civil Rights legislation. In all these cases, the prevailing “realities” of the true believers can override any alternative considerations. If forced to confront reality-negating evidence and alternatives, their reactions usually range from denial, refusal to consider alternative beliefs, to sometimes aggressive and even violent opposition and action.

Such strong opposition to alternative views and considerations of reality can also be seen as challenging or even negating the essential identity of true believers. Seen from this perspective, our perception and understanding of “reality” defines who and what we are. Confrontations with alternative realities center not necessarily around facts or logic, but concern fundamental existential issues of identity affirmations and negations. Thus anything that supports our fantasy worldview is accepted, and anything that challenges or negates it is opposed, regardless of the demands of rational and logical thinking.

For policy makers in positions of power, any information that threatens to challenge the perceived legitimacy of their fantasy worlds can pose serious problems. Here is where the need for “reality management” becomes an ideological necessity. As a result, threatening and contradictory information can be manipulated, distorted, rationalized, and “managed” in ways that continue to support the prevailing ideological position. In some cases, organizations can engage in outright deception and lies in order to protect their particular formulation of “reality”.

A good example of this was “Project Northwood, a proposal by the US military to create situations in Cuba whereby the US could justify military action against that



country. Here is a very good example of “managing reality” in order to justify ideological obsessions. In this case, it was the destruction of the Socialist Cuban State:

“This document, titled “Justification for U.S. Military Intervention in Cuba” was provided by the JCS to Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara on March 13, 1962, as the key component of Northwoods. Written in response to a request from the Chief of the Cuba Project, Col. Edward Lansdale, the Top Secret memorandum describes U.S. plans to covertly engineer various pretexts that would justify a U.S. invasion of Cuba. These proposals - part of a secret anti-Castro program known as Operation Mongoose - included staging the assassinations of Cubans living in the United States, developing a fake “Communist Cuban terror campaign in the Miami area, in other Florida cities and even in Washington,” including “sink[ing] a boatload of Cuban refugees (real or simulated),” faking a Cuban airforce attack on a civilian jetliner, and concocting a “Remember the Maine” incident by blowing up a U.S. ship in Cuban waters and then blaming the incident on Cuban sabotage.” (National Security Archive April 2001).

Project Northwoods was not implemented as designed. But it does provide insight into the use of deception and lies for the advancement of ideological needs. Another situation that did take place was the Gulf of Tonkin Incident. This blamed the North Vietnamese for a non-existent attack on US ships:

“Thirty years ago, it all seemed very clear. American Planes Hit North Vietnam After Second Attack on Our Destroyers; Move Taken to Halt New Aggression”, announced a Washington Post headline on Aug. 5, 1964. That same day, the front page of the New York Times reported: "President Johnson has ordered retaliatory action against gunboats and 'certain supporting facilities in North Vietnam' after renewed attacks against American destroyers in the Gulf of Tonkin. But there was no "second attack" by North Vietnam — no renewed attacks against American destroyers. By reporting official claims as absolute truths, American journalism opened the floodgates for the bloody Vietnam War. A pattern took hold: continuous government lies passed on by pliant mass media...leading to over 50,000 American deaths and millions of Vietnamese casualties “(Cohen and Soloman 1994). Contradictory information can thus be manipulated, distorted, rationalized, and "managed" in ways to continue support for the prevailing ideologically determined “reality”.

## **Ideology and the Bush Administration**

The coming to power of the Bush Administration in 2000 brought together people with extremely strong, and (in their own minds) clear views of global realities, US national interests, and what needed to be done in for the defense and advancement of US global interests. The central core of this community of understanding revolves around a belief system known as Neo-conservatism. Its advocates are known as Neocons.

Neoconservative ideology purports to define the US as having a special responsibility in the world as its greatest superpower. Irving Kristol considered as the "godfather" of the Neocons, describes the central points of Neocon thinking regarding foreign policy, noting that Neoconservatism has no set of "beliefs" regarding foreign policy but a common set of "attitudes derived from historical experience". These include the following:

"First, patriotism is a natural and healthy sentiment and should be encouraged by both private and public institutions. Precisely because we are a nation of immigrants, this is a powerful American sentiment. Second, world government is a terrible idea since it can lead to world tyranny. International institutions that point to an ultimate world government should be regarded with the deepest suspicion. Third, statesmen should, above all, have the ability to distinguish friends from enemies" (Kristol, 2003).

Robert Kagen, another major figure in this group, argues that "At this point in time, it is American power, and American power only, that can serve as the organizing principle for the worldwide expansion of a liberal civil society...the US has acquired this responsibility at a dangerous and chaotic moment in world history" (Kagen, 2003,p.69).

Neocon thinking originated during the Reagan Administration, but did not gain legitimacy until the coming to power of George W. Bush (see Diggins 2003, and Hussein 2003). Its "intellectuals" reside in such think tanks as PNAC (Project for an American Century), the American Enterprise Institute, and Rand Corporation. It also has a home in the pages of the Weekly Standard and other radical right-wing publications.

The Neocon inspired "National Security Strategy of the United States of America" presented by President Bush in September 2002 at West Point, specified the central role of the US in the world system. It declared a commitment to US military superiority around the world and in space, preventing the rise of rival superpowers, a commitment to the "war on terror" and the defusing of regional conflicts. The US is also committed to protecting and advancing free markets and free trade. It also emphasizes the right to pre-empt and prevent perceived threats from abroad (NSC document 2002).

Critics see this document as an almost perfect ideological match to PNAC thinking. In the world of the Neocons, the US is seen as the unchallenged superpower acting as a "benevolent global hegemon". The US would have the right to reconfigure the world to fit its economic and security interests, engage in "preventive and pre-emptive actions, control space, and replace "failed states" with democracies with economically liberal governments. The Neocons also consider the Middle East as the major source

of terrorism. Thus "democratizing" the Middle East would effectively eliminate the terrorist threat (Pitt, 2003).

### **The War on Terror as a "Mission From God"**

In addition to fantasies regarding the US right to global domination, Neocon ideology is also heavily influenced by so-called needs of Corporate Globalization, and Fundamentalist Christianity, or what is commonly known as the Religious Right.

The political reorganization of the world can benefit the needs of capitalism. In Iraq and Afghanistan this need is centered on control of natural energy resources, while the dominance of the Religious Right can be achieved through the subjugation of Radical Islamism and its resistance to US control.

Even though the mostly secular Neocons and the Religious Right seem unlikely bedfellows, they do share a set of core beliefs, especially relating to foreign affairs. These include a manicheistic outlook where the world is divided into contending opposite forces, i.e. "good" and "evil". The US leads the forces of "good", and the battle is against the forces of "evil".

Writing in the New York Times Magazine (10/7/03) Nicholas Kristof comments on the "war on terror" as a religious war "but not of Islam versus Christianity and Judaism. Rather, it is a war of fundamentalists against faiths of all kinds that are at peace with freedom and modernity. This war even had far gentler echoes in America's own religious conflicts--between newer, and more virulent strands of Christian fundamentalism and mainstream Protestantism and Catholicism. These conflicts have an ancient root, but they seem to be gaining new force as modernity spreads and deepens. They are our new wars of religion" (Kristof 2003)

Both Neocons and Religious Right are confrontational and uncompromising. For both groups, "evil" can never be accommodated, it must be destroyed. Diplomacy, negotiations, etc. are thus not part of the picture. Neither group holds much regard for international organizations such as the United Nations. Both groups are also absolutists in that nothing short of total victory is acceptable (see Zogby: 2003). The fact that President Bush considers himself as a born-again Christian may be an important factor in creating a more compatible relationship between these two groups." For the first time since religious conservatives became a modern political movement, the president of the United States has become the movement's defacto leader... (Milbank 2001:1). For Zogby, Neocon ideology looks like a "secular version of religious fundamentalism" (Zogby 2003).

### **Ideology and Radical Islamism**

The world view of Radical Islamism (RI) as preached by followers of the Islamic Brotherhood or Ikhwan al Muslimeen, the Wahabis of Saudi Arabia, and the Jamaati-Islami of Pakistan, runs parallel to the views of the Neocons described above. In some ways they are dialectical opposites of each other.

The central figures creating this ideology are Hasan al Banna, Mawlana Maududi, and Sayyid Qutb. Esposito (2002) summarizes the main features of RI ideology and the psychic prison Radical Islamist exist:

- “1. Islam is a total, all-encompassing way of life that guides each person and his or her community and political life.
2. The Quran, God’s revelation, and the Sunnah of the Prophet and the early Muslim community is the foundations of Muslim life, providing the models that guide daily action.
3. Islamic Law (Shariah) provides the ideal and blueprint for a modern Muslim society not dependent on Western models.
4. Departure from Islam and the reliance on the West are the causes for Muslim decline.  
A return to the straight path of Islam will restore identity, pride, success, power, and the wealth of the Islamic community in this life and merit eternal life in the next.
5. Science and technology must be harnessed and used. This must be achieved within an Islamic context, not by dependence on foreign Western cultures, to avoid Westernization and secularization of society.
6. Jihad, to strive or struggle, both personally and in community, in ideas and in action to implement Islamic reform and revolution, is the means to bring about Islamization of society and the world” (Esposito 2002:52-42).

The WOT then can be seen as an ideological conflict between alternative realities that come together only in the battlefield of overt and covert war and violence.

Both these world views negate each other, while at the same time they affirm each other’s reason for being. The Bush Neocons need RI to legitimize their quest for global hegemony, while RI needs the Neocons to justify their struggle against Western domination, and the need to establish “true” Islam.

### **Ideological Constructions of Reality: New World Order as the Theater of Fear**

Ideological constructions of reality employ many methods. At the center of this manipulation of hearts and minds is the craft of Public Relations. PR has taken on a special place in modern society. Edward Bernays, a nephew of Sigmund Freud, also known as the “father of public relations” emphasized the importance of molding public opinion or the “engineering of consent” in democratic society:

“The conscious and intelligent manipulation of the organized habits and opinions of the masses is an important element in democratic society. Those who manipulate this

unseen mechanism of society constitute an invisible government which is the true ruling power of our country... We are governed, our minds are molded, our tastes formed, our ideas suggested, largely by men we have never heard of. This is a logical result of the way in which our democratic society is organized. Vast numbers of human beings must cooperate in this manner if they are to live together as a smoothly functioning society... In almost every act of our daily lives, whether in the sphere of politics or business, in our social conduct or our ethical thinking, we are dominated by the relatively small number of persons... who understand the mental processes and social patterns of the masses. It is they who pull the wires which control the public mind.”(Bernays, 2005, p.95).

The theories and techniques of Edward Bernays were so influential that they served as a recipe book for Nazi propaganda. In his autobiography, Bernays remembers a dinner party in 1933 “where Karl von Weigand, foreign correspondent of the Hearst newspapers, an old hand at interpreting Europe and just returned from Germany, was telling us about Goebbels and his propaganda plans to consolidate Nazi power. Goebbels had shown Weigand his propaganda library, the best Weigand had ever seen. Goebbels, said Weigand, was using my book *Crystallizing Public Opinion* as a basis for his destructive campaign against the Jews of Germany. This shocked me... Obviously the attack on the Jews of Germany was no emotional outburst of the Nazis, but a deliberate, planned campaign” (Bernays, 2005, p.2).

From our perspective, PR serves not only to manipulate perceptions and “spin” realities; it can also serve to create the reality space affirming identity and purpose for the PR masters. In other words, it is aimed not just at winning the “hearts and minds” of an external audience, it also serves to create a home for one’s own ideologically determined heart and mind. This is the place where the propagandist actually believes his own propaganda, and therefore affirms his identity and purpose in life.

## **Media Influence and Control**

A major participant in the propaganda war on the US population has been the US media. The Bush Administration has taken important steps to see that the ideologically correct news and spin on events take place. Bill Van Auken describes the process:

”The Bush administration last week instructed US government agencies to ignore a ruling by the comptroller general of the United States barring the dissemination of “covert propaganda.” The phrase—generally associated with police-state dictatorships—was used by the General Accounting Office, the investigative arm of the US Congress, in describing the proliferation of video news releases produced by the Pentagon, State Department and at least 18 other US agencies. The GAO ordered a halt to the dissemination of such videos on the grounds that they “conceal or do not clearly identify for the television viewing audience that the agency was the source of those materials.

In a front-page article published Sunday, the New York Times detailed the government’s increasing use of the videos, which simulate genuine television news segments. They include the use of public relations employees posing as on-the-spot

reporters and “interviews” with government officials that have been scripted and rehearsed.

The Times cited a report issued by Congressional Democrats estimating that during its first term the Bush administration spent \$254 million on public relations contracts that pay for the production of these videos, nearly doubling the amount spent by the Clinton administration in its last four years.

It described a system in which thousands of such video news releases, or VNRs, are produced annually. They are sent out to television networks as well as local stations, which in turn broadcast them to tens of millions of viewers as if they were the independent product of the stations’ news departments.

In some cases, television producers edit out brief lines identifying the segments as having been produced by a government agency. In others, they have had their own reporters do new audio voice-overs, reading directly from scripts provided by the government.

Included in this massive propaganda operation is the production by the State Department and the Pentagon of video news segments aimed at selling the US war in Iraq to the American people. Various agencies have done television spots that attempt to cast controversial programs pushed by the Bush administration in the best possible light.

The US Defense Department has set up its own “Pentagon Channel” providing fake news reports, interviews and video clips to US television stations. The State Department runs a vastly expanded Office of Broadcasting Services with the same purpose.

US Comptroller General David Walker drafted a February 17 memo denouncing the practice as a violation of appropriations laws that bar the use of government money to pay for covert propaganda directed against the American people.

In response, the Justice Department’s Office of Legal Counsel issued its own ruling last Friday. It stated that the administration “does not agree with the GAO that the covert propaganda prohibition applies simply because an agency’s role in producing and disseminating information is undisclosed or ‘covert,’ regardless of whether the content of the message is ‘propaganda.’” (Van Auken 2005)

Among many psychological operations or “psyops”, the US government itself has launched propaganda units to make sure its side of the story is presented. One project comes at a cost of \$6.3 million and is called Digital Video and Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS), and is considered as one of the largest “public affairs” projects in recent years. “DVIDS will also let the Pentagon provide hand-picked photos, footage and stories to the media concerning events from which the military has barred the civilian media from covering...thus giving the government virtually total control over coverage of such events” (“Pentagon Offers Direct News Service from Iran and Afghanistan”, Associated Press February 28, 2004)

Today PR firms play an important role in helping the US government organize and manage reality to its advantage both domestically and globally. PR Firms have been highly creative in producing events such as the Jessica Lynch “rescue”, the staged toppling of the Saddam statue, producing “Osama” videos when needed, the creation of phantom leaders like “mullah Omer” of Taliban fame, and the many reported “deaths” of Zarqawi, and other shows.

Fake news is not the only product of such PR efforts, what is omitted from “real” news can be just as misleading. Examine for example a memo sent to the editors of the Panama City News Herald (Florida):

“DO NOT USE photos on Page 1A showing civilian casualties from the U.S. war on Afghanistan. Our sister paper in Fort Walton Beach has done so and received hundreds and hundreds of threatening e-mails and the like.... DO NOT USE wire stories which lead with civilian casualties from the U.S. war on Afghanistan. They should be mentioned further down in the story. If the story needs rewriting to play down the civilian casualties, DO IT. The only exception is if the U.S. hits an orphanage, school or similar facility and kills scores or hundreds of children" (FAIR 6/26/06).

The theories and techniques of organized persuasion, in its variety of forms including public relations, propaganda, and advertising, have long been part of US attempts at reality management throughout the First and Second World Wars, Korea, Vietnam, and the Cold War.

### **In Search of New Enemies**

With the fall of the USSR and its system of client states in Europe, the US was left without an “enemy”. Great relief was felt by the American people who no longer felt fearful of Soviet nuclear attacks. Talk of a “peace dividend” was heard. Slimming down the military budget was proposed. Such talk posed serious threats to those who had benefited from fearful images of Russian soldiers marching down Fifth Avenue, or Soviet missiles landing in US towns and cities.

With the “Red Scare” gone, it was difficult to justify government programs and policies on grounds of National Security, no logical need for huge military contracts, or the justifications for enacting regime changes in the name of “fighting communism”. Neither was there the need for a “Domino Theory” which had been used to create the fear of “communist expansion”. A fabrication that had helped to plunged the country into decades of bloody war in Southeast Asia.

While incidents of anti-US terrorism did take place in the years prior to September 11, 2001, its numbers and intensity could not allow for it to replace communism as the new “threat” to Western civilization. Some think the “threat” is overblown: “On average, far fewer Americans are killed each year by terrorists than are killed by lightning, deer accidents, or peanut allergies. To call terrorism a threat to national security, is scarcely plausible” (Mueller, J and Mueller K 1999, p.43). All this changed on the morning of September 11, 2001.

### **September 11 and the New Age of Fear**

September 11 gave the American Neoconservatives the opportunity they had been waiting for. This was their “Pearl Harbor”, an opening to transform US foreign and

domestic policy. Samir Amin describes the process of “discovering” terrorism as the new enemy:

"During periods of calm---marked by strong economic growth, accompanied by what pass for acceptable levels of social fallout--the ruling class's pressures on people naturally eases. Thus from time to time, the establishment has to re-invigorate that ideology using the classical methods: an enemy (always a foreigner since American society has been decreed good by definition) is designated (the evil empire, the axis of evil), which will justify the mobilization of all possible means in order to annihilate him. In the past, this enemy was communism; made possible the launching of the Cold War and the marginalization of Europe. Today, it is "terrorism", which is clearly just a pretext, which is being made to serve the real project of the ruling class: the military control of the planet (Amin, 2003, p.6)

### **Islamic Terrorism as the “New Black”**

The construction of Radical Islam, and more broadly Islam itself, as the base of the terrorist threat, fits in very well with the psyche of the US general public, the main targets of US propaganda efforts. A number of factors helped to make Islam a good candidate for enemy status:

- It is a foreign belief system
- It has a long history of opposition to Christian civilization
- Islamic countries are mostly led by “non-democratic” rulers
- Many Islamic countries are sitting on huge oil reserves, especially Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Kuwait, Iraq, and the former Central Asian Republics
- Many Islamic countries oppose Israel, a close ally of the US
- Many Islamic countries are situated in sensitive geopolitical areas such as the Middle East, the Persian Gulf, Central Asia, etc.
- The large majority of Muslims are from racial and ethnic backgrounds very different from most Americans.
- Arab/Islamic opposition to Israel and their violent resistance of Zionist occupation of Palestine
- Memories of the Iranian Hostage Crisis, the Iranian Imams and Muslim radical students, and shouts of “Death to America”
- Popular Islamic and Arab anti-Americanism fostered by US support for Israel and for authoritarian governments in the Middle East.
- 911

In this way Radical Islamists, who during the Cold War were useful allies of US foreign policy, and recipients of political and material assistance from Washington, were now reconstructed into the new “enemy”. Their ideology was presented as anti-Western, anti-Christian, anti-Capitalist, anti-democratic, terrorist, barbaric, and hence, worthy of extermination. The great irony here is that the current enemies of the US such as Osama bin Laden, and Saddam Hussein, are the same people who in another age were celebrated as allies and friends.



The attacks of 911 were presented as the work of “Islamic” terrorists under the management of Osama Bin Laden, even though Bin Laden has never claimed responsibility. Later, in an effort to justify the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the Bush Administration suggested that Saddam Hussein in league with the Alqaida organization of Bin Laden, might be behind the attacks (Rampton and Stauber 2003:91-96).

The construction of Radical Islam as manifested by the phantom Alqaida organization was accomplished through “cherry picking” intelligence data and information. Information that questioned the Administration’s ideological world view was rejected, and supporting materials were emphasized. Other information was given pro-Administration spin.

The distortion of information and its reconstruction as “reality” is described by Lt. Colonel Karen Kwiatkowski, an analyst in the Pentagon’s Near East and South Asia (NESA) unit. Kwiatkowski, now retired, comments on how the Pentagon would manufacture “news”:

"It wasn't intelligence, -- it was propaganda," she says. "They'd take a little bit of intelligence, cherry-pick it, make it sound much more exciting, usually by taking it out of context, often by juxtaposition of two pieces of information that don't belong together." It was by turning such bogus intelligence into talking points for U.S. officials, -- including ominous lines in speeches by President Bush and Vice President Cheney, along with Secretary of State Colin Powell's testimony at the U.N. Security Council last February, -- that the administration pushed American public opinion into supporting an unnecessary war (Dreyfuss, R and J. Vest 2004).

More evidence of “reality creation” was presented with the publication of the “Downing Street Memos:

“The document was written by British national security aide Matthew Rycroft based on notes he took during a July 2002 meeting of Mr. Blair and his advisers, including Richard Dearlove, the head of Britain's MI-6 intelligence service who had recently met with Bush administration officials. Among other things, the memo said: Bush wanted to remove Saddam through military action, justified by the conjunction of terrorism and WMD. But **the intelligence and facts were being fixed around the policy**. The (National Security Council) had no patience with the UN route. There was little discussion in Washington of the aftermath after military action. It seemed clear that Bush had made up his mind to take military action, even if the timing was not yet decided. But the case was thin. Saddam was not threatening his neighbors, and his WMD capability was less than that of Libya, North Korea or Iran” (Manning 2005).

### **Radical Islam as the New “Enemy”**

Depictions of radical Islam as the “enemy”, serves the interests of many groups. This includes the Christian Right which sees Islam as an enemy of Christianity, Zionists, who see this event as a means for advancing their anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian agenda, and of course the Neocons who now see a green light for the realization of their global domination objectives. Other beneficiaries included Big Oil, corporations

close to the Bush Administration, the US Military –Industrial Complex, as well as conservative Republicans, and George Bush in his new role as defender of the nation in the face of “evil”.

A major attack on US soil by people identified as “Arab terrorists” provided the shock and awe for legitimizing a self-declared “war on terrorism”, a war that knows no boundaries, no laws, and no time limitations. Thus a new and convenient reality was created.

With 911, the US now had a new “enemy” to replace the departed “communist threat” of Cold War times. The old enemy had allowed the US to establish itself as a National Security State (NSS), and justify the build up of the Military Industrial Complex. It legitimized and rationalized the use of military force in overthrowing suspected “communist” regimes and leaders all over the world, and established the “Bomb” as both defender of the nation, as well as the main element in an organized fear campaign inside the US.

The new enemy of Radical Islamism now serves to justify the US “right” and “duty” to bring order to the world through concepts such as “pre-emptive/ preventive war”, “regime change” and the setting up of US-friendly puppet regimes, economic sanctions, covert actions, torture, assassinations, kidnappings and “renditions”, and the incarceration of perhaps thousands of “suspected terrorists” in concentration camp-like prisons otherwise around the world, all justified in the name of the “War on Terror”. The New World Order of the Bush Regime sees these actions justified and not in violation of any international laws (Kramer 2005).

The Bush Neoconservatives see the world in an “us against them” perspective, where one is either “with us or against us”. The extent of the “threat” posed not only to the US but to “Western civilization” itself is presented by linking all groups and organizations seen as working against US interests as part of one big global terror network. In this way we have a globalize enemy requiring global solutions. Using Cold War imagery, one Neocon ideologue presents the threat facing Western civilization and the US:

“...the common denominator of the terror masters is tyranny. They are all dictators, whether like the Iranian mullahs, they actually rule or whether like Osama Bin Laden they aspire to it. As the communist dictators used Marxist-Leninist doctrine to justify their tyrannical rule, so Muslim leaders claim Divine Right to oppress their people. Osama bin Laden’s jihad is supposed to lead to the “establishment of a castle to the Muslims, a (new) Calipate where mosque and state will merge into a transnational Nation of Islam” (Ladeen 2002:152).

Ladeen continues to explain the motivations behind “hatred” for the US:

“So while there are many peaceful Muslims, the terror masters follow a tyrannical and bellicose version of Islam. This is why we are inescapably the bulls-eye in their target, for all tyrants and would-be tyrants fear and therefore hate America. Our great success threatens their legitimacy, for most of their own people prefer to be free and would prefer to choose their own leaders. Usually they don’t want the repressive rulers they have. So long as America flourishes, all tyrants are threatened. Sooner or later they are impelled to come to us, desperate to demonstrate that their way is better,

that we are weak, and that it is folly to challenge them...The tyrants hatred if America is not the result of any given American policy It is our existence, not our actions that threaten them, because our existence inspires their people to desire different rulers and a different kind of polity” (Ladeen 2002:153).

The above quotation summarizes the basic beliefs of the Neocon psychic prison very well. It also distorts history and reality in ways that create fear and the need for action among target populations. What is very interesting is that most of the Middle Eastern rulers are allies of the US, and that other than Iran, Syria and perhaps the newly elected Hamas “government” in occupied Palestine, none of these rulers promote anti-US or even pro-Islamic ideology.

In fact one of the major claims of the Radical Islamists is that the Islamic world is ruled by US-imposed dictators such as Mubarak in Egypt, the Saudi rulers in Saudi Arabia, and the Musharaf dictatorship in Pakistan.

Neocons however, reject US policy as having anything to do with causing conflict and dissent in the Muslim world. In fact, Ladeen presents US policy as favorable to Muslim interests around the world by presenting US financial and military support for the Mujahideen in Afghanistan, the liberation of Kuwait from Saddam forces, and US support for Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo (Ladeen 2002:153). Ladeen’s recommendations for US policy begin with bringing down “the terror regimes with the big three: Iran, Iraq, and Syria. And then we will have to come to grips with the Saudis” (Ladeen 2002:159)

A few months after 911, the US began the bombing campaign against the Taliban in Afghanistan on the pretext that they were giving refuge to Osama Bin Laden. The irony here is that the Taliban, prior to 911, were seen as an organization that the US could work with, especially in the area of constructing important oil and gas pipelines linking Central Asian fields with ports in Pakistan. But the Taliban had not succeeded in bringing order to Afghanistan and was now linked to Alqaida.

US B-52’s began carpet bombing a country that was already destroyed through 25 years of internal conflict and had no connections with the 911 attacks.

Today, close to 20,000 US military personnel are in Afghanistan trying to eliminate suspected “terrorists”. The US campaign cost close to 4000 innocent Afghan lives, and much destruction from carpet bombing and the use of depleted uranium weapons. At the same time, the installed government in Kabul continues, and is encouraged to bring “reformed” elements of the Taliban into the government. After four years of US military occupation and billions of dollars in foreign aid, Afghanistan remains a failed state with little hope for positive change (Nusbaumer, 2006).

### **Propaganda and Public Relations as Instruments of Control and Domination**

One of the outcomes of 911 was the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, an effort to consolidate the workings of 22 different government agencies under one roof. With it also came the infamous Patriot Act. With the enemy defined and the organizational and legal mechanisms in place, the US government initiated actions against suspected/potential “terrorists” and their suspected/potential supporters.

Arsalan Iftikhar (2005) the national legal director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) describes the consequences of these actions on American Muslims:

“Since the 9/11 attacks, the most disturbing legal trend in America has been the growing disparity in how American Muslims are treated under the law. Recently, the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation’s largest American Muslim civil rights group, [reported](#) that it processed a total of 1,522 incident reports of civil rights cases last year—a 49 percent increase in cases of harassment, violence and discriminatory treatment from 2003. That’s the highest number of Muslim civil rights cases ever reported to CAIR. In addition, CAIR received 141 reports of actual and potential violent anti-Muslim hate crimes, a 52 percent increase from 2003. Overall, 10 states alone accounted for almost 79 percent of all reported incidents of discrimination. These states include California, New York, Arizona, Virginia, Texas, Florida, Ohio, Maryland, New Jersey and Illinois. Anti-Muslim action also includes mass arrests of Muslim and Arab men in the name of national security. Iftikhar continues: “By far the greatest increase from last year occurred in the area of unreasonable arrests, detentions, unlawful searches/seizures and interrogations. In 2003, complaints concerning suspect law enforcement techniques accounted for only 7 percent of all reported incidents. In 2004, however, these reports rose to almost 26 percent of all reported cases to CAIR. In the months after 9/11, Attorney General John Ashcroft, using his powers under section 412 of the now infamous USA PATRIOT Act, rounded up and imprisoned well over 1,200 Muslim and Arab men based solely on pretextual immigration violations. The most disturbing fact about these mass roundups was the fact that the Justice Department refused to disclose the detainees’ identities, give them access to lawyers or allow them to have contact with their families. The inspector general conceded in his official report that they stopped counting the detainees after 1,200 because the “statistics became too confusing. Georgetown University law professor and civil liberties expert David Cole has said that, “Thousands were detained in this blind search for terrorists without any real evidence of terrorism, and ultimately without netting virtually any terrorists of any kind.” (Iftikhar, 2005).

Such actions serve a number of purposes. On the one hand it presents itself as working to safeguard Americans by detaining people who may be connected to terrorism; on the other hand, it also demonstrates that terrorists could be anywhere, even living next door. The fear of the “enemy within” has also opened the door to greater support for the suspension of civil liberties for the sake of national security. The impact of the government’s campaign for the hearts and minds of Americans can be clearly seen in research conducted by students at the Media and Research Group (MSRG) in Cornell University. Some of the findings are outlined below (MSRG 2004):

- In November, 2004 37% of the respondents believe that terrorist attack within the next 12 months is likely, compared to 90% in November 2002.
- Twice as many respondents who pay a high level of attention to TV news (18%) feel personally in danger from terrorist attack, as compared to respondents who pay a low level of attention to TV news (9%).
- Nearly half (47%) of the respondents believe that Islam is more likely to encourage violence compared to other religions

- That percentage rises to 65% among highly religious people
- Nearly half (44%) of all respondents agree that at least one form of restriction should be placed on Muslim American civil liberties
- 42% of highly religious respondents believe that Muslim Americans should register their whereabouts with the federal government
- Nearly half (47%) of the respondents support greater power for the government to monitor Internet activities, while nearly two thirds (63%) agree that the government should be able to detain indefinitely suspected terrorists
- Christians with a high level of religiosity are almost twice as likely to agree that the government should have more power to monitor Internet activities (61%), that the government should outlaw some un-American actions (43%), and that the media should not report criticisms of the government in times of crisis (44%), when compared to respondents with a lower level of religiosity.

Such findings attest to the success of government propaganda programs and tactics in creating the fear that allows people to willingly submit their civil liberties, and those of others in the name of national security.

### **Creating Fear as an Instrument of Policy**

A successful fear appeal includes the following:

1. A threat
2. A specific recommendation on how the audience should behave
3. Audience perception that the recommendation will be effective in addressing the Threat
4. Audience perception that they are capable of performing the recommended behavior

(Propaganda Critic 2002):

In the case of the War on Terror (WOT) the “threat” is “terrorism” associated primarily with Islam and Arabs. Specific recommendations range from Bush’s suggestions to “continue shopping”, to instructions on the use of duct tape and plastic sheeting from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). This department also encouraged Americans to keep an eye out for “suspicious” characters and out of the ordinary events.

Public paranoia is also compounded by confusing and often unfounded “terror alerts”. A recent article in USA Today revealed sharp differences between former DHS boss Tom Ridge and the White House: “The Bush administration periodically put the USA on high alert for terrorist attacks even though then-Homeland Security chief Tom Ridge argued there was only flimsy evidence to justify raising the threat level, Ridge now says. Ridge, who resigned Feb 1, 2005, said on May 10, 2005 that he often disagreed with administration” (USA Today 5/11/05).

### **Justifying the War in Iraq and Afghanistan with the “War on Terror”**

Unsuccessful in proving any of its major allegations against the Saddam Regime such as the existence of weapons of mass destruction, the biological weapons, the

chemical weapons, and the nuclear programs, the US is now content to legitimize the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the the WOT, and the arena where the struggle against enemies of America is taking place.

Speaking at the National Defense University (2005) Mr. Bush emphasized the point that the war in Iraq and Afghanistan *is* the WOT, and that fighting them overseas prevents them from attacking the US:

“Like an earlier generation, America is pursuing a clear strategy with our allies to achieve victory. Our immediate strategy is to eliminate terrorist threats abroad, so we do not have to face them here at home. The theory here is straightforward: terrorists are less likely to endanger our security if they are worried about their own security. When terrorists spend their days struggling to avoid death or capture, they are less capable of arming and training to commit new attacks. We will keep the terrorists on the run, until they have nowhere left to hide”(Bush,2005).

### **Giving Global Terrorism a “Face”**

Phantom wars such as the “war on terror” need to be dramatized to the public in the form of identifiable faces and personalities. In this way enemy has a “face”. In Iraq, Saddam served as the “face of terrorism” until his capture. A more recent “victory” has been the killing of the claimed leader of “Alqaida in Iraq”, Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, who some say has served as an agent for US propaganda in that country:

“From the moment President Bush introduced him to the American people in October 2002, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi served a crucial purpose for the administration, providing a tangible focus for its insistence that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein was linked to the al-Qaeda terrorist network responsible for the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. After the invasion that toppled Hussein, and the subsequent rise of the insurgency against occupying U.S. forces, Zarqawi's presence in Iraq was cited as proof that the uprising was fomented by al-Qaeda-backed "foreign fighters." On Thursday, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld described Zarqawi as "the leading terrorist in Iraq and one of three senior al-Qaeda leaders worldwide." In addition to his indisputably prominent role in the Iraqi insurgency, Zarqawi was always a useful source of propaganda for the administration. Magnification of his role and of the threat he posed grew to the point that some senior intelligence officers believed it was counterproductive (De Young and Pincus 2006)”.

Zarqawi was claimed to lead what the US calls “Alqaida in Iraq” (AQI) continuing to link the proclaimed enemy of the US with the insurgency against US occupation in that country, even though the majority of insurgents are Iraqis. This conveniently pushes aside legitimate opposition to US and allied occupation by Iraqis themselves, and portrays the resistance as caused by “foreign elements”. The capture/killing of designated “terror masters” is then presented as “victories” in the WOT. A few days later, the US introduced the “successor” to Zarqawi, Complete with an extensive biography describing his skills in terror activities (Moubayed 2006).

### **Ideological Constructions of Reality: The New World Order as the Theater of Fear**

Having linked the War on Terror to the overthrow of Saddam, the Bush Administration began a major effort to show how dangerous Saddam was to the world, and especially to the people of the US. In a major effort to justify the invasion and occupation of Iraq, the White House then orchestrated a campaign to evoke fears of a possible nuclear attack if Saddam was not overthrown.

What is interesting in this campaign is the use of common fear imagery, specifically that of the **“mushroom cloud”**. This is an image that the American public has already associated with death and destruction through decades of Cold War propaganda.

We should also remember that at this time there was no real evidence linking Saddam to terrorism, or to WMD, especially nuclear ones.

The same image was presented by Bush’s then National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. In a 2003 CNN report, Wolf Blitzer noted:

"We know that he has the infrastructure, nuclear scientists to make a nuclear weapon," she told me. "And we know that when the inspectors assessed this after the Gulf War, he was far, far closer to a crude nuclear device than anybody thought -- maybe six months from a crude nuclear device." Dr. Rice then said something that was ominous and made headlines around the world.

"The problem here is that there will always be some uncertainty about how quickly he can acquire nuclear weapons. **But we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.**" (Blitzer 2003).

On an October 7, 2002 speech in Cincinnati, Ohio, Mr. Bush also raised the specter of a “nuclear Iraq” as a major, if not *the* major threat to the American people, again without any substantial evidence to back up his claims:

“Satellite photographs reveal that Iraq is rebuilding facilities at sites that have been part of its nuclear program in the past. Iraq has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes and other equipment needed for gas centrifuges, which are used to enrich uranium for nuclear weapons. If the Iraqi regime is able to produce, buy, or steal an amount of highly-enriched uranium a little larger than a single softball, it could have a nuclear weapon in less than a year. And if we allow that to happen, a terrible line would be crossed. Saddam Hussein would be in a position to blackmail anyone who opposes his aggression. He would be in a position to dominate the Middle East. He would be in a position to threaten America. And Saddam Hussein would be in a position to pass nuclear technology to terrorists. Some citizens wonder: After 11 years of living with this problem, why do we need to confront it now? There is a reason. We have experienced the horror of September 11. We have seen that those who hate America are willing to crash airplanes into buildings full of innocent people. Our enemies would be no less willing -- in fact they would be eager -- to use a biological, or chemical, or a nuclear weapon. Knowing these realities, America must not ignore the threat gathering against us. Facing clear evidence of peril, **we cannot wait for the final proof -- the smoking gun -- that could come in the form of a mushroom cloud.**” (Bush 2002).

In the speech, which has no factual basis, Mr. Bush not only links the Iraq War and Saddam to 911, but throws out the horrible image of a **“mushroom cloud”** over American cities as the great danger faced by the US. This theme is repeated almost word for word by different Whitehouse officials. Below are some interesting quotes:

National Security Advisor Rice: "There will always be some uncertainty about how quickly [Saddam] can acquire nuclear weapons. **But we don't want the smoking gun to be a mushroom cloud.**" The New Republic (June 30, 2003)

Secretary Rumsfeld: "Imagine a September eleventh with weapons of mass destruction. It's not three thousand – it's tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children." The New Republic (June 30, 2003)

In a major speech to the UN General Assembly Bush presented the case against Iraq, again with no substantial evidence. In this speech he presented Saddam as in possession of great amounts of WMD. In addition, he emphasizes Saddam's abilities to deliver lethal weapons throughout the region with long range missiles.

"U. N. inspectors believe Iraq has produced two to four times the amount of biological agents it declared, and has failed to account for more than three metric tons of material that could be used to produce biological weapons. Right now, Iraq is expanding and improving facilities that were used for the production of biological weapons.

"United Nations' inspections also revealed that Iraq likely maintains stockpiles of VX, mustard and other chemical agents, and that the regime is rebuilding and expanding facilities capable of producing chemical weapons.

"And in 1995, after four years of deception, Iraq finally admitted it had a crash nuclear weapons program prior to the Gulf War. We know now, were it not for that war, the regime in Iraq would likely have possessed a nuclear weapon no later than 1993.

"Today, Iraq continues to withhold important information about its nuclear program -- weapons design, procurement logs, experimental data, an accounting of nuclear materials and documentation of foreign assistance. Iraq employs capable nuclear scientists and technicians. It retains physical infrastructure needed to build a nuclear weapon. Iraq has made several attempts to buy high-strength aluminum tubes used to enrich uranium for a nuclear weapon. Should Iraq acquire fissile material, it would be able to build a nuclear weapon within a year. And Iraq's state-controlled media has reported numerous meetings between Saddam Hussein and his nuclear scientists, leaving little doubt about his continued appetite for these weapons. Iraq also possesses a force of Scud-type missiles with ranges beyond the 150 kilometers permitted by the U. N. Work at testing and production facilities show that Iraq is building more long-range missiles that it can inflict mass death throughout the region..." (George Bush, United Nations General Assembly, New York, September 12, 2002).

Needless to say, neither the UN weapons inspectors, nor the multi-million dollar search for WMD conducted by the US military after the occupation, have found anything remotely similar to the "dangerous" weapons described in the Bush Administration's PR campaign of fear and provocation.

Lack of evidence however, means little for true believers stuck in the psychic prison of ideology. In that protected space they see themselves in the right no matter what contradictory evidence is placed before them. For the Bush administration the compulsion to justify only their version of reality severely diminishes any ability to make effective decisions based on facts that have always been in front of them. The results, as we have noted, have been disastrous.



Distortions can take place at a number of levels in the policy process calling into question conventional images of rational decision making in organizations:

1. At the level of information/feedback, ideological filters can help to keep out unwanted and troublesome information. Policy makers will only accept and process information that confirms ideological beliefs.
2. At the "throughput" or process level, information can be distorted, omitted from analysis, manipulated, or reconstructed for a variety of reasons ranging from concern with the "purity" of ideological truths, to political and psychological factors relating to internal organizational power struggles and politics. Here, the results of such struggles will determine which versions of "truth" prevail, and which ones do not.
3. At the level of policy output. Here the system can engage in "reality management" through processes of organized persuasion such as propaganda, public relations, as well as authoritative statements and declarations.

An extensive analysis of the situations leading to the war in Iraq has been conducted by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (2004), summarizes administration misuse and manipulation of information as "systematic misrepresentation" that goes beyond intelligence failures now being used as a scapegoat for policy failure:

- "Treating nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons as a single "WMD threat". The conflation of three distinct threats, very different in the danger they pose, distorted the cost/benefit analysis of the war.(p.52)
- Insisting without evidence---yet treating as a given truth---that Saddam Hussein would give whatever WMD he possessed to terrorists.(p.52)
- Routinely dropping caveats, probabilities, and expressions of uncertainty present in intelligence assessments from public statements. (p.53)
- Misrepresenting inspector's findings in ways that turned threats from minor to dire. (p.53)

The report goes on to state that "in the Iraqi case, the world's three best intelligence services proved unable to provide the accurate information necessary for acting in the absence of imminent threat "(p.61).

Writing in the Atlantic Monthly, James Fallows provides a blow by blow account of events leading to the invasion of Iraq. His reading places the major cause of the current failures on the shoulders of administration policy makers and the president. "The US occupation of Iraq is a debacle not because the government did no planning, but because a vast amount of expert planning was willfully ignored by the people in charge". (Fallows 2004, p.53). Despite mounting evidence of policy failure, the Bush Administration continues to frame the Iraq war as necessary and justified.

### **September 11, "1984"**

In his popular book *1984*, George Orwell writes about a totalitarian society in which reality is managed by the state and maintained through constant surveillance and control of the population. The Bush fear campaign would make George Orwell proud.

Some Orwellian Constructions used by the Bush Administration include the following:

“The use of powerful and well-placed words and images worked for *INGSOC* (Big Brother’s party). Its slogan — *war is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength* — fits like a truncheon in the cradle of shattered bone with Bush's recent State of the Union address:

*War is peace*

"There is no peace in retreat."

*Freedom is slavery*

"The terrorist surveillance program has helped prevent terrorist attacks. It remains essential to the security of America."

*Ignorance is strength*

... Political doublespeak is nothing new, but has become a real threat to democracy in the hands of this administration. Bush has taken communication strategy to new heights, said David Domke, associate professor of communications at the University of Washington.” (Blethen, 2006).

Writing in the San Francisco Chronicle, Daniel Kurtzman makes some interesting observations regarding the parallel between Orwell’s 1984 and Bush’s America in terms of Orwellian concepts such as “Permanent War”, “The Ministry of Truth”, “Infallible Leader”, “Big Brother is Watching” and the “Thought Police” (Kurtzman 2002):

Each of the above Orwellian nightmares is slowly becoming part of “normal” life in the US. The WOT is a never ending war. The Bush White House serves as the “ministry of truth” with its reality management program. Mr. Bush, a twice “elected” president is portrayed as knowing what is best for the country, new government surveillance of the American people and control of how political discourse is framed and managed indicate a significant drift towards “Big Brother” and the development of a National Security State.

### **Growing Contradictions and Unraveling “Realities”**

The Bush Administration’s powerful propaganda campaign was initially successful in extending their version of reality on to the American people. A poll conducted in 2003 found that the majority of American has held at least one of three mistaken impressions about the U.S.-led war in Iraq. These misperceptions are seen as having contributed to much of the initial popular support for the war. The three common mistaken impressions are that:

1. U.S. forces found weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.
2. Saddam Hussein worked closely Alqaida
3. People in foreign countries generally either backed the U.S.-led war or were evenly split between supporting and opposing it.

Overall, 60 percent of Americans held at least one of those views in polls reported between January and September 2003, by the Program on International Policy Attitudes, based at the University of Maryland in College Park, and the polling firm Knowledge Networks based in Menlo Park, California:

"While we cannot assert that these misperceptions created the support for going to war with Iraq, it does appear likely that support for the war would be substantially lower if fewer members of the public had these misperceptions," said Steven Kull, who directs Maryland's program. In fact, no weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq. U.S. intelligence has found no clear evidence that Saddam was working closely with al-Qaida or was involved in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks (Davis 2003).

Maintaining fabricated realities is difficult and costly. In addition, events in the world outside the ideologically constructed one need continuous management. Ultimately however, this becomes a losing effort. As events on the ground become difficult to whitewash, and as the costs of the war continue to skyrocket, the American people seem to be slowly questioning the White House versions of reality. In 2006, Bush's approval ratings have fallen to the low 30's, a far cry from his close to 90% rating following the events of 911 (Harris Poll 2006).

More recent polls confirm these ratings:

"An AP-Ipsos poll taken last week, before the killing of al-Qaida leader Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq, showed that more Americans than ever thought the war in Iraq were a mistake. The poll showed 59 percent of adults say the United States made a mistake in going to war, and approval of President Bush's handling of Iraq dipped to 33 percent, a new low "(Gearan and Whitmire, 2006).

More and more people in the US and around the world are beginning to see problems such as the mass illegal arrests of thousands of Muslims from Iraq and Afghanistan and their incarceration in concentration camp settings in Guantanamo, Bagram, Kandahar, and many other secret prisons around the world as violations of both international law and human rights. The atrocities at the Abu Ghraib prison, and prisons in Afghanistan which include torture, death, and numerous violations of human and prisoner's rights, testify to the failure of Bush's WOT.

### **The War on Terror and Oil**

The invasion and occupation of Iraq is also about oil. The need to control precious oil fields at a time when supplies are running low and prices are skyrocketing has become a major concern for the Bush government. The WOT serves as a great cover for extending US control and domination into area formerly held by the USSR, especially oil-rich Central Asia. Russia, which has extensive interests in Central Asia views the WOT as a US attempt to gain control Central Asian energy resources:

”On the pretext of fighting international terrorism the United States is trying to establish control over the world’s richest oil reserves, Leonid Shebarshin, ex-chief of the Soviet Foreign Intelligence Service, who heads the Russian National Economic Security Service consulting company, said in an interview for the Vremya Novostei newspaper. Using the anti-terrorist cause as a cover the United States has occupied Afghanistan, Iraq and will soon move to impose their “democratic order” on the Greater Middle East, Shebarshin said. The U.S. has usurped the right to attack any part of the globe on the pretext of fighting the terrorist threat, Shebarshin said.

Referring to his meeting with an unnamed al-Qaeda expert at the Rand Corporation, a nonprofit research organization in the U.S., Shebarshin said: ‘We have agreed that [al-Qaeda] is not a group but a notion.’ ‘The fight against that all-mighty ubiquitous myth deliberately linked to Islam is of great advantage for the Americans as it targets the oil-rich Muslim regions,’ Shebarshin emphasized. With military bases in Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, Shebarshin said, the United States has already established control over the Caspian region, one of the world’s largest oil reservoirs.” (Moscow News 03/21/05)

### **Consequences and Costs**

Policy formulation and implementation that is ideologically determined sooner or later runs into the walls of concrete reality resulting in major negative consequences. Today, the US is bogged down in a war with no end and no boundaries. It is caught in a situation where friends and enemies are ideologically defined, and the national interests of the US are extended on a global scale. It remains to be seen how this war with no end or boundaries will affect the US economy and US standards of living. No exit strategy is in sight. More recently, even major officials of the Bush Regime are slowly realizing the failures of their policies. So now instead of “victory”, they speak about “potential”. This is demonstrated by a recent speech by the US Secretary of State:

“Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Wednesday that the U.S. military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan do not assure those countries will become successful democracies. But she said the chance for success is worth the price” (Gearan and Whitmire 2006).

The “price” as Rice puts it is very high. For the targeted nations, only death, destruction and foreign occupation have been the result. Recent estimates put the civilian death rate in the initial attack, is about 4000 in Afghanistan. Thousands of others remain maimed and injured (Herold 2004:1). Continued US military operations in Afghanistan have come at great civilian costs. In Iraq, the British Medical Journal Lancet estimated 100,000 civilians killed (BBC News Friday, 29 October, 2004). The living in both countries have to deal with environmental damage, radiation pollution from depleted uranium shells, the dangers of unexploded bombs, land mines, and cluster bombs, destroyed civil infrastructures, poverty, unemployment, and the promise of growing civil conflict.

The financial costs of occupation are also mounting for the US: "The financial costs of maintaining US forces in Iraq are currently running at \$7 billion per month, or an annual rate of \$84 billion. By the end of 2010 the costs could rise to \$ 570 billion. A recent report by National Public Radio in the US sees the "true" costs of the war as over two trillion dollars: "The cost of the U.S.-led invasion and continued occupation of Iraq could top \$2 trillion, according to a new academic study -- a sum far larger than any estimates by the Bush administration. The study factors in the long-term costs, such as replacing worn or destroyed military equipment, paying interest on the debt used to finance the war and providing lifetime care for disabled veterans" (Flintoff, NPR 1/13/2006).

On the other hand, corporations such as Halliburton, Bechtel, the Carlyle Group and the "big three" weapons makers Boeing, Lockheed Martin, and Northrop Grumman can expect major profits in US military campaigns. All these corporations have close ties to the Bush administration (See Hartung 2003).

In both Iraq and Afghanistan the US is busy trying to impose US-friendly governments on the population with little success. In Iraq, US calls for "democracy" means unending occupation. In Afghanistan, the US is playing ethnic politics, aligning itself with discredited political elements, and ethno-fascist political parties. Such policies have yet to bring about the necessary order for building and maintaining the proposed oil/gas pipeline connecting Central Asian sources with Pakistan. (Kolko, 2002).

In Central Asia, the US is giving support to dictatorial regimes for the promise of access to Central Asian oil and gas resources. Kleveman calls this a new "great game" based on oil (Kleveman, 2004). In both Iraq and Afghanistan prospects for any kind of meaningful social order and peace remain out of sight. Both countries will most probably continue to be under US military control for a long time to come with increasing economic and human costs. This in itself can be the cause of future problems and disasters for US foreign policy. Continued US occupation and military actions only serve to confirm the ideological beliefs of RI and its particular psychic prison. The situation has boiled down to both sides justifying the actions of the other.

## **Concluding Remarks**

We live in a society where reality is constructed and managed to serve the interests of those in positions of power and privilege. Much like the film "The Matrix", we have been programmed into believing that the Matrix world of George Bush, Corporate Capitalism, and Corporate Globalism must be our reality. Living in such a fabrication is not only detrimental to all our dreams of democracy and human rights, but it also

means death and destruction to millions of people around the world whose lives and livelihoods must be appropriated by the Matrix masters. The Matrix world only offers false meaning and false security. Life beyond the Matrix demands continuous struggle for freedom and liberation from unreality.

A Matrix world has also been created by RI for naïve and unsuspecting Muslims all over the world. RI ideology teaches that Islam is under attack by the infidel West. US policies and military actions confirm these beliefs, intensifying the conflict between the two antagonists.

As the contradictions between the world seen from inside the Bush psychic prison, and the world outside continue to mount, more and more Americans are having doubts about the WOT and Mr. Bush. This despite a very Bush-friendly US media which has effectively underplayed gross atrocities, violations of human rights and international law, and mounting evidence depicting the Bush regime as narrow minded, incompetent, and ideologically driven.

Unfortunately, given the intensity of the Bush propaganda machine, the US has a long way to go before it can liberate itself from the current ideological psychic prison locking the US and its people in a senseless and ineffective war effort. More recently a new justification for the occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan has been created, rejecting immediate withdrawal on grounds that it could generate even more violence, perhaps civil wars. This of course justifies unending occupation.

The fact that the WOT continues, attests to the power of White House propaganda and its effective reality management through fear and deception. At this moment in history with two more years left for this Administration to fulfill the objectives of the Neocons, only a major regime change in the US can offer escape from the Bush Matrix, and the psychic prison that Neocon ideology has built for the American public and the rest of the world.

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***“It is new, and it has to be done!”***

**Socio-Analytic Thoughts on Betrayal and Cynicism in Organizational Transformation\***

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*„Newness’ is a powerful rhetorical trope in the western civilization.  
We live in a culture that values new findings, new ideas and new clothes  
and where that which is old tends to be regarded as obsolete.*

Eriksson (2002, 10)

*Issues of betrayal always involve central processes of change and stability in the moral and  
social boundaries of collectives of people and hence in their sense of belonging and identity.*

Ben-Yehuda (2001, 311f.)

Cynicism is *an attitude that has already done with the experience of betrayal and is just getting to immunize itself against further injuries of this kind.*

Teichert (1990, 100)

## **Abstract**

Contemporary western organizations appear to be caught in neophily, i.e. a cult of newness and novelty. As traditional means of organizational transformation – and profit maximization in particular – have broadly proven insufficient or to have completely failed, contemporary capitalism has turned the Old into an antiquated object of hatred. As the Old, and thus the past, is split off, the New – because it is new – is guaranteed to be better. Organizational structures and processes that previously served as more or less reliable containers for both labour and capital are now regarded as old wineskins that have served their purpose and belong on the ‘scrapheap of history’.

This paper emanates from the *working hypothesis* that betrayal and cynicism, in the context of organizational transformation, cannot sufficiently be understood from a perspective limited to individual psychopathology but has to take the organization as a whole into account – both its internal ‘order of command’ and its interrelatedness with the economic environment that today is tainted by increasing globalisation and particularly by the revolution of the financial service industry.

## **1. Introduction**

The idea of focusing this paper on the organizational function and meaning of betrayal and cynicism in the context of ‘The New’ originates to some extent from my experience of consulting to the ‘Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ)’ a few years ago (Sievers 2006). Many of the dreams shared during the Social Dreaming Matrix (Lawrence 1998)<sup>1</sup> referred to the participants’ experience of being severely betrayed by their political party. As this became obvious through their associations to the dreams, the Austrian Social Democratic Party appeared not only to have given up its original name ‘Socialist Party’ but also most of the essential ideas of socialism. The ongoing effort of their political party to pursue a policy of moderation in order to gain the centre and thus the majority of votes in the elections made them suspicious and full of anger and rage. As one participant of the Social Dreaming Matrix expressed it: *“We should fight against our corrupt party, a system that exists. I have lost the dream, the vision of what Social Democracy embodies. There is nothing more worth fighting for. What is important has already been accomplished; we don’t have to fight for it”* (Sievers 2006). While the participants at first expressed their disappointment with the party leaders, they later realized that they were not only the betrayed victims but were also playing an active role in this betrayal of the idea of socialism.

Though this Social Dreaming example would be worth much further elaboration in the context of contemporary political betrayal in democracy at large, the emphasis of this paper is the broader issue of how the introduction and implementation of the New in organizational transformation often is met by the experience of betrayal that, in addition to many other reactions, may induce cynicism. This is, as one easily may assume, particularly the case if those at the top enforce the New by destructive social and managerial engineering. This paper thus focuses on some of the underlying organizational psychodynamics that result from the neglect, violence, persuasion, manipulation, and lack of thinking which often determines the social atmosphere of transformational processes and ventures in organizations.

Instead of dealing with the phenomena of betrayal and cynicism in the traditional frame as a psychic expression of ‘resistance to change’ – a frame that primarily focuses on the inner world of individuals and their reactions towards organizational change – my attempt at understanding these phenomena as ‘social facts’ is guided by a socio-analytic perspective.<sup>2</sup>

The following thoughts thus emanate from the *working hypothesis* that betrayal and cynicism, in the context of organizational transformation, cannot primarily be regarded as the outcome of individual psychopathology. As these organizational transformations mainly are imposed and engineered by top-management, the experience and reaction of betrayal and cynicism towards the New on the side of subordinate organizational roleholders have to be perceived as being socially induced; betrayal and cynicism are part of the organization as a whole and thus have an impact on its roleholders.

Though, as will be further elaborated, the implementation of the New is often accompanied by a splitting of new and old in the sense that “all that is new is deemed progressive and all that is old regressive” (Gilmore, Shea & Useem 1997, 40), I hope that the following thoughts are not seen as going from the frying pan into the fire by seeming to advocate a reverse splitting, i.e. only the old is good and the new bad.

As with previous topics I have studied (e.g. secrecy in organizations, competition as war, the economy of vengeance and the misuse of trust in organizations – Sievers 1974, 2000, 2003a/b/c; Sievers & Mersky 2004, 2006), there apparently is an enormous gap between the frequency with which social phenomena like betrayal and cynicism appear in everyday life and the attention actually paid to their scientific conceptualization and understanding. Not only is

betrayal quite common throughout the history of mankind and found symbolically in many myths, narratives, literature (e.g. von Matt 1989) and a variety of arts, we all obviously have a whole range of often tragic personal experiences of betrayal. “The consequence of betrayal in familiar contexts, is, as Luhmann has pointed out, that the familiar itself is shattered: ... ‘A gulf opens up even with respect to things and people nearest to one, which doubt removes into a surprising strangeness’ (1979, 33)” (Akerström 1991, 20). Whereas being the victim of betrayal results in the experience of disappointment of trust and may raise feelings of loss, anger, rage, despair, the desire for revenge, cynicism or even traumatization, acknowledging one’s own betrayal of an idea or towards others is not easy and is seldom accompanied by shame and remorse. Not least, “we are betraying ourselves; we betray what we once were willing to do and for what we have fought” (Jaeggi 1984, 302).

A first literature search gives the impression that betrayal is almost ubiquitous – an impression that may be confusing at first sight but makes further sense if one follows the wider understanding of the Italian Jungian psychoanalyst, Carotenuto (1996, 14): “life as betrayal constitutes a key to understanding all phenomena making up the existence of an individual”. “The shadow of betrayal looms over the origin of the individuality” (ibid., 15). “Life in itself, from the moment of birth, is betrayal” (ibid., 25; cf. Green 1978, 182).

There is, both in contemporary fiction and non-fiction literature, not only an endless amount of books on the betrayal of love and adultery, but countless references to betrayal from a broad range of perspectives. Not only are spies, politicians, governments, the media, or the (Catholic) Church (e.g. Boston Globe 2003) accused of betrayal. Other objects of betrayal include ‘the American man’ (Faludi 1999), American sovereignty and social justice (Buchanan 1998), democracy (Lasch 1995), modern work (Ciulla 2000), the worker (Wolman & Colamosca 1997), global public health (Garrett 2000), freedom (Berlin 2002), and not least confidentiality in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy (Bollas & Sundelson 1995). And, not too surprisingly, there are also countless self-help and how-to-avoid books both by (amateur) therapists and organizational consultants (e.g. Reina & Reina 1999; Zyman & Brott 2004).

It well may be that since “one of the features of betrayal is its normality and commonness” (Akerström 1991, XII), it seems to have been broadly ignored as a topic of the social sciences. It is quite surprising that since Georg Simmel’s (1907, 3f., 1908, 342ff., 1950, 294f.) explicit reference to betrayal as ‘the logical contrary to the secret’, sociology, with very few exceptions

(e.g. Gresson 1982; Akerström 1991; Ben-Yehuda 2001), seems to have been broadly silent on betrayal – and on secrecy (cf. Sievers 1974; Ludz 1979). Psychological and psychoanalytical inquiries in particular are also scarce and mainly restricted to a personal or interpersonal perspective, emphasizing the harm, the pain, and the trauma of the betrayed. This is equally true for cynicism. There is little literature that explicitly deals with it from a psychoanalytic perspective. From the few sources I have been able to make out – Reik 1913/1930; Bergler 1933a/b; Sarnoff 1960; Bonime 1966; Eiguer 1999 – cynicism either is regarded as an expression of individual psychopathology or referred to in a pejorative sense.

As already mentioned and indicated by the first line of the this paper's title "*It is new, and it has to be done!*", special emphasis will be laid on how, in the context of organizations, the introduction of new strategies, policies, and value systems is often experienced as betrayal. If they don't have means and capacities to deal in another way, people react with cynicism. This reaction seemed connected to the way in which the New is often praised and perceived as a panacea in the sense that newness and novelty per se are considered to be better than the Old. One example of the 'It' referred to in the first part of the title, is 'reengineering', which is widely praised by Peter Drucker on the front of the book jacket of Hammer & Champy's (1993) book on reengineering as a 'manifesto for business revolution'.

To the extent that the experience of betrayal and cynicism predominates in organizations, the social bonds necessary for productive and meaningful work are damaged, which is most likely devastating for an organization's success, profit, and shareholder value. Even though betrayal and cynicism are not new phenomena in relationship to organizational transformation, their contemporary predominance must – as will be further elaborated towards the end of this paper – partly be understood as part of the global psychotic dynamic created and maintained by the more recent financial service revolution.

## **2. Betrayal and cynicism in psychoanalysis**

### *Betrayal*

Betrayal in the context of psychoanalysis has at least a twofold aspect. It is both the object of analysis and research as well as the content of extensive reproaches. Both Freud himself (in the case of Dora – Freud 1905) and other psychoanalysts have – for good or bad reasons – been

accused of the abuse and betrayal of patients. As Westerlund (1986), for example, explicates, seduction and betrayal of patients have a long history.

As psychoanalysis (and psychology) – with their “retrospective, pathological bias which makes them apter for explaining the present in terms of the past” (Rycroft 1992, 17) – traditionally focuses on the individual, it is not surprising that betrayal in psychoanalysis mainly seems to be restricted to the context of self-betrayal and betrayal trauma. As Josephs (2001, 705) indicates, Freud (1919) made already “explicit that the child views parental intercourse as an act of infidelity, as sexual betrayal”. The ‘primal scene’ is experienced as a betrayal of trust that destroys the assumption of being the unique centre of the parents’ love and protection. The experience of betrayal may put the child in a kind of double-bind situation of being neither able to keep the full awareness of betrayal nor to ‘express’ it due to the (unconscious) phantasy of betraying its parents.

Following Otto Rank’s (1924/1952) thoughts in *The Trauma of Birth*, Carotenuto (1996, 9ff.) regards birth-related betrayal as having a fundamental importance. “Our existence and our autonomy are conditioned because, even before we come into the world, we have already been invented, invented by parents who also were invented. Betrayal, therefore, is inexorably transmitted down through the generations” (ibid., 11). – Carotenuto is one of the few psychoanalytic authors whose understanding of betrayal explicitly focuses on “the vicious circle of betrayal, which is the family circle” (ibid., 35). “The primary context in which betrayal is experienced is the family, for it is in that nucleus that the first love pact is sealed” (ibid., 43).

Not acknowledging and thus betraying the experience of being deceived is one of the sources of betrayal blindness that every child ‘learns’ to some extent very early in the individuation and socialization process. Betrayal blindness is, as Freyd (1996, 193) put it, “the systematic filtering of reality in order to maintain human relationships. It is the not knowing and not remembering the betrayals of everyday life and everyday relationships in order to protect those relationships. It includes the white lies – and the darker lies – we tell ourselves so as not to threaten our bonds”.

Self-betrayal, to which we all are prone to a larger or minor extent (Gruen 1988; Hirsch 1999), can be perceived as a form of perverted love. It is based on subjection and the denial of one’s



own needs and desires in order to receive (parental) recognition and love (cf. Miller 1979/1996, 1981/1998; Winnicott's 1965, 1967 notion of the 'false self'). It most likely becomes chronic for those lacking the basic experience of being loved for one's own self and who learned to subjugate themselves to their parents' aspirations in order to earn their love. The betrayal of self is similar to a *vita reducta*, a restriction of one's own liveliness that tends to be sublimated by permanently proving imaginary superiority. This compulsion and adaptation "keep us from knowing ourselves and others fully. We end up fragmented both internally and externally – impoverished spiritually and socially" (Freyd 1996, 195). In its extreme case, self-betrayal may lead to a betrayal trauma, i.e. "the realisation that one had been deceived and led astray by one's own forbidden but rationalised wishes, masquerading as one's conscience" (Josephs 2001, 703).

"The dread of betrayal trauma results in maintaining a constant state of suspicion in relation to whatever engenders a sense of trust and security" (ibid., 707). "Part of the humiliation of self-betrayal is that one sacrificed the integrity of the self for a forbidden bliss that in reality is not blissful after all" (ibid.). As "betrayal phenomena are partially a consequence of violations of certain compromises that the oppressed had endured (if not accepted gladly)" (Gresson 1982, 10), betrayal thus is not only a matter of who betrayed whom but raises "the more profound questions of man's capacity for forming successful social bounds and how they are broken" (ibid., 4).

Freyd (1994, 1996) especially focuses on the betrayal trauma of abused children, elaborating the quite curious blending of knowing and not knowing typical for betrayal and its traumatic escalation. "The survivor of childhood abuse who 'forgets' and does 'not know' about the abuse similarly has memory and knowledge of the event that surface in other ways: specific phobias, learned behaviours, a self-perception of being a 'bad girl' or 'bad boy'" (Freyd 1996, 4). The victim of a betrayal trauma also may be consciously or unconsciously facing the dilemma of being able to "afford to know about the betrayal but does not know that such awareness is safe" (ibid., 11). What Freyd (ibid., 65) describes as the risk of a child in being fully aware of betrayal by a parent or caregiver, i.e. that it is "or may seem to be, a matter of life and death", may, as will be elaborated later, be equally valid for roleholders in organizations. The amnesia of betrayal, implemented by both personal and interpersonal mechanisms, creates "'information blockage' and a kind of knowing without knowledge"

(Brenneis 1997, 449). – Even though Freyd does not explicitly refer to Bollas' (1987, 1989) concept of the 'unthought known'<sup>3</sup>, the proximity of her thinking is obvious.

Whereas elaborations on betrayal in psychoanalysis seem broadly restricted to its meaning for the individual, Bollas, the British psychoanalyst, significantly widens the frame of reference to the institutional and political realm. In his book *The New Informants*, written with Sundelson, both authors describe to what extent institutional, legal and technical changes in the practice of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy have contributed to the betrayal of confidentiality in work with patients (Bollas & Sundelson 1995). The analyst thus is in danger of becoming a cynic "exploiting for personal ends his patient's need" (Green 1978, 187).

Psychoanalysis, despite its ongoing emphasis on the legacy of Freud and other early psychoanalysts (cf. e.g. Grosskurth 1991; Sievers 2001), has been in permanent fear of betrayal of the 'doctrine' since its very beginning; the excommunication of Carl Gustav Jung, Otto Rank and countless others as well as the founding of the committee of the seven rings<sup>4</sup> are only some of the episodes and dynamics that illustrate this. – It appears that the fear of betrayal is further immanent – and thus widely inexpressible – in psychoanalysis due to the specific socialization process of psychoanalysts and their transferences<sup>5</sup> during the training analysis in particular.

Hillman (1964, 22), a Jungian, appears to be the only psychoanalyst who explicitly indicates the restrictedness of a psychological perspective on betrayal: "Betrayal ... is too tragic an experience to be justified in personal terms of psychological mechanisms and motives. Personal psychology is not enough; analysis and explanations will not do". Whereas most of the psychoanalytic literature appears to be limited to the traditional imagination of betrayal as sin, Hillman (1964, 21) refers to the possibility that "the capacity to betray others is akin to the capacity to lead others" – a turn of the notion of betrayal according to which it – as further elaborated by Krantz (2005) – actually could be understood as a kind of creativity leading to organizational survival.

### *Cynicism*

It will hardly be necessary, in the present context, to remind us that Freud and psychoanalysis are often attacked for inherent cynicism not only by the 'public' but, in some cases, by Freud's

‘followers’ (e.g. Karen Horney). Or, as Sloterdijk (1988, 295) puts it, Freud “erected a theory that makes us all, whether we like it or not, into kynics (if not even into cynics)”.

What is more important here is the impression that there is almost no explicit link between betrayal and cynicism in psychoanalytic literature. That the cynic in psychoanalytic literature is, for example, supposed to devalue in a nihilistic way what actually is of high value for him (Haubl 2001, 99), may well be an expression of self-betrayal. This also seems to be the case if “the cynic is stated to possess an ethic of the negative, in which beauty is trampled underfoot by linguistic acts permeated with the subject’s internal void” (Eiguer 1999, 671). To the extent that cynicism as a linguistic act is supposed to have “the specific purpose of serving as an alibi within a defensive strategy aimed at domination” (ibid.), it equally may serve the self-betrayer as a means to prove imaginary superiority. “Any attachment would be futile, according to the cynic. If a human being seeks it out, the reason is weakness and the fear of loneliness and independence. Compassion, affliction and pain are no part of the cynic’s world. He takes emotional paralysis to extremes, but the ultimate object is to avoid feeling separation anxiety” (ibid.).

“The cynic sets himself up as the founder of a different law, which is terrible and terrifying for his fellow human being, who is his victim and sometimes his accomplice. He claims to be the superego, an exterminating angel; his superego does not impose itself on his ego, but ‘is’ the ego, whereas the actual ego is projected ‘narcissistically’ outwards” (ibid., 675). Eiguer (ibid., 676) is convinced that cynicism “is not merely a marginal phenomenon, but that it fills a void in a psychic structure that does not allow the patient to displace and symbolise like the neurotic: instead, he is induced to construct theories for himself, to support them by argument, and to prove them by enactment”.

“Cynicism is a subjective disbelief in the capacity of any human being to experience genuine friendliness or affectionate concern for another” (Bonime 1966, 155). This may be the reason why Eiguer (1999, 671) feels bound to regard cynicism as “a component of perversion”. “The patient gives the odd impression of possessing a sense of reality and intelligence, albeit coupled with a certain contraction of his interests, which are directed primarily towards his own projects of mastery. But his thought is stimulated preferentially when it has a *cause to defend*. In more general terms, this will involve the setting up of a doctrine on the universality of deceit and infamy. That is the crucible of cynicism” (Eiguer, 1999, 677). “The acceptance of

a cynical attitude ... may help the individual to remain unaware that he actually harbors affectionate feelings towards others” (Sarnoff 1960, 132).

### **3. A socio-analytic perspective on betrayal and cynicism**

As already indicated, one – if not the crucial – reason that psychoanalysis appears so inclined to a pejorative view on betrayal may be seen in the founding process of psychoanalysis itself and its early development. Amongst the early (male) followers of Freud, whoever dared to take up a different perspective on what might constitute the unconscious would run the risk of being seen as a traitor of the doctrine or – even worse – as someone who was betraying ‘the father’.

This seems to be similarly true for cynicism. Psychoanalytic perspectives on cynicism appear quite narrow and neglectful of its historical and societal implications. In addition, as Sloterdijk (1988; cf. 1984) indicates, they also ignore the history of ideas, which is constituent for psychoanalysis and its inheritance. Regarding psychoanalysis as being rooted in the Greek philosophical tradition of Kynicism as a form of Cheekiness (ibid. 1988, 101ff.), psychoanalytic perspectives on cynicism not only devalue the meaning, charm, fascination and tragedy of cynicism but betray the character of psychoanalysis as a “thoroughly kynically inspired discipline” (ibid., 149). In its limited focus on the inner world of the individual, psychoanalytic conceptualisations not only seem to have lost sight of the fact that modern cynicism has dramatically changed since the First World War and its aftermath (ibid., 122) but seem to have ignored the fact that cynicism could be seen less as a symptom of private melancholia and more as an expression of a deep hopelessness and despair due to betrayal, loss and disillusionment on the public and political level and thus on the role level of the citizen. As previous modes of consciousness have lost their value, evaporated through endless suffering and substituted by defensive surrogates, cynicism has become “a conscious choice of unconsciousness” (ibid.). “The discontent in our culture [Freud1930] has assumed a new quality: It appears as a universal, diffuse cynicism” (Sloterdijk 1988, 3). “Cynicism is one of the categories in which modern unhappy consciousness looks itself in the eyes” (ibid., 140).

Eiguer’s (1999, 673) assumption, for example, “that cynicism takes the form of a thought and that it fuels a strategy” thus has to be seen much more as a social strategy than as an individual, private one. Understood from this perspective, cynicism as a social pattern fosters the supposition that the thoughts of the cynic are an expression of non-thinking or even ‘anti-

thought' rather than thinking in the Bionic sense (Bion 1962, 1962/1984; cf. Hoggett 1989). Cynicism thus further may be seen as a kind of a-social or perverse narcissism (Lawrence 2003), which, as opposed to pathological, has to be seen as socially induced and re-enforced by the basic assumption of me-ness (Lawrence, Bain & Gould 1996)<sup>6</sup>. Cynicism is thus an expression of the reification of the singleton (Turquet 1975), a perversion of socialism; it reveals the radical, insurmountable loneliness of the individual in a society of competing monads and dehumanises man, who must exist in a human way only in relation to others (Fetscher 1975). And even the underlying desire that at least the cynics in their cynicism would be able to maintain or establish some relatedness amongst themselves may but appear like the rhetoric of 'workers of the world, unite!' – the equally antiquated and desperate illusion that the global workforce would be able to change its fate if it only would be able to express its solidarity.

We live in a time in which cynicism has become part of the social repertoire of coping with discontent in our culture. If we subscribe to Bion's (1957; cf. Sievers 1999) differentiation of the psychotic and non-psychotic parts of the personality, we may assume that all of us are prone to it. Instead of pathologically classifying someone as a cynic, we thus may assume that we all have cynical and non-cynical parts. Following this assumption, it can, from a socio-analytic perspective, be assumed that the extent to which one or the other part resonates or predominates may not primarily be a matter of individual 'character' but instead a reflection of systemic variables. That would mean that the actual scope and intensity of cynicism are an expression of the organizational context and the extent to which the actual experience of hopelessness and despair can or can't be contained on the level of the respective social system. It thus is most likely that organizational role holders, who experience themselves as treated in a nonhuman way, reified into mere commodities or recipients of orders and unrelated to other role holders as well as to a common task may consciously retreat into cynicism to protect themselves from being exposed to the predominating discontent.

Contrary to Bonime's (1966, 155) *psychoanalytic* definition of cynicism as "a subjective disbelief in the capacity of any human being to experience genuine friendliness or affectionate concern for another", cynicism from a *socioanalytic* stance may well be understood as a socially shared belief that either a particular organization or social systems in general do not have the capacity to allow their role holders the experience of genuine friendliness and affectionate concern for one another. Or, to put it another way, would one actually be surprised

that inmates in today's correction systems – long term recidivists in particular – react with cynicism given the way they are treated?

Sarnoff (1960, 131) writes,, from a *psychoanalytic* perspective, that the cynic projects into others the qualities that are constituent of himself, i.e. “being devoid ... of genuinely altruistic motives” and seeing both himself and “all men as being exclusively preoccupied with the gratification of their own power, security, or comfort”. From a *socioanalytic* perspective this would appear quite appropriate and realistic. This is especially the case when ‘the Other’ is a shareholder – or rather an anonymous mass of shareholders – with no concern other than increasing their shareholder value.

In a curious way, cynicism seems to resemble the unthought known (Bollas 1987, 1989). On the one hand, it implies awareness or knowledge of despair and hopelessness while, on the other hand, the known despair is protected or excluded from thinking – and from experience. As opposed to the view that the indulgence of despair is the only road towards hope, the cynic seems to be convinced that a desperate defence against despair is the only way not to be defeated by it. The avoidance of the experience of what actually is known demonstrates the similarity between cynical and psychotic dynamics – both on the level of the individual personality and the organization.

In psychoanalysis cynicism is regarded as a form of behaviour and distorted thinking of the individual caused by certain childhood experiences related to self-betrayal and betrayal trauma. From a socio-analytic perspective, however, cynicism (and betrayal) must be regarded as socially induced by the organization (if not society or culture) and/or its respective dynamics.

#### **4. Three examples of betrayal and cynicism in organizational transformation**

Through what has been elaborated in this paper so far, one might assume that betrayal and cynicism in organizations are purely recent phenomena, fueled by the cult of the New. In fact, however, cynicism and betrayal have long been regarded as organizational issues in social science literature (in the broader sense) and in less scientific, political or praxis-oriented literature. I will illustrate this using three different examples: (1) cynicism among US prison guards as an organizationally-induced reaction to enforced organizational changes, (2) the disastrous impact of organizational changes on the lives of hundreds of thousands of veterans

of the Vietnam War, and (3) the cynicism of members of the German Social Democratic Party in relation to the betrayal of its original mission.

(1) *Prison and police system*: Cynicism was at the center of an intensive debate in the prison and police system in the US at the end of the 70s. As Poole et al. (1978), Regoli et al. (1979), Poole & Regoli (1980) and various other authors indicate, corrections occupations and police forces are “a fertile breeding ground for cynicism” (Regoli et al., 1979, 185). Cynicism is regarded as a defence mechanism of the prison guards, induced by their experience of frustration and disenchantment related to the conditions of their job and role requirements. Cynicism increases to the extent that “prison guards’ work relations with inmates, fellow officers, and administrators deteriorate” (Poole & Regoli 1980, 303). They feel abandoned and betrayed by their superiors and administrators, who appear not to support their authority in role vis a vis the prisoners. As they also experience being abused by the prisoners and unsupported by their colleagues, “they realize no sense of accomplishment or purpose. In effect, their daily work is rendered meaningless” (ibid., 1980, 306). “In order to survive in a setting where the work relations at all fronts are either threatening or unsupportive, cynicism may represent the type of working ideology which at least ensures one’s own psychological and physical integrity. These concerns may be the only concerns over which the guard still maintains effective control” (ibid., 313).

As Poole & Regoli (ibid., 312) indicate, the cynicism of prison guards revealed in their research was not least a reaction to the betrayal they experienced as “traditional prison roles have been affected by institutional reforms”. The new organizational structures, guided by a political movement to improve the rights of inmates and unilaterally implemented by top prison management, ultimately severely undermined the authority of the prison guards. As in some other Western countries where, in the context of privatisation of correctional institutions, inmates are turned from prisoners into customers (cf. Long 1999), the guards felt left alone and betrayed. Their former commitment to the double institutional task of rehabilitation and punishment was seriously in question. Prison managements were unable to provide sufficient containment for the role conflict of the guards and the undermining of their authority. Retreat into cynical withdrawal seemed the only escape from the insight that they themselves – and not the inmates – face ‘lifelong imprisonment’.

(2) *Betrayal trauma in the Vietnam War*: The extent to which betrayal and betrayal traumata in particular actually are induced in an organizational context further becomes obvious in a most striking way in the context of the military forces. Shay (1994, cf. 2003), in his quite shocking account of working as a psychiatrist with Vietnam veterans, describes how the experience of combat traumata in Vietnam has severely damaged and often ruined the future lives of countless veterans. (Shay estimates that about 250.000 people have been traumatised in this extreme sense in Vietnam.) He gives frightening evidence that most of these traumata had been induced by the organization and management of the military forces and the inherent cynical neglect of the dependency needs of soldiers, especially those in the lower ranks.

While the organization of armies in the past was based on a dependency culture (Bion 1962), since the 1950's (under Eisenhower) the American Department of Defence "adopted and enhanced policies that .. transformed the officer corps into business managers and technocrats" (Vandergriff 2002, 89). The transfer of the New – in the form of scientific management – from the business world into the army was further enforced by Robert McNamara, secretary of defence during the Vietnam War, who applied to the military forces what had appeared to be appropriate for his former employer, the Ford-Motor Company. He was convinced that the "solution to any problem ... was the use of systems analysis and cost-effectiveness comparative analysis" (ibid., 95). The prevalent tendency of "making the army a business" (ibid., 80) also fostered a personnel system that "produces a willing servant in the bureaucracy, the wrong type of officer to be a troop leader at any echelon" (ibid., 18).

To the extent that soldiers were to be treated like employees and workers, military leadership was unable to provide the containment required for combat, which is an inescapable matter of life and death. Countless soldiers experienced as betrayal the disastrous conditions enforced upon them by new and not yet adequately developed management and weapon technologies and reacted to them by betrayal trauma.

Some became preoccupied with the conviction that the US government had a vested interest that not too many of them would return home (Shay 1994, 52). Others turned their indignant fury into irreversible rage. The betrayal of 'what's right', a term which refers to the ancient Greek *thémis* (ibid., 36), borrowed from Homer's *Iliad* (which Shay compares



to the Vietnam War in his book), is of a social kind; it hurts a person by the offence against 'what's right' (ibid., 57). Social betrayal has a most destructive effect on the feeling of continuity of values and ideals, ambitions, and activities. If certain important values are betrayed, ultimately the trustworthiness of all ideals or activities may be challenged (ibid., 242).

I all too well remember how disconcerted I felt when, on a recent visit to a US veterans' hospital, I noticed the appalling conditions in which the 'inmates' lived. The way these veterans appeared to me and how they were kept in custody did not leave me with the impression that the nation was grateful to those who once had risked their lives – and been psychically ruined. Only when I read Shay's (1994, 2003) books some time after the visit, did it become strikingly obvious to me that Vietnam veterans had been seen by part of American society "as losers and executors of a policy that had betrayed American ideals" (Reemtsma 1998, 10). It also confirmed another observation: "it is historically typical for returning American war veterans throughout our history to be ignored by the communities they returned to, rather than to be celebrated and cherished by them" (Shay 2003, 154).

Though I was not aware of it on the occasion of this visit, it is most likely that many of these veterans (the Vietnam ones in particular) apparently suffer from lifelong betrayal trauma. – Sadly enough, it appears to be most likely that the severe political betrayal, on which the present Iraq war is based, will not spare many soldiers a similar traumatic fate.

(3) *Social Democracy*: Inspired by the experience of a Social Dreaming Workshop with the *Austrian* Social Democrats, I researched the early history of *German* social democracy. It became evident that *German* social democracy and its history during the relatively short period of the Weimar Republic is an even more dramatic example of organizational betrayal and cynicism.

As opposed to the two previous examples, where the new had been enforced upon an organization in destructive ways, the relatedness of the old and the new and the inherent experience of betrayal and cynicism was different in the case of the suppressed revolution in Germany at the end of World War I. From its very beginning, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, German Social Democracy had to face the accusation of having betrayed its original target group, i.e. 'the workers'. Even though the Weimar Republic as such was a

period in which “fraud and expectations of being defrauded became epidemic” (Sloterdijk 1988, 483) and had a major impact on social and political life in Germany, the focus here is on the relatively short period after the end of World War I, in 1918, when “social democracy destroyed and hindered what was about to take place in Germany in those months: the Social Democratic revolution” (ibid., 432; cf. Haffner 1995, 6).

The Social Democratic Party, led by Friedrich Ebert, the Reichskanzler (Chancellor of the Reich) and chairman of the party, squelched the revolutionary attempts of the workers, who to a major extent were either members or sympathizers of the Party. Ebert was driven by the desire to reach hegemony for his party in the Reichstag in order to get a broad enough basis for enforcing social reforms and for improving the fate of the workers. As a result, he “placed the needs of organizational survival over adherence to doctrine” (Lipset 1962, 19; cf. Sloterdijk 1988; Haffner 1995).

This did not only contribute to the predominant social and political climate of cynicism during the Weimar Republic but seriously damaged the credibility of the Social Democratic Party up to the present. ‘The workers’, party members and sympathizers alike, have a deeply rooted suspicion that contemporary party leaders are not able to cope with the insuperable contradiction between being the party of the working class and the unemployed and the increasing conviction “that traditional working class politics had become obsolete in a world of globalized competition” (Bernstein 2005).

What has become clear from these three case examples is the often devastating impact that social betrayal can have both for an organization’s membership or workforce and for the organization as a whole. As the literature on the correction system and Shay’s work on Vietnam veterans indicate, the deep feeling of betrayal and the ‘flight’ into cynicism or betrayal trauma on the side of organizational roleholders can be understood as being socially induced by maladapted organizational transformations, i.e. by an inadequate reform of the authority structure and the role requirements of superiors and their subordinates and/or the adoption of management and leadership models that prove to be totally inadequate for the respective organizational task. The sketch on the Social Democratic Party is not only an indication of how deeply betrayals from earlier times last over time but also raises serious questions about its future and its ultimate survival.

## **5. Betrayal as a defiance of mandated social relationships**

Following Gresson's (1982) paraphrase of betrayal as "a unilateral breaking of faith, oneness, affinity, or trust with another" (ibid., VII), betrayal in the context of organizations – and organizational transformation in particular – can, to a major extent, be understood as the "defiance of mandated social relationships" (Gresson 1982, 3; cf. Elangovan & Shapiro 1998, Koehler & Gershoff 2003, Morris & Moberg 1994, Scallen 1993). It "destroys the fabric of the relationships that keep our organizations operating" (Reina & Reina 1999, 37). As betrayal always involves "central processes of change and stability in the moral and social boundaries of collectives of people and hence in their sense of belonging and identity" (Ben-Yehuda 2001, 311f.), the experience of betrayal often seems to be linked to change and to organizational transformation in particular. As some or most of the Old no longer is valid, organizational changes are most likely – to a greater or lesser extent – experienced as a loss and, in the extreme case, as deceit or robbery.

As many recent transformation processes in enterprises and corporations more or less appear forced down from top management – often with a high degree of violence (Stein 2004) – it is but an irony that managements and management books in particular broadly propagate a "rhetoric focused on 'commitment', loyalty', and 'trust'" (Ciulla 2000, 153). This not only seems to confirm one of my previous working hypotheses that "the attempt to engineer trust by management is an expression of an underlying denial of the loss of hope both with regard to the relatedness between organizational members ... and the value and meaning of organizations" (Sievers 2003b, 24; cf. 2003a/c); it equally can be assumed that the inherent betrayal is further evidence of (top) management's deep despair.

According to my own understanding and to the literature on the betrayal of work and the worker (Wolman & Calomosca 1997; Faludi 1999; Reina & Reina 1999; Ciulla 2000; Stein 2004), the contemporary predominance of betrayal in organizations is a result of top managements' contempt towards the workforce. Management strategies like downsizing, reengineering, outsourcing, megamergers, benchmarking, and various others, all of which promise more effective business processes, profits and efficiency, predominate. The reasons articulated are not only based on the conviction that workforces were often inflated in the past and thus require downsizing or slimming via 'organizational anorexia' (Stein 2004, 426ff.), they also reflect the contemptuous assumption that workforces have for too long lived in clover

by profiting from life-long employment, high (pension) benefits, relatively low workloads and increasing wages – an assumption that might have been true perhaps two decades ago but not today. Managements' contempt towards 'the worker' is not a recent phenomenon but can be regarded as ingrained in the relationship since early times of industrialization (Sievers 1994, 74ff.; cf. Pelzer 2005). The contemporary increase of contempt via betrayal suggests that top management groups can not acknowledge the chaos and despair inside themselves and their managerial roles. Instead of accepting and containing their own inner chaos and despair resulting from their own unacknowledged limitations and their powerlessness to respond adequately to demanding environmental challenges, chaos and despair are projected both into the workforce and onto apparently inadequate former management tools.

It further can be assumed that the betrayal of workforces by top management is regarded by the latter as a justified response to the betrayal they have had to endure from the former for far too long. Although it is true that employees have to a more or less limited extent cheated their employers e.g. by stealing or reducing their commitment to the minimum of what is required of them in their roles, top managements' phantasy that employees have to be prosecuted and punished for their betrayal is a projection<sup>7</sup> that ultimately serves to justify and legitimise their own behaviour as an unavoidable and adequate reaction.

## **6. Betrayal through 'betterment' of the New**

Whereas in pre-modern times and ancient times in particular, the Old is generally considered to be better than the New, modern age has turned the hierarchy of time around. Since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, "innovation has become a god to whom we are even today paying tribute day by day" (Girard 2004, 41). Striving for the future "also means to dissolve the links to the past and to break the supremacy of tradition – often in a quite violent manner" (Koschorke 2004, 144). That does not only mean that newness and novelty have become the tropes of modernity but also the speed with which the New is becoming old has increased enormously. The ironic remark of Karl Valentin, a German comedian and actor of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, that there is nothing older than yesterday's paper, has more and more become today's reality. The half-life period of knowledge, the expiry dates and the life cycles of many of our products have shrunked drastically; in fact many products are made to expire!

As the future per se almost necessarily is supposed to be better, betterment has become the predominant doctrine not only for our private lives but also for science, education, health care, industry, and economy. The respective organizations and their roleholders are under unimaginable pressure to adapt to the doctrine of betterment and to be devoted to the idea of progress. As there is almost no doubt that the New per se is better than the Old, newness becomes a value in itself, obliterating traditional ways of living and working and above all most of the values on which they were based.

Contemporary capitalism reduces social, political, and economic reality into money that, as Wolfenstein (1993; cf. Sievers 2003a) has elaborated, has become a universal equivalent to all values and thus the standard of values in general. As money has lost its meaning and symbolization, what counted so far as ultimate values are reduced to 'shareholder value' turning shareholders into the only relevant and "legitimate 'stakeholders' and reference group" (Stein 2004, 431). And as time is equally reduced into money, time loses its relatedness to the past; it is supposed to happen in the immediate present with the only function to increase future gains. As the Old, and thus the past, is split off (cf. Sievers 2004), turned into an object of hatred, regarded as antiquated and supposed to be abolished, the New is supposed to give the guarantee to be better; it per se is promising a higher profitability and increase of shareholder value.

Whereas organizations – and corporations in particular – previously represented symbols of survival and immortality, due to their existence over generations and their offer of lifelong employment (Sievers 1990, 1994), in contemporary organizations, "the face of death is the bottom line everywhere" (Stein 2004, 431).

New organizational and managerial strategies like downsizing (Stein 1999, 2000, 2004), business process reengineering (Hammer & Champy 1993; cf. Wolman & Calamosca 1997; Grint & Case 1998; Case 1999; Sievers 2004), shareholder value optimization (Rappaport 1986; cf. Sievers, 2003a), or balanced scorecard (Kaplan & Norton 1996, 2001; cf. Kiunke 2004) are increasingly being implemented and pushed through in response to the promising economic advantages or the potential threats of globalization. These new strategies are often based on a cynically engineered "work ethic of intimidation and fear" (Stein 2004, 424).

Business process reengineering, with its rhetoric of “Don’t automate, obliterate” (Hammer 1990) or “Tradition counts nothing. Reengineering is a new beginning” (Hammer & Champy 1993, 49), is probably the most striking example of how the Old tends to be devaluated and abandoned in face of the New. More and more, and often with good reason, traditional means of organizational transformation and profit maximization in particular have proven insufficient or a total failure. The way reengineering has been marketed and accepted by a vast amount of enterprises in the 1990s seems to be the incarnation of a cult of the New. The ruthlessness, boldness, and naïvety with which it has been propagated – and implemented – would previously have appeared incredible. Reengineering is based on a total neglect and obliteration of the past in which organizations and enterprises in particular functioned as reliable containers for the owners and/or shareholders and for meaningful work. The exclusive emphasis on the improvement of business processes and thus the optimization of profit and shareholder value reduces organizational reality to a monopoly game designed to maximize profits with the lowest amount of invested capital and the rationalization of technology and resources – including those that, in the rhetoric of personnel management, have long since been referred to euphemistically as ‘human’.

In a metaphoric sense, the propagators of business process reengineering and many other management strategies seem to resemble the cynic, described above, who, in his sadism, is “demolishing beauty, of spirit and creations” (Eiguer 1999, 671), using a “strategy aimed at domination” (ibid., 672), being devoid of genuinely altruistic motives, and “essentially self-seeking along any scale of values held dear by the society of which he is a member” (Sarnoff 1960, 131). Remaining in the *metaphoric* frame of the cynic, as described in psychoanalysis and applied here to the propagators of management strategies, it is not too much of a surprise that Eiguer (1999, 671) regards cynicism “as a component of perversion”. Like cynicism, these strategies tend to take “the form of a thought and ... fuel .. a strategy” (ibid., 673) that, as indicated above, reflect a high degree of non-thinking. The propagators of those organizational and managerial strategies devoted to the cult of newness seem to be driven by a totalitarian-state-of-mind (Lawrence 1995), leaving their subordinates with no choice other than acquiescence.

The biblical parable of the wineskins (e.g. Greeley 2004; Weiler 2004), i.e. that “no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins, and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined” (Luke 5:37) is often used to illustrate the value of the New.

The general assumption regarding this parable is that the new wine stands for a positive symbol and the old wine for a negative one. This, however, is not the interpretation of most wine connoisseurs and – as the theologian Eriksson (2002) convincingly indicates – is also not congruent with biblical exegesis. In Mediterranean ancient culture the old was highly esteemed. The belief that the new is better is in itself based on a moral persuasion, which began in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century. Commonly used as proof that Christianity is better than (Pharisaic) Judaism, the parable has not only “served as a justification for the winning side in an ideological battle between Judaism and Christianity” (ibid., 13) but continues to be applied to the contemporary battle for organizational betterment and its devoted service of the cult of the New.

Betrayal, when realized, is a phenomenal existential feeling and experience. The world is no longer the same as before. As the New is often devastating, it raises all kinds of ‘negative’ feelings and not seldom despair. “Issues of betrayal always involve” as Ben-Yehuda (2001, 311f.) put it, “central processes of change and stability in the moral and social boundaries of collectives of people and hence in their sense of belonging and identity”. Betrayal reaches its climax when the New changes from an episode that might be ‘repaired’ later to a permanent reality, regarded as incontrovertible and infinite. As it is likely that the organizational strategies referred to above may soon be replaced by even newer ones – and thus by renewed betrayal – organizational roleholders face even more of “the social production of meaninglessness and rage” (Stein 2004, 425 – with reference to Faludi 1999).

Those who are lucky enough to have survived a first (or even subsequent) round of downsizing and betrayal by devastating organizational transformation know full well that they could be the next victims. “The betrayal of trust and loyalty, the abrupt severing of the psychological/social contract, the utter discounting of human relatedness, the chronic condition of disposability, leads to self-protective measures, often unconscious, among workers and managers alike” (Stein 2004, 431), regardless whether they are among the survivors or not.

“Over time, employees become cynical from the cumulative effect of these bruising betrayals and lose confidence in their organizations. Employees reach the point where they *expect* to be betrayed” (Reina & Reina 1999, 6). The experience and emotional response of survivors to betrayal shapes not only their experience but also the organizational culture as a whole. In its worst case, it becomes tainted by the ‘survivor syndrome’ of managers and workforce alike.

## **7. The impact of the financial service revolution**

In the following section, I would like to emphasise the impact of a particular New on the contemporary dynamic, i.e. the financial service revolution. It can be assumed that underlying top managements' projections into the workforce – that of chaos, despair and betrayal – is the contempt and betrayal that they experience, mainly unconsciously, from shareholders and from the financial analysts of the huge investment and pension funds in particular. The main 'accomplishment' of the financial service revolution is the broadly irrefutable fact that money is all that counts in today's business world. Money, having become the measure of man means that (top) managers are not only obliged to follow the pied pipers and the tunes they are playing, but feel more controlled, disposable and thus replaceable than their predecessors. Corporate executives, at the mercy of shareholders, turn into mere henchmen of the major institutional investors and their managements. As further elaborated on a previous occasion (Sievers 2003a), the financial industry sustains a vicious circle of psychotic<sup>8</sup> projections and introjections<sup>9</sup> sustaining a mutual collusion of defenses against psychotic anxieties.

In the context of shareholder value frenzy, the value of an enterprise is reduced to a single monetary one, i.e. the shareholder value. This makes obsolete any other notion or quality. Organizations in the financial industry have no valency for anything other than the mandate they claim to have from their shareholders. The vicious cycle of psychotic transferences is not limited to the inner world of the financial industry but directly impacts other corporations and enterprises. To the extent that top corporate managements are in collusion with the institutions of the financial industry, they can be seen as having become the primary object of "defiance of mandated social relationships" (Gresson 1982, 3). This collusion appears to perpetuate the vicious circle of betrayal, as these top managements project the unacknowledged betrayal of the funds and their representatives into their own organizations and workforces. As the mandated relationship with the funds is tainted by defiance, top managements collude with the workforce to foster a relationship based on mutual distrust and betrayal. As contemporary managements appear to have no other choice than to adapt to the triumphant increase of the 'cult of the share', the new generation of top managers not only loses its historical autonomy but also perpetuates a psychotic circle in which everything that is not commoditizable is devalued and excluded – including its workforce, which is treated like any other resource for the exclusive sake of shareholder value optimisation.



Fuelled by psychotic anxieties and defenses, the external reality in which the pension funds operate is characterized by a totalitarian mode of thinking and thus reduced to a universal money game. Limited to the dual logic of either winning or losing and played in a highly complex and ever speedier fashion, this game avoids any consciousness of greed, fraud or betrayal. In cynically ignoring any other value but that of money, the game maintains demoralization by affluence. Money has but a cynical valence (Sloterdijk 1988, 315).

Although both shareholder value optimisation as ‘the *new* standard for business performance’ (Rappaport 1986) – and thus the incarnation of the cult of the share – as well as the *revolution* of the financial service industry (e.g. Clark 2000) have become crucial for business and capitalism in a global economy for more than a decade and thus, in a sense, are not really any longer ‘new’, they meanwhile have become ‘commandments’ for the betterment through the New, elaborated above. Not taking them into account or offending against them has become a deadly sin in the global business world. To commit it almost equals eternal damnation in the sense of drastic decrease of shareholder value and ultimately bankruptcy or hostile takeover. In order to avoid this sin, top managements seem to be legitimised, if not encouraged, to regard almost anything that – according to the *Ten Commandments* – had previously been perceived as sin as a mere means for the improvement of profit and the increase of money. As Orwell (1956, 43) put it half a century ago, “money worship has been elevated into a religion. Perhaps it is the only real religion – the only really felt religion – that is left to us. Money is what God used to be. Good and evil have no meaning any longer except failure and success.”

As there is striking evidence that most new management strategies only contribute to raise the value of a firm for a short time, if at all (e.g. Wolman & Colamosca 1997; Lurie 1998), it is an irony and a paradox that every new attempt to ‘improve’ companies by the newest, more promising innovations further nurtures the vicious circle of betrayal. To the extent that the engineering of organizational transformation is “highly influenced and contaminated by brutality, sadism, indifference to suffering, and .. magical thinking” (Stein 2004, 419), it is not too much of a surprise that employees, both lower management and the workforce, often and to an increasing extent, tend to react to the cynicism of top management by cynicism themselves. Cynicism is, as Teichert (1990, 100) put it, “an attitude that has already done with the experience of betrayal and is just getting to immunize itself against further injuries of this kind”.

## 8. Conclusion

What I have attempted to elaborate so far is just a sketch; neither have I intended to give a complete overview on betrayal and cynicism in the context of organizational transformation, nor do I regard this matter closed. Looking at the predominating betrayal and cynicism in contemporary organizations from the perspective chosen here, one may have the quite pessimistic impression that the business world and working life are tainted by an endless accumulation of money. What broadly is propagated as the ‘new wine’ has become to an incredible extent poisoned by the ‘new wineskins’. For the sake of affluence and achievement of world market hegemony this poisoning is broadly ignored by the main protagonists and profiteers. The immanent tragedy is hidden, disguised or denied by more and more betrayal and cynicism. “Modern bourgeois economic sciences are”, as Sloterdijk (1988, 315) states, “nothing other than a higher-level *non olet*. In the song of the praise to the free-market economy, modernized money, as capital, has found an appropriately modern form to declare its physical and moral odorlessness”.

The socio-analytic perspective applied here has been guided by the underlying assumption that the degree of betrayal and cynicism in the context of contemporary organizational transformation is partly an expression of a psychotic global dynamic, fuelled by the new financial service industry. It would seem to be a wasted effort to imagine how this dynamic might ever be changed.

It is difficult to imagine how, in the present context, a defiance of the mandated social relationship could be overcome to create hope for a significant transformation of organizational culture. What Teichert (1990, 24) states about the realm of interpersonal relationships seems to apply here, i.e. that to the extent that the ‘culprits’ are not prepared to take responsibility for their deeds, to show remorse or – due to shame – admit what they have done to others, committed betrayal cannot be overcome by a development of new trust. On the contrary, it leaves the betrayed ones in a state of permanent dependency on their betrayers, thus ‘immortalizing’ the betrayal.

How can one imagine that top managements and workforces will ever be able to admit that they are mutual traitors? Krantz (2005, 14) has offered the idea that “the capacity to betray from the depressive position [might be] .. a developmental stage for managers and leaders”. He

works with the hypothesis “that injury is more easily overcome, and the experience of guilt, anger and sadness more easily integrated, when the betrayal occurs in the broader context of institutional purpose” (ibid., 23). Using these thoughts, it seems to be more reasonable to imagine a reflexive strategy of betrayal, which can be contained, acknowledged and hopefully ‘overcome’ by leaders who have the capacity to work from the depressive position. “Containing the experience of betrayal and converting it into useful thought” (ibid., 26) under ‘normal’ conditions of organizational change requires a high amount of competence on the side of the leader. To change ‘psychotic betrayal’ to ‘depressive betrayal’ appears a Herculean task that requires almost superhuman authority, strength and confidence on the part of any leader prepared to face it.

If there is some truth to what Rycroft (1992, 19) states, i.e. that “hope is, in fact, something that circulates within that total, wider, system of relationships we call society”, then perhaps in future we can collectively generate further hope in parts other than the economic realm. Developing a “social matrix of hope” (ibid.) may help us to overcome the current predominant economic and business matrix of betrayal. Even though the wheel of history ultimately cannot be turned back, we must be aware of the fact that the New does not necessarily imply better; we may have to continually remind ourselves of the original meaning of the parable of the wineskins, i.e. that “The old is better” (Luke 5:39).

Differentiation between paranoid-schizoid<sup>10</sup> and the depressive<sup>11</sup> dynamics offers a different perspective on the Old and the New than immaturely splitting them into regressive or progressive features (Gilmore, Shea & Useem 1997, 177). Holding unshakably onto the Old or persisting in the frenzy of the New are both expressions of a psychotic dynamic. Neither position allows one to face the anxieties of the paranoid-schizoid position nor of the depressive one. Over three decades ago, Eric Trist (1972, 181; cf. 1997) stated that in order to foster positive societal growth, “a more thorough working through of the anxieties of the depressive position” must take place. Trist’s position may provide a source of hope for overcoming the totalitarian-state-of-mind and the one-dimensional way of thinking characteristic of the cult of the new. The seductivity of the idea that something must be done just because it is new may come from the unconscious desire to devalue what has been arrived at and to substitute chaos and discontent with the illusion of a future of order, efficiency, and happiness.

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### ***Biography:***

**Dr. Burkard Sievers** is Professor of Organizational Development in the Department of Economics, Management and Social Sciences at Bergische Universität Wuppertal in Germany, where he teaches and writes on management and organization theory from a psychoanalytic perspective and an action research approach. He received his Dr. Soz. Wiss. from the University of Bielefeld in 1972 and has held visiting appointments at various universities abroad. Dr. Sievers is co-editor of ‚Freie Assoziation – Zeitschrift für das Unbewusste in Organisation und Kultur‘. He was awarded the 1995 International Award for Participation from the HBK-Spaarbank in Antwerp (Belgium) for his book ‘Work, Death, and Life Itself. Essays on Management and Organization’, Berlin: de Gruyter 1994. He is President of the International Society for the Psychoanalytic Study of Organizations for the period 2005-2007 and co-director of ‘Organizations in Depth’, an International Professional Development Program held in Coesfeld/Cologne, Germany.

## **10. Notes**

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<sup>1</sup> Social Dreaming “is a discipline for discovering the social meaning and significance of dreams through sharing them with each other’s. This is done by the deliberate and sustained method of free association and amplification through the Social Dreaming Matrix. ... From the inception of Social Dreaming the systemic nature of dreaming was recognized and affirmed. Not only do dreamers dream from their ecological niche but also they dream themes that are systemically related. Social dreaming is also a uniquely experiential discipline, which frees participants from their personal defenses that constrain free-thinking and interaction in ordinary social situations. Social dreaming can be used in organizational systems, professional communities, and consumer, focus and special interest groups” (Social Dreaming Institute). Social Dreaming was founded by W. Gordon Lawrence in 1982.

<sup>2</sup> Socio-analysis is defined “as the activity of exploration, consultancy, and action research which combines and synthesises methodologies and theories derived from psycho-analysis, group relations, social systems thinking and organisational behaviour” and “social dreaming” (Bain 1999, 14).

<sup>3</sup> Unthought known is a term which has been offered by the British psychoanalyst Bollas (1987, 1989). It refers to what “is known at some level but has never been thought or put into words, and so is not available for further thinking” (Lawrence, 2000, 11–12). This knowledge cannot be grasped, because it cannot be phrased in language or metaphor. As it cannot be thought, named, or put into an idea, it is acted out primarily in situations of high anxiety and chaos, which foster the exportation of the threat of internal terror.

<sup>4</sup> The Committee of seven rings is “the ‘Secret Committee’ of seven men, including himself, that Freud organized in 1912 ‘to maintain the faith and to search out deviance’ from his principles. Freud charged Ernest Jones, Karl Abraham, Otto Rank, Sandor Ferenczi, Hanns Sachs and Max Eitingon with preserving his discovery and propagating it around the world. To seal their compact he gave each an ancient ring, thus closing the circle” (Schneiderman 1991).

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<sup>5</sup> Transference: The process by which an individual or social system displaces on to others feelings, ideas, etc., by which it relates to others as though it were some former object (cf. Rycroft 1968/1995, 185f.).

<sup>6</sup> Basic assumption me-ness (baM): “Our working hypothesis is that baM occurs when people-located in a space and time with a primary task, i.e., meet to do something in a group-work on the tacit, unconscious assumption that the group is to be a non-group. Only the people present are there to be related to because their shared construct in the mind of 'group' is of an undifferentiated mass. They, therefore, act as if the group had no existence because if it did exist it would be the source of persecuting experiences. The idea of 'group' is contaminating, taboo, impure, and, in sum, all that is negative. The people behave as if the group has no reality, and cannot ever have reality, because the only reality to be considered and taken account of is that of the individual. It is a culture of selfishness in which individuals appear to be only conscious of their own personal boundaries, which they believe have to be protected from any incursion by others. The nature of the transactions is instrumental, for there is no room for affect which could be dangerous because one would not know to where feelings might lead” (Lawrence, Bain & Gould 1996/2000, 100).

<sup>7</sup> Projection: “Lit. throwing in front of oneself. Hence its use in ... psychoanalysis to mean 'viewing a mental image as objective reality'. In psychoanalysis two sub-meanings can be distinguished: (a) the general misinterpretation of mental activity as events occurring to one, as in dreams and hallucinations; and (b) the process by which specific impulses, wishes, aspects of the self, or internal objects are imagined to be located in some object external to oneself. Projection of aspects of oneself is preceded by denial, i.e. one denies that one feels such and such a wish, but asserts someone else does. ... Projection of internal objects consists in attributing to someone in one's environment feelings towards oneself which derive historically from some past external object whom one has introjected” (Rycroft 1968/1995, 139).

<sup>8</sup> Contrary to the traditional use of the term both in psychiatry and psychoanalysis, psychosis is understood here as a way of thinking. It is mainly through the work of Melanie Klein that the experience of anxieties of a psychotic nature is regarded as a constituent dimension of the normal development of infants, and equally constitutes a part of our adult world, rooted as it is in this early experience (Klein 1952, 1959). To acknowledge psychotic anxieties and

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thinking as constituent parts of the development of infants and of human development – and thus of life in general – contributes towards a depathologization of psychosis and its respective anxieties (Young 1994, 73ff.). It is the notion of psychotic anxiety as the in-between-state of the paranoid-schizoid and the depressive position which challenges me to use the notion with organizations. Social organizations and profit-oriented organizations, in particular, often seem to cover their internal anxiety level with a somehow curious, but nevertheless normal appearance. I often have the impression that these organizations are stuck in the predominant attempt to defend against the apparent threat and persecution emanating from the outer world of markets and competitors, which they at the same time tend to dominate and control with a high degree of aggression, sadism and destructivity. In cases like these, it seems to me that the psychic dynamic of the organization is caught in a behavior and a way of thinking which are typical of the paranoid-schizoid position. In face of the on-going struggle for excellence, growth and survival and the attempt to gain greater market shares, there seems to be almost no capacity for the depressive position and its anxieties. As the concern for good objects of the inner or outer world is missing, the predominant destructiveness and aggression seem to leave no space for the experience of guilt, the desire for love, mourning or reparation typical of the depressive position. The external world and reality thus become shaped and reduced by inner psychotic anxieties and their respective defense mechanisms.

<sup>9</sup> Introjection: “The process by which the functions of an external object ... are taken over by its mental representation, by which the relationship with an object ‘out there’ is replaced by one with an imagined object ‘inside’. The resulting mental structure is variously called an *introject*, an *introjected object*, or *internal object*” (Rycroft 1968/1995, 87).

<sup>10</sup> Paranoid-schizoid position: “Psychic configuration postulated by Melanie Klein in which the individual deals with his innate destructive impulses by (a) splitting both his ego and his object-representation into good and bad parts, and (b) projecting ... his destructive impulses on to the bad object by whom he feels persecuted. According to Klein, the paranoid-schizoid position constitutes the infant’s first attempt to master its death instinct and precedes the depressive position. Failure to leave the paranoid-schizoid position (i.e. to reach the depressive position) is responsible, in Klein’s view, not only for many schizoid and paranoid disorders, but also for obsessional difficulties ... in which the ‘persecuting bad object’ is introjected ..., forming the core of the super-ego” (Rycroft 1968/1995, 125).

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<sup>11</sup> Depressive position: “A Kleinian concept. It describes the position reached (in her scheme of things) by the infant (or by the patient in analysis) when he realizes that both his love and hate are directed towards the same object – the mother – becomes aware of his ambivalence and concerns to protect her from his hate and to make reparation for what damage he imagines his hate has done” (Rycroft 1968/1995, 36).



# ***24th Standing Conference on Organizational Symbolism***

*The Good, the Bad and the Ugly:  
Organizations and Demons*

12-15 July 2006

Nijmegen, Netherlands

## **Organising Organic: a Darker Side**

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## Introduction

*“Do people, when they go and pick their organic potatoes up off the shelf, do they really realise that it’s grown on an agrobusiness on that type of system and then used an industrial model to get them on the shelf of the supermarket?”  
(Personal interview with organic producer)*

In November 2003, Britain became third largest consumer of organic produce in the world with annual sales of organic food exceeding one billion pounds. By 2004, organic sales were growing at a rate of £2.3 million a week, which was a faster growth rate than sales in the non-organic grocery market (Soil Association, 2005a). Clearly, in Britain and elsewhere, organic has moved from the marginal to the mainstream and, in doing so, has become a very fashionable word.

On the grocery store shelf, organic indicates a promise of good things: wholesome, healthy, pure, “green”, environmentally friendly, pesticide-free, and a possible antidote to all the recent food scares, helping us to avoid ills such as BSE <sup>1</sup>, salmonella, pesticide residues, growth hormones, E-coli, and GM “Frankenstein foods”. There is a suggestion perhaps of a return to days when farms were small and handed down through the generations engaging in labour-intensive farming: a cosy farmhouse located in bucolic splendour, a few pleasant meadows, a milking stool, bottle-fed lambs, hand-picked produce, hearty home-made meals, and a little red tractor. But what is the reality of producing organic and is there a bad and an ugly side?

Food studies is slowly popularising as an academic topic <sup>2</sup> but, to date, agriculture and organic farming in particular have not been studied much in business schools. Organisation theory has been criticised for marginalising the rural peasantry (Burrell, 1997) and focusing instead on manufacturing and service organisations (Burrell, 1997; Egri, 1994). Accordingly, an attempt is made here to promote agriculture as a good topic of academic interest with the following question. Is there a darker side to

"organic": how is organic regulated and what are the truth games played in the organic discourse?

This paper is presented as part of the author's doctoral research which is focusing on the regulating practices associated with producing food organically.

## **Purity: of Soil and Blood**

*"Frequently explicit, and always implicit, in the writings of those who created the organic movement is belief in a natural order whose laws cannot be flouted with impunity. Organic farming is not about rejection; it is about positive acceptance of the natural order and the intention to work with its laws." (Conford, 2001: 16-17)*

Organic agriculture developed in Europe in the early twentieth century, before pesticides and nitrogen fertilisers became widely used. Eve Balfour and Albert Howard, well-known organic pioneers of the 1920s and 1930s, were concerned mostly with soil fertility, conservation and the link between food and health. The 1947 Agriculture Act introduced intensive agricultural methods to satisfy a demand for efficiency and maximum food production <sup>3</sup>. During the 1990s, organic agriculture expanded rapidly, drawing more stakeholders into the movement and extending its remit to encompass pesticide residues, animal welfare and the use of non-renewable resources.

Conford (2001), Moore-Colyer (2001) and Reed (2001, 2002) locate the origins of organic farming in movements that took place before World War II, culminating in the inauguration of the Soil Association in 1946. Reed (2001, 2002) has traced the formation of the Soil Association back to three distinct groups: Haughley Research farm, the Peckham Experiment and Kinship in Husbandry. Haughley Research Farm was initiated by Eve Balfour, first President of the Soil Association, alongside Alice Debenham to conduct a trial comparison of an organic farm with one using chemical fertilisers and composts (Reed, 2001: 138). The Peckham Experiment was set up as a

laboratory to experiment on the health of supposedly deprived working class locals and provide, or perhaps impose, remedial action such as adjustments to diet. But it is to the last of these groups that we shall turn to look more closely at the Soil Association's extreme right-wing and Fascist origins (the downright ugly!). Kinship in Husbandry was begun in 1941 by Rolf Gardiner (Moore-Colyer and Conford, 2004) and has associations with racial determinism: "*Many members of the Kinship were admirers of Nazi Germany and harboured anti-Semitic, anti-urban, anti-Communist sentiments*" (Reed: 2001: 136). Rolf Gardiner, together with Gerard Wallop who was to become Earl of Portsmouth, had been involved previously with the English Mistry, "*a Far Right English nationalist grouping*" (Reed, 2001: 136) who had "*a re-invigorated aristocracy ... at the core of their manifesto, which they surrounded by a mixture of eugenic theorizing, social Darwinism and Lamarckism*" (Reed, 2002: 486). In 1939, Gardiner and Wallop (by now Earl of Lynton) had met Walter Darré, the Nazi agriculture minister: "*To Gardiner, Darré's inspired concept of 'blood-and-soil' defined an inescapable mystical relationship between race and soil*" (Moore-Colyer, 2001: 197). The Kinship in Husbandry developed the English Mistry's work into agricultural renewal through a return to a full feudal order: "*Rather than a social construction, society was an organism with certain individuals born to take the leading roles*" (Reed, 2002: 487). This programme was set out in a book *The Natural Order* produced by Massingham (1944). The Kinship in Husbandry entered the Soil Association in 1946 and Rolf Gardiner, Harold Massingham, the Earl of Portsmouth, and Jorian Jenks sat on the Soil Association's first Council (Reed, 2001). Jorian Jenks, who had worked formerly as agricultural advisor to Oswald Mosley, leader of the British Union of Fascists, also took up the role of Editorial Secretary and edited the Soil Association journal *Mother Earth* until his death in 1963.

In 1967, the Soil Association published Britain's first set of organic standards. Organic standards recommend approved ways, without resorting to the chemicals that are

considered to be harmful, to reduce or remove the bad and the ugly: the weeds and pests demonised by both organic and non-organic production methods. Weeds are disruptions to an order that determines what is harmful and useless and justifies a systematic extermination, an analogy used by Bauman (1989) in analysing the genocide carried out by Stalin and Hitler.

Albert Howard refused an invitation to join the Soil Association (Reed, 2001). He and his wife Louise do not appear to have been associated with the Kinship of Husbandry or other right-wing groups. Even so, a letter from Louise Howard to the Editor of the Times in 1949 reveals some rather disturbing eugenics undertones associated with organic pioneering:

*“Disease attacks the weak, the under-nourished, the incorrectly nourished, and – alas – the old. It is nature’s censor. Immunity from disease cannot be hoped for: disease resistance, sometimes in so great a degree as almost to approach immunity, as Lady Eve Balfour has very ably pointed out, can be attained. We, the modernists in agriculture, the organic school, aim at this. Sometimes wrongly called sentimentalists, we actually take a far more robust view of the plant than our opponents. While they strive, at great cost, to prop up the weak crop, washing it, spraying it, and dosing it, we assert that such crops are not worth growing. It is a fact that any of a number of misjudgments, among which we may reckon monoculture, unsuitable varieties, unsuitable soil treatments, and a host of other errors, may induce crop disease: the history of agriculture is strewn with examples. The only worthwhile aim is to grow such crops as will be strong enough to protect themselves; nothing else is of the least use.” (Howard, 1949)*

Such a philosophy, whilst appearing fairly harmless when applied to plants, would be very ugly if applied to humans for it would condone the use of controlled breeding to improve selectively the human race and, ultimately, the extermination of those not considered fit to survive without outside help. At the time, however, a process of reconstruction of social and economic life was taking place. The Beveridge Report published in 1942 influenced the development of the Welfare State in Britain by advocating a redistribution of income funded from national insurance contributions and taxation. Such a scheme would allow benefits to be paid to people who were sick, unemployed, retired or widowed. The 1944 Education Act provided free education to all

children of secondary school age. And the National Health Service was established in 1948.

## **Aesthetic Perfection: The Good, the Bad or the Ugly?**

Hopefully, today, people are more used to the idea of social welfare provision. Nevertheless, there is still widespread discrimination against the ugly, both human and inanimate. All fresh fruit and vegetables, including organic, that is sold by commercial retailers has a uniform appearance devoid of blemishes. Why do we not like blemishes? Why do we want everything to look the same? Does a homogeneity devoid of mis-shapes imply a greater purity? And if so, what are the implications if this train of thought is translated into ideas of aesthetic perfection for woman- and man-kind? And why does purity sound so good and racial purity, engineered via genocide and eugenics, sound so bad?

Competition between multiple retailers is intense, pressurising them to cut costs and expand for survival. To optimise on economies of scale, supermarkets restrict their numbers of suppliers, encroaching on the farmers who supply supermarkets who then have to reduce their customer base and depend increasingly on one or several contracts<sup>4</sup>. The supermarkets are then in a strong position to keep down prices on supply contracts because of the impact to farmers of having a contract terminated. The Competition Commission's report (2000) regarding the supply of groceries from multiple stores in the UK confirmed that the main retailers carried out most of the practices alleged by suppliers, such as requiring suppliers to make payments or concessions to gain access to supermarket shelf space. Organic farmers who supply supermarkets are not excluded from retailer (mal)practices: although they were not researching such practices, Lobley et al (2005) had many cases reported to them of demands placed on organic producers by the multiple retailers.

Below, an organic producer interviewee, who herself distributes through market stalls and box schemes, speaks out about the risks of supplying supermarkets, citing the experience of another producer whose produce was rejected for lacking aesthetic perfection:

*“Supermarkets, no. They want cosmetically beautiful produce. There was a very famous case last year. A woman lost her husband, and one thing and another, and she was organic, she lost her cattle. She was offered a contract for growing potatoes by organic farm crews at [Market-Town] for supermarkets. She grew them, sent them all in and only 20 per cent of them were accepted because they were not cosmetically beautiful. The other 80 per cent weren’t accepted, by which time they were too far gone to resell. She was only offered 20 per cent of the contract and they took a long time to give her the money and the poor woman was, and still is, suffering.”*

Supermarket demand for large quantities of consistent and cosmetically perfect produce has resulted in most food being sourced from very large farms, thereby encouraging intensification of agriculture and a greater use of fertilisers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides (Commission for Rural Communities, 2005: 92). The next section considers organic agribusiness.

## **Organic Agribusiness: Gresham's Law <sup>5</sup>**

During the second half of the twentieth century, agriculture in Britain and most of Western Europe became increasingly industrialised and intensified with small family farms on the decline. Farming has become dominated increasingly by agri-business and this does not exclude organic, as this extract from an interview with an organic family farmer reveals:

*“So three years ago I was growing lettuce for the supermarkets and I was planting 10,000 lettuce a week for 14 weeks. And they’re big blocks and you plant them, you look after them, you harvest them as a block and the management of that big block is much much easier. That’s why the agrobusinesses have done what they’ve done. Because it’s much easier to specialise in a crop and grow big blocks of it. The efficiency. There’s some huge organic players now the agrobusinesses have come in. I mean I grew two acres of strawberries. [Large-scale Organic Producer] up the road here grew 25 [acres*

*of strawberries]. Now when you consider you're looking at probably four ton of strawberries to the acre, that's 100 ton of strawberries that he produced. And he did that the first year he was organic. He didn't start with five. He planted 25 acres of organic strawberries."*

Expanding an agricultural production business requires acquiring more land to put into production. One way of doing this is for an agricultural business to borrow organically converted land off other farmers for a short period, use it for production, and then hand it back to the farmer to sort out issues like crop rotation and fertilisation:

*"When I said they go on to a farm and take all their kit, grow it for 12 months, pull it out, what they're doing is actually using that farmer's rotation. It's the farmer that's organic ... You just take that 100 acres and you grow the crop and you pull out again. But that firm, actually, they haven't done anything wrong as such. They've grown it in an organic regime. They've done everything organically with it. But in actual fact, it's just a pure industrial model that they've dropped into. That business hasn't had to gain any fertility. They just bought it [fertility] off the farmer."*

Firms who farm in this way are acting like parasites on organic land. They use the goodness that has been put in the soil by someone else to grow organic produce on an industrial-scale but do not engage in practices that are fundamental to organic production.

Being regulated by an organic certification body requires a lot of record-keeping which is inspected at the annual audit. Large-scale organic farming businesses can afford to have one person dedicated to the paperwork required by DEFRA and the Soil Association. Family farmers, organic and non-organic try to fit in the paperwork with the farming tasks:

*"And the bit that does always does get you down is the bit with the bills and the cheques and they've got to keep meeting all the time. And that is very wearing ... And you've still got to pay your mortgage and all the rest of the things that you have to do. And that takes the joy out of it. I mean, people look at farms and they don't think of that bit. They don't think of the man at the centre who holds it all together. Plus the hassle. I've got a team of six or seven in the field and you've got to make sure – if somebody comes to work, you've got to find them work. And you've got to make sure that the work matches the people. There's a lot of organisational stressful stuff that has to go on besides when you climb on a tractor after you've done all that ... Those big companies – their paperwork will*



*be up to speed because they have a man to look after it, whereas I have to do mine after tea."*

It also seems that government endeavours to increase organic home production will benefit farm businesses that produce on an industrial scale. When the government announces a target for increasing home production of organic, it makes sense to appeal to some of the larger conventional suppliers to convert some of their land:

*"Tony Blair stood up in the House of Commons and said "I want this and that of organic production etc. etc." They gave a little grant away and shervumph! ... And Tesco's give a little nudge ... 90% conventional, if you'll produce us 10% [organic] - that's the power. What they're saying is, I mean I don't know this but it's obvious it happens, they say "We will take your 90% [non-organic] if you produce 10% [organic]. If you don't produce 10% organic, we'll go to somebody who has the 90% that will produce the 10%." Because that's the sort of power they've got. And that's the sort of influence they've got. So therefore then organics go whoosh!"*

What this organic producer is suggesting is that government targets can be met more easily by involving the larger producers, even those not currently organic, and that the multiple retailers are capable of putting pressure on their suppliers to convert some of their land to organic by threatening to withdraw their supplier contracts.

The next section considers alternatives to supermarkets for distributing organic food.

## **Distributing Organics: Alternatives to Supermarkets**

Organic producers are distributing increasingly through alternatives to supermarkets such as organic box schemes. In Britain, the alternative sector is now worth £220 million, representing a growth of nearly 40% over the past three years (Browning, 2004). Lobley et al (2005) found that customers tended to trust direct sales between producers and consumers, with one interviewee stating that customers liked the traceability and another that customers appreciated being able to speak face-to-face to the producer. Furthermore, farmers involved in organic direct sales tend to form informal alliances with other farmers based on trust rather than on contracts (Lobley et al, 2005).

But media reports of organic fraud challenge the trust that would seem to be gained by removing distancing through shortening the supply chain. The UK translates EC 2092/91 into the Organic Products Regulation, enforced by Trading Standards Officers, that requires anyone who produce organic food to register with a certification body. As part of their remit, trading standards officers try to make sure that traders do not label non-organic products as organic. The media are keen to expose anyone who is found to “cheat” in this way as a “fraud” who is attempting to make more of profit by obtaining a premium for organic. It was reported recently that fraud within the organic food industry had grown mainly because of a rise in the number of farmers' markets and home delivery 'box schemes' (Doward et al, 2005). As a result of a spot check by environmental health officers, a Mr Sains was accused of being a cheat and fined £6,000 including costs for selling non-organic meat as organic. Mr Sains defended himself by saying that the confusion arose because the name of his shop Organic World was on his labels:

*“ "I never made out all my meat was organic," he said. "It is true the name Organic World is on all the labels, but underneath it is clearly written whether the product is free-range or organic. I pleaded guilty because I didn't want to go to Crown Court." “ (Gordon, 2005)*

This producer reveals a tension between regulation and self-regulation of organic, which we now attempt to resolve by turning to Foucault.

## **Foucault's Ethics: Producing Organic To Rules and To Ethos**

Organisation Studies scholars have investigated efforts by work organisations to move away from hierarchical bureaucracies towards self-managing, and thereby self-regulating, teams (see for example Barker, 1993; Sewell and Wilkinson, 1992). Inevitably, the attempt to escape from rules and authority has been short-lived and its desirability questionable. By tradition, regulation and self-regulation have been

understood as two separate entities. It does seem though that the attempt to replace one with the other is problematic. At this point, we turn to Foucault to provide insight into how the boundary between self-regulation and regulation may be blurred. For Foucault, self-regulation and regulation are in the same place, like two sides of the same coin, as are, correspondingly, resistance and power. In the larger scale of things, Foucault is refusing to acknowledge the social/individual boundary that most of us try and work with and that are represented by the disciplines Sociology and Psychology.

Self-regulation equates to regulating one's own conduct, recognising oneself as the subject of one's own actions, and employing a form of governmentality over oneself. In so doing, individuals apply the truth game to themselves through practices. Foucault distinguishes between two types of self-regulation: a code-oriented morality and an ethics-oriented morality. A code-oriented morality occurs when a subject is given rules or interdictions to follow:

*"In these conditions, the subjectivation occurs basically in a quasi-juridical form, where the ethical subject refers his conduct to a law, or set of laws, to which he must submit at the risk of committing offenses that may make him liable to punishment." (Foucault, 1984: 29-30).*

At this level of self-regulation, then, the individual might choose to obey codified laws in order to escape punishment, but has other choices as well. In implementing the code, one is forming oneself as an ethical subject. Instead of seeing the subject as a passive being regulated by a set of rules, Foucault is focusing on how the subject responds actively to rules through self-regulating: *"the way in which the individual establishes his relation to the rule and recognizes himself as obliged to put it into practice"* (1984:27). This type of self-regulation can be related to producing to organic standards in order to obtain certification.

On the other hand, an ethics-oriented morality involves the individual performing certain practices in a process of self-formation as an ethical subject: *"And this requires him to*

*act upon himself, to monitor, test, improve, and transform himself.*" (Foucault, 1984: 28)

In an ethics-oriented morality, exact observance of a code is less important than the relationship the individual has with her/himself: *"in his different actions, thoughts, and feelings as he endeavors to form himself as an ethical subject"* (Foucault, 1984: 30). We can relate the producing of organic food in such a way to farming organically because that is the way that the producer thinks is a fit way to farm, using knowledge transmitted in non-codified ways such as orally from one generation to another. One can practice such a tradition because one *"regards oneself as an heir to a spiritual tradition that one has the responsibility of maintaining or reviving"* (Foucault, 1984: 27). In this frame of mind, one farms organically because one has an inherent desire to farm organically.

Whilst Foucault says that both these types of self-regulation involve personal responsibility for making a decision on what to do, it is clear that an ethics-oriented morality gives far more scope for personal autonomy. In practice, tensions may arise when an individual with a strong ethos <sup>6</sup> is given rules to follow. So, in the case of organic farming, the organic standards that a producer is required to follow to be able to label produce as organic may conflict with the producer's organic ethos as shown in the next section.

## **Self-Regulation: through Responding to Rules**

This section looks at the organic regulations and includes a discussion of how there is sometimes a mis-match between the regulations and individual organic producer's ideas of what organic is.

Does an organic apple look, smell or taste any different from a non-organic apple? You could assume that a grub-ridden apple is pesticide-free, but such apples are not often sold commercially. If the apple smells or tastes particularly flavoursome, this might be because it is organic but this is a very difficult thing to prove. Perhaps the apple is tasty

because it is very fresh. Or, it is a hot day and you are dehydrated and, in that state, most apples would be refreshing. Organic food as an end-product cannot be distinguished easily from non-organic produce and, accordingly, the process of production is monitored through a system of regulation that provides a label to signify organic. The International Federation of Organic Agriculture (IFOAM) provides a set of basic international organic standards that have no legal status in the EU. In Europe, policy intervention in organic farming began in 1991 with EC Council Regulation 2092/91, a state-supervised certification system for organic products that was extended in 1999 to cover livestock production through EC 1804/1999. In Britain, the largest and second largest organic certification bodies are the Soil Association, certifying more than 70% of all UK organic produce, and Organic Farmers and Growers (OF&G). A certifying body provides a set of standards to adhere to for the granting of organic status.

In becoming a fashionable word, organic seems to have had assigned to it an unquestioned homogeneity that this research seeks to deconstruct. Even within the regulatory bodies such as the EU and certifying bodies, there appears to be a hierarchy of organic. Below, the Soil Association promotes itself as more organic than the EU standards and some other certifying bodies:

*"The Soil Association has chosen, where appropriate, to set standards that are much better than the organic standards set by ... EU and ... DEFRA. There are other UK organic certifiers who also support better welfare for organic chickens. They include the Biodynamic Agricultural Association (Demeter), Irish Organic Farmers & Growers Association, Organic Trust, Quality Welsh Food Certification and the Scottish Organic Producers Association (SOP). They use the same or similar standards to the Soil Association." (Soil Association, 2005b)*

In this text, the Soil Association is suggesting that organic practices accepted by some other certifying bodies not by them, such as OF&G and the Organic Food Federation, are not as good or as organic as their own. The organic consumer, of course, may be unaware of the complexity of buying organic <sup>7</sup>.

Additionally, does the regulators' understanding of organic accord with those striving to farm organically? To some extent, there must be an equivalence because it was organic producers who wanted regulation in order to differentiate their produce in the market. Also, the Soil Association organic standards are being updated continually for which purpose organic producers sit on the standards advisory panels. But tensions arise in that "organic" is not a homogeneous word and there is no one right way of farming organically. For Foucault, there is no one absolute truth. Instead, people play truth games, which are "*a set of rules by which truth is produced*" (Foucault, 2000: 297).

One commercial organic producer discusses the somewhat controversial issue of using polythene:

*"And then you get to the polytunnel issue. Because the one way you can get out of that is by sticking polytunnels up and intensifying the operation. You know, organically, that's an iffy principle in a way. I mean I've got my little tunnels here and I've got a few out in the field. But where you go with that one is a really difficult one. Because can you call a crop truly organic when it's got two layers of polythene."*

At a guess, polythene raises issues of chemicals leaching into produce and also one of waste management, indicating that organic is not inevitably an environmentally friendly process. For many people, polytunnels are an eyesore in the countryside. The Shadow Minister for Agriculture, Bill Wiggin, is campaigning currently against polytunnels (ugly!) for their impact on local house prices by refusing to eat strawberries, organic or not, from local fruit growers, one of whom has asked him to resign (Bills-Geddes, 2006).

The main research site for studying self-regulation is a group of non-commercial organic producers who produce for their own consumption and therefore do not need to be certified. At present, this group of organic producers is trying to farm as organically as they can without becoming Soil Association members. They have been debating at great length whether or not to join the Soil Association. There are several issues which

joining the Soil Association would face them with that they would rather not have to confront.

### *Ethical Dilemma: Wring their Necks or Electrocute?*

At present, this group of producers kill their chickens in what they believe is a humane way by wringing their necks at home:

*"And there are things that we do that aren't allowable under Soil Association rules which I think are perfectly OK. Like killing the chickens the way we kill them. Now you're supposed to electrocute them. Well, we can't do that. But to me that's not about being organic. That's something else."*

[Interviewer] "So what do you think it is – any ideas?"

*"Well, I guess they think it's more humane but I don't actually agree with that in our circumstances. We wouldn't be able to do that. We'd have to send them away to be killed which would be less humane in our circumstances."*

### *Ethical Dilemma: Feed Organic Bad or Non-Organic Good?*

Another potential ethical dilemma is presented by the buying in of organic feed from outside for organic livestock:

*"Two years ago we needed to buy some more hay. [A] went to two local farms, one organic, one non-organic. [S/he] bought a sample back of the organic hay; our animals wouldn't have eaten it, it was terrible. Appalling. Whereas the hay from the other guy was really nice ... It wasn't organic but it was really nice hay. So, if we'd joined the Soil Association, we wouldn't have been able to make that choice. We'd have had hay that the animals wouldn't have eaten."*

It was also pointed out during the interview that driving round to obtain organic feed raises issues of pollution and global warming.

### *Ethical Dilemma: The Culling of the New-Born Lambs*

There is also the issue of the economic viability of supplementing ewes' milk by feeding organic milk to lambs, particularly when the ewe doesn't have sufficient milk and you have to buy organic milk from outside. The alternatives are to feed non-organic milk, which would make the lamb non-organic, or to slaughter one or more lambs following birth:

*"Say, for example, one controversial issue is when a ewe has triplets, she only has two udders, what do we do with the third lamb if she can't feed the third lamb? And those of us involved just think "bottle-feed" and we don't actually have organic milk. We can't buy organic milk. So they then have non-organic. First of all, we give them goat's milk which is ours which is organic. But then if we run out of that or we don't have enough. This year, we've had five sets of triplets so we had potentially five lambs to bottle-feed. And that's a lot of feeding. And some people said "We would rather those lambs were destroyed straight away than bottle-fed non-organic milk". "*

### **Self-Regulation: through an Ethics of the Self**

This section looks at the self-regulating practices of organic producers according to Foucault's ethics-oriented morality or an ethics of the self.

One organic producer indicates that some other organic producers are converting to organic to take advantage of the organic boom and do not necessarily possess the mindset to farm in this way.

*" There's a lot of conventional people come in and had a go and gone out again because they haven't got the enthusiasm, they're just doing it for monetary gain. And in actual fact, I don't think you would succeed if you did that."*

This organic producer is suggesting that you do need to subscribe personally to an organic ethos and that simply following rules on how to farm organically will not keep you going when times are hard. The question arises: do some organic producers convert to organic farming purely for instrumental reasons? And should that be



considered bad? It may be an unrealistic option, for organic producers risk losing large amounts of money because of not being able to spray, suggesting that dedication is a necessary factor:

*"Because you do get the losses, you do get the disappointments. And however good you are - I've got one this year - my parsnips covered in weeds. I'm going to rotivate them up. And conventionally you don't have that because you can nearly always cure it. Because you can put a herbicide over it and you'd cure that. In fact, you'd have a herbicide on it in the first place, so you wouldn't have the problem..."*

[Interviewer] *"But even at this stage you could do something about it?"*

*"Not organically. I could conventionally. You can knock weeds down. And there's very few crops that you can't knock the weeds out of conventionally. But organically, you can't. And you can't give them a fertiliser to give them a boost. You know, I've got some lettuce that are struggling down there and they have to struggle. So unless you've got the right mindset and you know that's going to happen. You've got to say to yourself, that's part of the expense of the job and there wasn't a lot I could do about it. But you do have to have that enthusiasm ... And I will have lost a thousand pounds."*

Organic farming is a business and one would hope to make a profit. However, it would be wrong to under-estimate potential problems associated with converting to organic, particularly the problem of over-production. A recent price freefall in organic milk was generated by over-supply through too many people converting simultaneously. The price freefall caused organic milk farmers to drop out of production, a situation that was followed 18 months later by a boom in demand <sup>8</sup>.

When engaging in care of the self, one looks inside for principles on how to regulate oneself, rather than looking outside to codified rules. An individual makes ethical decisions by discovering rules through examining her/his soul: *"In this divine contemplation, the soul will be able to discover rules to serve as a basis for just behavior and political action."* (Foucault, 1988:25). Caring for the self practices include self-examination. Findings from empirical research show that the organic producer is not necessarily an organic consumer for there are other things to consider. Below, an

organic producer examines her/himself to try and resolve an ethical dilemma to do with organic consumption:

*"I think there's a dilemma that I would like to buy things that have been fairly produced, fairly traded, I'd like to support that as well. And sometimes it's been a dilemma for me. Should I buy stuff that's been fairly traded but is non-organic? Should I buy things that are organic but don't necessarily have the Fair Trade label on? And then, to that, add produced in this country as well. And local .... It's not organic, but maybe it's the fairly traded thing that I'm interested in. It depends on the different product that you're buying. But that I'd say you've got three choices. I mean I tend to go for these three things when you're buying stuff. I might say that you can't always be completely consistent over – we all make choices. Balance."*

This producer draws attention to the issue that having an organic label doesn't necessarily make a product Fair Trade and local and, in so doing, raises some questions. Which of organic, Fair Trade and local is better? Is buying organic without buying Fair Trade less good than buying Fair Trade that isn't organic? And is buying local better than buying organic?

But buying local is not necessarily good, as one organic producer points out:

*"And local, yes. I would rather buy local produce. But then you've also got the difficulty – I mean there are some local farms who are being farmed by Eastern European immigrants who get paid a pittance. I've often picked them up and given them lifts because they get bussed down to [local town] once a week to shop in Tesco's and all they can afford to buy is the cheapest jam and therefore they're buying sliced bread. They've told me the rates they get paid and it's dreadful. So, if you buy local, then you've got to be careful that you're buying not from fruit farms and other farms where they're employing very cheap labour."*

So for that organic producer, buying local might sometimes be very bad because of the risk of exploitation of labour close to home.

Tied in with avoiding high food miles is the concept of seasonality, which is missing from most commercial food sales:

*"Flying stuff in from all over the world, so we can have strawberries every day of the week, every day of the year. That's not a benefit to me. But to look forward to the first strawberry out of that garden – that's worth – well you can't put a price to it."*

Growing all your own food organically might seem to be the only way of getting close to resolving this particular ethical dilemma!

## **Conclusion**

The paper began by focusing on the darker side of organic and revealed that, far from its pure image, organic can be bad and surprisingly ugly. By referring to the history of organic and the Soil Association's foundations in racial determinism, the fashionably wholesome and pure image of organic was debated by exploring the issues of aesthetic perfection and organic agribusiness.

Throughout the paper, the ambiguities of organic have surfaced. An alleged incident of organic fraud seemed to have been produced by such ambiguities rather than by deliberate attempts to cheat. There was also competition amongst organic stakeholders as to who could be more organic than others. The Soil Association in particular was found to have positioned itself at the head of a hierarchy of organic-ness.

To try and resolve the difficulties of disassociating self-regulation from regulation, a theoretical framework of Foucault's was adopted. This framework helped to identify the tension confronting organic producers between self-regulating to the standards of a certifying body and self-regulating according to a personal organic ethos. There was also discussion about whether one could farm organically without having an organic mindset or ethics of the self to do so. Organic was found to not necessarily imply a promise of no exploitation or of low food miles, with some organic producers engaged in perpetual self-examination whilst trying to resolve the ethical dilemma of whether to buy organic, Fair Trade, or local. It seemed that this dilemma could only be truly resolved by growing all one's own food.

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<sup>1</sup> BSE is still being found in British cattle. During 2004, DEFRA (2005) reported 309 British cases.

<sup>2</sup> For example, the Editors of the journal Human Relations intend to publish a special issue of the journal on the subject of Food, Work and Organization in 2007.

<sup>3</sup> This Act and its ramifications are discussed in more detail in Skinner (2003).

<sup>4</sup> Blythman (2004) reports interviewing a horticultural cooperative that, in 15 years, had its customer base reduced from 45 customers buying vegetables daily to four major multiples.

<sup>5</sup> According to Gresham's Law, bad money drives good money out of circulation. Inevitably, during interviews, small-scale family farmers report feelings of being "squeezed out" by the "big boys".

<sup>6</sup> *ethos* is a word used in Ancient Greece, notably by Aristotle, that has a very specific meaning, referring to a strong aspect of behaviour, a way of behaving or of valuing life. Foucault goes back as far as Ancient Greek and Rome to identify individuals carrying out practices related to the principle of caring for the self. He says that in those days, ethics reflected individual freedom. The author's doctoral research studies a research site that is so permeated by organic that when groups of individuals debate organic food production practices, they use decision-making practices that might themselves be termed "organic" (see Burns & Stalker, 1961). Furthermore, not only does organic food production have a good, bad and an ugly side, but so do organic decision-making practices.

<sup>7</sup> Each certifying body is allocated a different number for its label. For example, Soil Association producers label their produce as "UK5".

<sup>8</sup> Farmers Weekly reported one farming family who converted to organic milk production in 1999 through OF&G and gave up five years later due to organic milk prices freefalling (Andersen, 2004). By January 2006, Farmers Weekly was reporting that the Organic Milk Suppliers Co-operative needed more organic dairy farmers to satisfy growing demand (Ashbridge, 2006).

# ***“We don’t want woollen trousers” – Studying how researchers and developers interact with police officers during an innovation project***

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Paper to be presented at SCOS 2006 Conference “The good, the bad and the ugly”  
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(Standing Conference on Organisational Symbolism, <http://www.scos.org>)

**Abstract:** The author describes one research and development project from the perspective of participant observer. The project team members – researchers and developers – seek interactions with (future, putative, potential) end-users – in this case: police officers – to inspire and inform their innovation project. The study focuses on how project team members interact with police officers, and how they make decisions about the application that they are developing for them.

It is shown that each interaction affected their decision making which resulted in a gradual shift of the project’s goal and focus. It is also shown how the project team members – because of their focus on developing and evaluating an innovative telecom service – unintentionally missed several chances to learn about what it for police officers to work within a police organisation. E.g. they could have listened better to police officers telling about not wanting to wear woollen trousers. Such stories can tell something about police officers’ professional identities and how management and innovation work within a police organisation.

This paper is *not* about good guys versus bad guys. Both the researchers and developers, and the police officers did what they could do, given their respective tasks and roles. Two topics are identified for further study: How researchers’ or developers’ professional roles, e.g. their practice of creating fictional *personas* and *storylines*, allow movements towards openness/otherness (towards end-users’ experiences) or towards closure/self (towards their professional role and agenda); And what we can say about ethical qualities of design choices, e.g. when a researcher or developer chooses to privilege or marginalize a specific target , problem or solution.

## **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

This paper is about researchers and developers who develop and evaluate innovative information and communication technologies, and – with the theme of the conference in mind: *The good, the bad and the ugly* – we will first briefly look into how people have viewed the creation of new technologies: as good or bad, as beautiful or ugly.

In the “the Golden Age of engineering”, between 1850 and 1950, many innovations were developed and people enthusiastically adopted these: “trains, ocean liners, ... subways, automobiles, ... and airplanes ... telegraph, telephone, phonograph, movies, radio, and television ... bridges, tunnels, dams, and skyscrapers ... sewing machines, toilets, typewriters, bicycles, cameras, watches, electric lights, refrigerators, air conditioners and so forth” (cf. Florman 1994:p.4-6). People were optimistic about technology and believed in progress, and were eager to invent and use technologies as neutral tools to improve their lives. This attitude can currently be found amongst



scientists and engineers who invent new products or services: the idea that technology and innovation are good and beautiful.

There have always been people with a critical stance towards developing or applying technology: farmers who objected to railroads through their lands, workers who burnt down automated plants. There were books like *1984*, films like *Metropolis*, etc. Writers like Lewis Mumford (Mumford 1967), Langdon Winner (1988) and Neil Postman (1993), argue, in different ways, that technology is “autonomous” and “out of control”: that technology has a life of its own and threatens humanity. People and culture sit in the one corner of the boxing ring, and technology and innovation sit in the other corner. They think that technology and innovation have a bad or ugly face, or can have a bad or ugly face as well. Read for an extreme example the first paragraph of Victor Papanek’s *Design for the real world*, a frontal attack to developing and marketing of products that serve no real needs:

There are professions more harmful than industrial design, but only a very few of them. ... Before (in the “good old days”), if a person liked killing people, he had to become a general, purchase a coal mine, or else study nuclear physics. Today, industrial design has put murder on a mass-production basis. By designing criminally unsafe automobiles that kill or maim nearly one million people around the world each year, by crating whole new species of permanent garbage to clutter up the landscape, and by choosing materials and processes that pollute the air we breathe, designers have become a dangerous breed. (Papanek 1991:p.ix)

The accepted position in academia is a kind of intermediate position, namely that people and technology are in a *reciprocal* relation, that people affect technology, and technologies affect people – a social constructionist position. This idea of the “co-construction of users and technologies”, goes “beyond technological determinist views of technology and essentialist views of users’ identities” (Oudshoorn and Pinch 2003:p.3). Technology is not a neutral tool to unproblematically improve things, nor is it an autonomous force opposed to humankind. Creating or using technology is part of what it means to be human. Bruno Latour, a proponent of this position, goes further and states that not only humans have agency, but that also products have agency, that people and artefacts are sitting next to each other as equals in one socio-technical space, in one network of relations (Latour 1996; Latour 1987).

So, if I don’t want to say things like “this technology is good or bad” or “these people do beautiful or ugly things”, what *can* I say? I will try to follow a social-constructionist approach and describe one aspect of one research and development project. I will study how researchers and developers<sup>2</sup> interact with (future, putative, possible) end-users<sup>3</sup>, and how they make design decisions<sup>4</sup>. That approach will enable me to speak with more nuances about the practice of researchers and developers interacting with end-users during an innovation project.

Such practices – where people who create a technology try to cooperate with, or learn from, the people who will be or may be using this technology – draw from various traditions: from *participatory design*, where end-users are invited to participate in the development project (Muller and Kuhn 1993; Schuler and Namioka 1993); from *human-centred design*, with the aim of “active involvement of users for a clear understanding of user and task requirements” (ISO/IEC 1999); or from *empathic design*, where researchers and developers try to move closer to end-users’ lives and experiences (Leonard and Rayport 1997; Koskinen et al. 2003).

I am interested in such practices because there seem to be several implicit assumptions, e.g. that developers *should* put users centre stage in their project, that researchers *must have* more empathy towards end-users, that it is good if designers invite end-users to participate in their project. It is not difficult to imagine where such assumptions come from, because in many projects researchers and developers

approach end-users in an arrogant or authoritarian way (Steen 2004). John Thackara – at that time project leader of a large research and development project with the ambition to create internet-based telecommunication services for the elderly – tells about how they conducted their project:

Someone said, “There are a lot of older people out there; let’s see if we can find some and help them by giving them this Internet stuff in an easy-to-use format”. So we went and found some older people and told them how we had come to help them with the Internet, and they said, “Piss off!” which is apparently how they say, in some long-lost dialect, “We don’t need your patronising help, you designers. If you’ve come here to help us, you’re wasting your time; we don’t want to be helped, thanks just the same. Yet we do have some interesting observations to make about our daily lives, about our lifestyles, about our communication, and about all of their attendant dysfunctions. If you could kindly change your attitude and help us explore how we will live, then perhaps we can do something together”. Or words to that effect. (Thackara 1999:p.8-9)

Furthermore, researchers and developers often either create inventions for themselves, e.g. when they take themselves as examples of end-users, as ego-design or “I-methodology” (Akrich 1995). Or they design something for an “average consumer”, a faceless person, which often results in poor designs, because it is hard to make appropriate design decisions with no particular person in mind (Cooper 1999). In order to safely pass between these two pitfalls, designer and researcher Jane Fulton Suri advocates empathic design:

On the one hand, many design problems arise when we assume that everyone else is just like us. Poor design is often the result of an assumption that other people will like what we like, do things the same way we do... Clearly, this is not the case. People are very different in many ways.

On the other hand, many problems arise when we think of other people as so different from ourselves that we think of them as “them”. Sometimes when we observe, collect data and measure people’s diverse reactions to things, we adopt a kind of objectivity more appropriate to understanding physical matter than people. We begin to behave as if other people’s behavior and experiences were phenomena quite divorced from our own. Clearly, this is not the case either...

Empathic design is all about navigating the course between these extreme ideas. Yes, people do, say, think and feel different things and in different contexts. However, we can make sense of this and design appropriately if we use our ability to learn about, and identify with, their experience. (Fulton Suri 2003:p.52)

## **Theoretical background**

This study draws from science and technology studies, which can be thought of as the *empirical turn* in the philosophy of technology. This field was pioneered by an ethnographical study of people working in a scientific lab, in which the focus was on what these people *do*, rather than on the results of their work (Latour and Woolgar 1986). Such studies unravel the social processes before a scientific fact becomes true or before a technology works: “if things persist, they start to become true” (instead of “if things are true, they persist), “the machine works, if all the people involved are convinced” (instead of “once the machine works, people will be convinced”) (Latour 1987). Although the field started with studying researchers and developers, there is currently a lot of attention for the role of end-users in innovation (both creation and adoption) processes (Oudshoorn and Pinch 2003), and approaches to involve end-users in innovation processes (Rohracher 2005).

From the field of science and technology studies I borrow the concept of “configuring the user” (Woolgar 1991): i.e. the idea that researchers and developers, when they envisage a new product or service, they *also* envisage an end-user. Explicitly, or often implicitly, they imagine a certain end-user in a certain context doing a certain task, and

invent the product or services for that person in that context doing that task. In the field of product development and human-computer interaction design this approach is widely advocated and practiced, e.g. when designers – ideally at the very start of their project – construct fictive users or personas (Cooper 1999) or write user-scenarios or storylines (Carroll 1995) as a basis for idea generation, and to direct further product development.

I think that this “configuring” takes place within the imagination of researchers or developers, or during discussions between them, and that it is not necessarily related to what real people (will) do with the product or service they are talking about or developing. I agree with the point put forward by Steward and Williams (2005) who warn for the “design fallacy”: the false idea that designers can *determine* people’s behaviour by building particular properties into the product or service. Findings from cultural and media studies show convincingly that people have a large amount of freedom and creativity in whether and how they consume, adopt, domesticate or appropriate technologies – or choose *not* to. Nevertheless, I find it interesting to study researchers’ and developers’ *attempts*, explicitly or implicitly, to configure end-users, because I think it has *some* influence on the product or service that comes out of their project, and that when people will use this product or service, that it will have *some* (reciprocal) effect on what people do with it. The idea of a “script” (Akrich 1992) captures the agency that end-users have: designers or developers “inscribe” their assumptions about who will use the product and how they should use it, into a product, but end-users still can choose whether they follow that script, or behave differently.

In this paper I will follow several researchers and developers in one project and describe how they interact with end-users in one project, and how they make decisions within that project. The question I seek to answer in this paper is: When researchers or developers interact with end-users in the early phases of an innovation process, how does that influence their decision making? I am mostly interested in choosing one problem to focus upon and neglecting other problems, or privileging one target group and marginalizing another, or decisions about the product to be developed for that problem and that target group.

## **Research approach**

In this paper I study one research and development project: the Freeband FRUX project in which I work and coordinate one part. This role of participant observer (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002:p.110) offers me the opportunity to see many things, also on different levels (as a researcher, as a project coordinator). This FRUX project runs from 2004 until 2007 and is part of the larger research and development program Freeband. Some forty researchers and developers, from nine organisations and with different backgrounds work in multidisciplinary teams in FRUX. The project is financed by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and by the participating organizations, and the goal of the project is to create knowledge that will help organisations in The Netherlands to develop and apply innovative information and communication technology (ICT). The results are meant for the common good of the society and economy. It follows from the exploratory nature of this project that researchers and developers have a fair amount of freedom as to what problem to address or which direction to look for solutions – more freedom than e.g. in a short term project for one client. On the other hand, there are all sorts of implicit goals and politics, e.g. because the program board and committee that steer and evaluate the project consists partly out of people from the organisations that work in the project.

By choosing to study one project in-depth I hope to be able to say interesting things about this one project, and concerning generalizability, also that the “concepts and constructs derived from this study have any relevance to other settings” (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002:p.53). I hope to be able to say things that are interesting for other

research and development projects, and for the early phases of product development projects – the “fuzzy front-end” of the innovation process (Koen et al. 2002), in which there is also a relatively large amount of freedom because many options are still open.

The role of participant observer has the benefit of being close to what I study, but it also brings the risk of being *too* close to it. Therefore I seek a research approach that creates some distance (Easterby-Smith et al. 2002:pp.43-44). For this, I feel attracted to Jacques Derrida’s approach of *deconstruction*: his way of reading a text very carefully, looking for what is *not* said. The word *text* here is not restricted to written texts or documents, but can also refer to things that happens during a project, a social interaction, provided that it is written down, so it can be read and reread during the process of deconstruction. Derrida is reluctant to define what deconstruction is, and prefers to say what it is *not*: “deconstruction is neither *analysis* nor a *critique* ... is not a method and cannot be transformed into one” (Derrida 1991:p.273). This is consistent with what deconstructing is about: refusing to make statements in the form of “S is P” (Derrida 1991:p.275) and trying to open-up a text for alternative readings, reading between the lines, and writing alternative readings in the margins. Simon Critchley describes deconstruction as follows:

What takes place in deconstruction is reading; and ... what distinguishes deconstruction as a textual practice is *double reading* – that is to say, a reading that interlaces at least two motifs or layers of reading, most often by first repeating what Derrida calls “the dominant interpretation” of a text in the guise of a commentary and second, within and through this repetition, leaving the order of the commentary and opening a text up to the blind spots or ellipses within the dominant interpretation. (Critchley 1999:p.23)

I will attempt to follow a similar approach, and will apply a modest form of deconstruction<sup>5</sup>: to apply a first voice to describe in a mainstream fashion what happens during the project, based on documents, papers and notes made by project team members, and on participant observations, and then “to locate a point of otherness” (Critchley 1999:p.27) outside that first text and, from that point, to apply a second voice (indicated with “—” in front of paragraphs) to provide an alternative reading of what happened, to destabilize this first description.

## The project studied

This study is confined to the one part of the FRUX project in which I work and which I coordinate: the development and evaluation of a new kind of telecommunication services: *we-centric* services<sup>6</sup>. At the start of the project there was only this name – *we-centric* services – and the observation that in many situations one belongs not to *one* group, but to various groups, and has different roles and tasks, and that (to be developed) we-centric services could facilitate people to communicate and cooperate in heterogeneous, spontaneous or dynamic groups, and to combine tasks and roles that are possibly conflicting. A we-centric service would be helpful if communication or cooperation is driven by events, e.g. emergencies or if things do not go as planned, because it would help people to improvise and form a group spontaneously. We-centric services are envisaged as a new kind of telecom service for *computer supported cooperative work*, or (mobile) social software. Different from “I-centric services” (Arbanowsky et al. 2004), where one person controls the rest of the world from a central position: objects, as well as other people. And different from traditional groupware, where one fixed group of people is supported to do one fixed set of tasks.

The project’s aim is to develop and evaluate such we-centric services in two specific domains: the “police domain” and the “dementia care domain”, and, based on those specific studies, to draw more general conclusions. While preparing the project, various committees and future project team members suggested to focus FRUX on the (supposed) socially relevant domains of public safety and health care, and to cooperate

with organisations from these domains – this would improve and benefit the project, especially in terms of receiving funding. This paper reports on the “police domain”, where researchers and developers interact with police officers, and attention is drawn to the interactions between *team members and police officers* and how that affects the processes of configuring and decision making. Another paper (Steen 2006) reports on the “dementia care track”, where researchers and developers interact with informal carers, and attention is drawn to the *interactions between team members*, and how that affects the processes of configuring and decision making.

The following organisations are active in the “police track” and relevant to the present study<sup>7</sup>: JKL<sup>8</sup>, an ICT expertise centre associated to the police organisation, and in the FRUX project responsible for establishing contacts with the larger police organisation and with police officers as future end-users of the services that are being developed; PQR and STU, two research and development (R&D) organisations in the domain of information and communication technology (ICT), and together responsible for explorative fieldwork with police officers and the development (up to specification) and evaluation of a we-centric service for police officers; and two companies, one that develops and sells telecom hardware and software and one that develops and sells web applications, together responsible for the development of prototypes (after the specification of user requirements) that can be evaluated together with end-users.

This track started in April 2004, and much of the work focused upon in this paper was conducted by Mandy<sup>9</sup>, Dirk and Alex (and in the beginning also Yvette), who work in research and development roles at PQR and STU; and Albert, whose role was later-on taken over by Trevor, and Harold from JKL. The people work on this project on a part-time basis, e.g. for 100 to 300 hours per year.

From the start of the project Albert has been advocating to contribute to the police organisation’s ambition to improve their “area-bound” work, i.e. the work that community police officers do in one area, which consists largely of communicating with many people and many organisations, in order to be able to listen to citizens, to establish cooperation with other organisations, and to prevent crime. This “area-bound” work is different from the work that e.g. emergency police officers do: they react to emergencies and provide immediate help, e.g. they stereotypically jump into their car and drive with flashing lights to an emergency. Albert was thinking particularly about developing ICT tools to support community police officers to communicate and cooperate with people both inside and outside the police organisation. His idea matched with the project’s ambition to develop and evaluate we-centric services that will help to improve communication and cooperation between people.

### **Workshop 1: Exploring opportunities**

In July 2004 Albert, Lisette (who worked in the project during the first six months and whose role was then taken-over by Mandy) and Alex had a workshop with six police officers in the south of The Netherlands. Two of them are working as community police officers, and the other four were working as community police officers and are currently managing community police officers. Lisette and Alex facilitated the workshop and stimulated the police officers to talk about police work, and not to invent solutions – although such ideas or suggestions were welcomed and noted down, of course.

The purpose of the workshop was: 1) to learn about “area-bound” work; 2) to learn about current communication, information and cooperation processes in which police officers are involved; and 3) to identify problems (or, like Albert preferred to say: “*opportunities*”) that may be solved through (innovative) telecommunication. The workshop started with describing the daily work of community police officers, and moved to describing in more detail working processes, and means to communicate and to capture, retrieve or exchange information. The workshop closed with formulating four

relevant and interesting problems and associated ideas to solve these problems through the application of information and communication technology:

1. When a police officer is on the street he/she may need some information, e.g. an update, a history or details, and these are currently not available. Currently, he/she will have to go to the office to retrieve it. An innovative information or communication service may solve that problem, by offering mobile access to that information, or communication with one who can provide that information;
2. Part of the police officers' work is 'paperwork'. Currently, they often have to do that twice: they make notes on paper while they work outdoors, and later on, back in the office, they type the same data into a computer system. Some information or communication service may streamline that, for example by taking notes digitally and sending these to the office electronically;
3. In order to react adequately to emerging events, management wants to know where the police officers currently are, and who is currently doing which task. With this knowledge, they could change priorities and better steer the police officers. Currently management's view is incomplete. Some information service may provide such view, for example by using localization technology;
4. Community police officers need to communicate with other police officers, or with firemen or ambulance personnel, for example in emergency cases; and with 'network partners' like people from the municipality, shopkeepers or headmasters for example for prevention of theft. The police organization wants to facilitate this kind of communication, but currently lacks appropriate tools. (project memo)

During the meeting the fourth "opportunity" was chosen to focus upon for further study: the idea to help community police officers to communicate and cooperate better with others. Additionally, Albert advocated to focus on helping community police officers to communicate and cooperate with others outside the police organisation: with "network partners" such as people from the municipality, shopkeepers, schools' headmasters.

— We chose that fourth option, mainly because it fitted nicely our concept of we-centric services, our idea to stimulate communication and cooperation within heterogeneous, spontaneous or dynamic groups. Although we only had rough or tentative ideas about what we-centric services may, or should, look like, we were able to identify this one as lying within our scope. Choosing this one opportunity and leaving the other three lying around, made us feel comfortable: it fits our project and it fits the idea of Albert, who we see as spokesperson for the police organization.

— In later phases of the project, e.g. during observations and interviews, we would often hear about inputting, accessing and editing data or information – which is closely related to the first and second options – but we were not keen to listen too much to those topics. We decided in this first workshop not to pay attention to those topics because they are related to *information* – and we decided, even before the project's start, that our project should be about *communication* (as if you can separate these).

In the report of the workshop, which we sent to the six participants afterwards, we included several of their quotes:

Police work is around-the-clock-work. A police officer is solution-oriented, eager to solve problems, curious, suspicious even, and is a doer, a go-getter.

Area-bound work means that police officers focus on one area and work together with network partners: e.g. people from the municipality, social workers, or people form a housing association. Police officers who work area-bound work very independently and often alone. A lot of their work is driven by incidents, and is therefore difficult to plan.

The police officer is like the spider in the web: he communicates with colleagues, with the local police station's secretary, with citizens, with the municipality, with neighbourhood associations. Communication is both face-to-face and via telecommunication.

A police officer must report all his activities: the hours he spent in a planning and control system; report on a content level in the basic police process system, e.g. type-out official reports and warrants; communicate to his network partners about his actions; in the police station he must indicate where he is, e.g. whether he is out or not, in which police car, e.g. on a white board; and fill-in in his electronic office agenda what things he is doing and will do.

A policeman's job is not to catch villains, but to produce files full of information for the prosecutor [Ministry of Justice] to prosecute villains. (project memo)

— These quotes tell us something about the fragmented or problematic identity of a police officer: about the tension between the police officer as an solution-oriented, independent professional, the police officer as a 'spider in the web' dependent on others, and the police officer as a servant to larger bureaucratic processes. This topic of identity – what it means to work as a police officer – re-appeared whenever we interacted with police officers, but was never made into a central topic of study. Another topic was neglected similarly: namely how to monitor or manage the quality of police work: What you can say if the number of burglaries drops? Can you attribute that to the work of police officers? And if the amount of tickets for a certain offence increase, does that mean that there are more offences, or that the police officers are dedicating more time to writing tickets? In later fieldwork we saw a chart in a police station's hallway indicating the target and realisation so far for writing certain tickets... We shunned topics like identity, management or culture, and felt attracted communication and cooperation – and we thought that these are separate phenomena.

### **Observations and creating storylines**

In August 2004 seven project team members observed "a day in the life of a police officer": Mandy, Dirk, Alex, and also Rachel, Karin, Liam, Barry – the latter four are mainly working on other tasks within the project.

The goal of these observations was to understand better the daily work of police officers via personal experience. This method is called "rapid ethnography": "field methods intended to provide a reasonable understanding of users and their activities given significant time pressures and limited time in the field" (Millen 2000). During these observations special attention was paid to how police officers communicate and cooperate with others, in different contexts and for different tasks. Each team member spend one day with police officers, either during a day shift or an evening shift, and followed one or more officers in the office, on the street and in the car. The team members were able to observe the work of a community police officer, and also the work of emergency police officers – either because they followed more than one officer, or because a community police officer sometimes also works as emergency police officer: "within emergency response". These observations were conducted in and around a small city in the centre of the Netherlands, with urban as well as rural qualities, and team members reported their observations in memos of about six pages each. A few days after the observations the team members, together with project team members from the police organization, shared their experiences in a project team meeting.

Many of the characterizations of police officers' work that were mentioned during the workshop in July reappeared in these observations: police officers' work is driven by incidents and requires a lot of improvisation; they communicate with many different people; they often need implicit knowledge of others (knowledge that is in the heads of

people, not in systems) or information that is not easily available, and have to call a colleague at the police station for this information (via radio telephones or cell phones), or have to go to the office to look it up; and police officers spend a lot of time at their desks in order to enter, edit or access information, or to monitor progress, etc. All project team members said afterwards that the value added of their observations was in having personal, first-hand experiences of a day with a police officer, rather than in obtaining new information.

As a way of summarising the observations, the project team members created three *personas*, fictional end-users Ad and Bert (community police officers) and Theo (emergency police officer); and three *storylines*, in the form of “one (working) day in the life of...”, amounting to a 16-page report. Personas and storylines were constructed by selecting and combining observations that happened frequently and that seem to be relevant or interesting from the perspective of communication and cooperation. Here are some excerpts:

Ad is 45 years old and has been working for 20 years as a community police officer. Ad is married and has two children: a daughter of 18 and a son of 16. Five years ago Ad and his family moved from Amsterdam to Haretown. Amsterdam was becoming too hectic for him and he preferred quieter surroundings. Therefore he was very happy with the opportunity to become a police officer in Haretown. His area suits him: quieter than his former area in Amsterdam, but enough happens in Haretown. Ad likes fishing and running. And he enjoys to cycle; he cycles to his work, and he often does his beat on his bicycle rather than in the car.

Bert is 25 years old and has been working for 18 months as a community police officer. Bert has been living together with his girlfriend Angela for a year. Angela has come to live with him in his spacious, newly built house, with room enough for two. Bert lives close to his work; 20 minute cycling brings him to the police station. Bert likes mountain biking and playing computer games. Angela regularly reproaches him for spending too much time in front of the computer.

*Monday 11.00 o'clock: Visiting the swimming pool:*

Ad is walking around in 'his' area. He decides to go to the swimming pool to have a quick look how things are. The weather is beautiful and it will probably be very busy in the swimming pool. The last few days a group of teenagers has been causing a lot of trouble. Ad arrives at the swimming pool and looks for his contact person, John. John however appears to have a day off.

*Tuesday 11.30 o'clock: Serving a writ:*

Bert has to serve a writ [go to someone's home and personally deliver a legal letter] today. Bert does not like this job. When he presents such documents, people often say: “This is a mistake, the person you are looking for moved a few weeks ago.” Bert has no photo of the person the document is meant for, so he never knows whether the other one is lying. Additionally, the document may be for some small crime like refuelling at a petrol station without paying. And attempting again and again to 'serve a writ' feels like a waste of time. Bert goes to the address. Nobody answers the door. Bert wants to call a judicial officer to ask whether the document can also be presented tomorrow. Unfortunately, he does not have a phone number to do that.

*Wednesday 16.15 o'clock: Helping the elderly lady:*

The neighbours of an 80-years old lady called the police, because they haven't seen her for two days and they worry about her. Ad arrives at her apartment, and calls at the lady through a cantilever window above the door. Fortunately the lady can hear him. She cannot open the door however, since she is fallen and cannot walk anymore. Ad enters the apartment by forcing the window. When he is inside, he starts to take care of her, and asks her whether she takes any medication. The lady is too confused to answer, so Ad asks her the name of her general practitioner. (project memo)



— We gave names to our end-users and described what they do. These personas and storylines helped us to communicate within the project about police officers, and helped us to develop a product for them. We wanted to have more contact with end-users, but the organisational context of the project allowed for only a small number of encounters. From a critical perspective, we can ask ourselves whether creating personas and storylines brings us closer to the people that were the raw material for these personas and storylines. Or are we coping here – given the few encounters with real end-users, where we would have liked more – with storylines and personas as a *surrogate* for contact real end-users. We can extend this critique and say that when we play with our personas and storylines we are confusing understanding end-users with grasping end-users – notice similarity between *comprendre* and *prendre* (French), *begreifen* and *greifen* (German), *begrijpen* en *grijpen* (Dutch) (cf. Critchley 1999:pp.6,29). When we ask ourselves what a police officer would do, we just imagine what our Ad would do.

— When we compare the individual observation notes with the storylines constructed collectively later, we see in these notes a freshness from the personal experiences during that day of observations. The storylines, however, appear relatively plain. The personal, first-hand experiences did not end-up in the official storylines. In her notes, Karin writes repeatedly that she thinks that police officers spend a lot of time inputting or editing data and suggests annoyed that that “should be made more efficient”, and how horrible she felt sitting next to a thief who was arrested and brought to the police station “all that hassle for one book of 9 euro 50”. Dirk relays a cynical joke of one officer as they get into the car: “Would you like to see our advanced navigation system?” – referring to a pile of paper maps, and a remark that one community officer makes about emergency police officers: “They run around like young dogs. I used to be one of them, but not anymore, fortunately”. Alex notes down jokes about new chairs and bureaucracy: “I asked for that two years ago, so you see, things are really happening here”, and of officers mock fighting with each other during lunch: they wear ties that unclip if you pull them. Barry notes that the police officer he shares the day with “has a strong appearance, is kind, and very determined”, and tells about this officer’s pleasure when he would point at something saying “Did you see that?” and of course Barry hadn’t.

— We were making observations about police officers’ identities, about management and culture of police work – but did not turn these into topics for further study, and instead kept focusing on telecommunication. The police officers’ attitude, their jokes, their culture – what it means to work as a police officer – did not end up in the storylines, and was not taken into account during further development and evaluation of our innovation. What would have happened if we had made such observations into topics for further study, if we analysed our own experiences and reflected upon these? The idea of empathic design is to move towards end-users’ experience you’re your own experience (Koskinen et al. 2003), but we largely *ignored* both their and our subjective and emotional experiences.

## **Workshop 2: Validating the observations**

As a next step in the process, the project team members organised a workshop, in October 2004, to validate their observations. Four of the community police officers whom we observed previously, participated, and their manager joined the workshop. The goal of that workshop was to identify and problems that are relevant for both the police officers and for the project team members, and to discuss possible solutions. One week before the 16-page document containing personas was sent to them, with the request to read it as a preparation. Besides the five police officers, project team members Friso (researcher), John (developer) and Kobus (from JKL) participated. Mandy, Yvette, Harold and Alex organised and facilitated the workshop.

At the start of the workshop three fragments from the storylines were put forward by the facilitators to focus upon during the workshop: three situations in which a community police officer communicates and cooperates with their network partners – see the three situations excerpted above. In these three situations several problems concerning communication are implied, in order to facilitate discussion about telecommunication means as a way to solve these problems. The idea behind the swimming pool seen is that Ad would have liked to know before that his contact person is away, and that an ICT-service could have informed him about that. In the situation of serving a writ ICT could have helped Bert to contact a judicial officer on the spot. And in the situation with the elderly lady, Ad could have been more effective if he would have had some ICT-tool to look-up information on a citizen in need.

The police officers were asked to evaluate these situations: Do they recognize these situations? How would they react? What problems do they see? What kind of solutions can they think of? About the visit to the swimming pool, they said that a visit is also worthwhile if your contact person is *not* there to meet you: it is good to show your face, and meet other people working there. About serving a writ, they said that “you just have to do this work, because otherwise you would jeopardise the work of your colleagues in the juridical department” – but you have to do it. And about helping the elderly lady, they said that this is not part of the core tasks of a police officer, but while you are there, you improvise, and call other people for information or for assistance. In short: communication and cooperation with network partners was fine as it is.

They said that they “are here to serve the community” and execute many “non-core” tasks. They often feel like being someone else’s assistant, and relate that to the problem that the quality of their work is difficult to measure. How can one measure the quality of walking around preventively, or how can one measure the quality of helping a kid *not* to turn to crime? As an illustration of the value added of their work, one police officer told proudly about the results they achieved in a large block of flats which had been problematic for years: there was vandalism, fights and crime. For a number of years he has worked in close cooperation with the housing association and with the doorkeeper, and the situation slowly improved – but “these things you don’t read in the newspaper, they are not interesting for journalists.”

They also told that the intimate knowledge that community police officers have of particular areas and of the people there is currently not accessible for other police officers, and they speculate that this knowledge may be especially valuable for emergency police officers. They therefore suggested to shift the project’s focus to emergency police officers (instead of community police officers): they often need communication or information urgently, and they may find some of the intimate knowledge of community police officers useful. The project team members adopted this suggestion and changed the goal from helping community police officers to communicate and cooperate with their external network partners (which seems to go fine), into helping community police officers to share their knowledge with emergency police officers.

— In earlier discussions we developed the idea of facilitating reciprocal communication between police officers and external network partners – reciprocity being a key concept of a we-centric service. If police officer A can see whether his contact person B at the swimming pool is out, or in or busy, then this contact person B can also see whether police officer A is out, or in or busy. Because of security issues, this idea was not developed further – imagine what a powerful tool for criminals this could be.

Additionally, the police officers mentioned several problems they encounter. They have to do too much paperwork (on paper, on computers). They want laptops or PDA’s (Personal Digital Assistants: small, mobile information and communication devices) or laptops in their cars, so they can access databases or intranet – but there is no budget

for that (“management chooses to allocate budgets differently”) or it is not allowed from a juridical perspective (“you cannot have people’s information on the street, outside the office”). Overall, the police officers were more interested in practical solutions which they can apply on the short term, whereas the project team members are interested in concepts that may materialize into products or services on the longer term. During the workshop the project team members made clear that many of the problems that the police officers tell about cannot be addressed within their project.

— At the start of the workshop the police officers’ manager said that he was not amused about the storylines. He called these “children’s stories”, and was irritated by the descriptions of policemen drinking coffee (“as if we are drinking coffee all the time”) and insisted that he does not want these stories to be picked-up by e.g. journalists. You may wonder how a manager may have reacted if we had included the police officers’ more cynical jokes about the new furniture that took so long or about their “advanced navigation system”. It may be handy to have two versions of the storylines: one for project team members, to help them empathize with end-users, and one for end-users, in which they can recognize themselves (and not feel irritated).

— At the end of the workshop the manager said irritably: “You have not learned anything about police work.” We discussed what one can learn in one day about a complex organisation like the police. Also the idea was formulated to do observations over a longer period of time in order to learn about police work. However, in the period after the workshop there was a process of reorganisation within the police organisation, so that this plan did not materialize with that police “region” (the Dutch police force is divided into some 25 “regions”). We had to find another “region” for further studies.

## Reading an article

During the “rapid ethnography” Alex browsed through a corporate magazine of the police organisation and found a article with a review of a large ethnographic study of police work which describes how little community police officers and emergency police officers communicate and cooperate with each other:

During the 343 hours on the street with emergency police officers we observed one time that they were supported by a area-bound [community] police officers. During the 268 hours on the street with area-bound [community] police officers we observed one time that they were supported by emergency police officers. (Stol et al. 2004:p.143)

The article suggested that area-bound police work (of community police officers) is critically looked upon within the police organisation, e.g. because the results of such work are difficult to measure – e.g. compared to writing tickets which is steered via target setting or within project, or compared to reacting to emergencies which is done by police officers within emergency response. This seemed interesting, so Albert and Alex interviewed the first author Wouter Stol in February 2005. He suggested to improve communication and cooperation between these two types of police officers in order to improve the overall performance of police work. He supported the idea that police officers’ intimate knowledge of one area can help other police officers within emergency response to do their work better. One police officer would be able to help a colleague, if only she knew that he needs her help, e.g. because he is currently working on a case similar to a case that she has been working on.

— We chose to empower community police officers, to help them with their work within the police. We felt that their area-bound work is under-valued: their work is less visible, requires commitment over a longer period, and their results are hard to measure. We were keen to stress that we want to stimulate people to *communicate* with each other, to exchange knowledge from person to person, *not* to introduce yet another chore of the data processing. That would make both police officers and citizens more happy.

## Developing a we-centric service

Based on the research so far Mandy, Dirk and Alex took on the role of developer and developed an idea for a we-centric service for police officers. Dirk, Adrian (a technical developer), Alex and Harold finished a report in April 2005 in which they propose the development of the *WijkWijzer*. This name<sup>10</sup> is a wordplay (in Dutch) with the meanings of *NeighbourhoodWiser* or *NeighbourhoodPointer*: the service presents to you a list of people that you may want to contact because they have knowledge that is interesting for your current task. Furthermore, the *WijkWijzer* supports communication because it shows ways to contact these people and their “status” (similar to MSN Messenger). The *WijkWijzer* will run on a PDA that some police officers in some police regions are currently already using. Furthermore, the *WijkWijzer* taps into the police database which contains reports (of e.g. incidents) and in which these reports are edited.

The idea behind a *we-centric* service is that it is also a “context-aware” application: the *WijkWijzer* is aware of people’s contexts and adapts what it displays dynamically. The list of people and their status are dynamic. The developers envision that the *WijkWijzer* monitors several “context elements” of police officers and combine these in order to automatically and dynamically create these lists and statuses. Examples of such “status elements” are: cases she has been working on earlier; whether an officer is currently working or available for communication. The development in this stage focuses on what an end-user will see, see Figure 1, whereas the underlying software will be developed later.



Figure 1. Sketch (left) and visualisation (right) of the *WijkWijzer*

— We were happy to re-use one functionality of a prototype that was developed and evaluated in a forerunner project with a similar scope and goal in which several people from the current project also participated (de Poot et al. 2004). Such re-use is stimulated by project managers and steering and evaluation committees. That forerunner project service gave insight in the availability of several others by showing information derived from their digital calendars. Prior to contacting that person, you can see in a glance whether that other person is in a meeting, en route, etc. Based on that “context information”, you can decide on an appropriate time and medium to contact that other person: e.g. now by mobile phone; later face to face; or via email.

— Why was there such a long period between workshop 2 (October 2004) and the next workshop 3 in (August 2005)? Not because sketching a user interface took so long, but because of two organisational issues. Firstly, in the process of finding police officers who are relevant for a certain incident, the *WijkWijzer* has to tap into the police reports database, which caused many discussions about practical and political difficulties of tapping into that database, e.g. about security and privacy. Finally, it was decided that we were going to build a copy of that database for our own experiments, and then it took some time until additional contracts about secrecy, cooperation and property between project partners were settled. Secondly, there was a process of reorganization

within several police departments, and there were personnel movements within JKL that delayed the *WijkWijzer* work. This shows how much a project depends upon the people within and around the project. E.g. when Albert retired, and his role was taken over by Trevor, the project lost an advocate for improving area-bound police work and for developing the *WijkWijzer*. Furthermore, the changing context of JKL made them decide to gradually increase their work on a new concept in which they became interested, and, consequently, to decrease work on “we-centric” and the *WijkWijzer*.

### Workshops 3 and 4: Evaluating the *WijkWijzer*

In August 2005 and November 2005 two workshops with police officers in the east of the Netherlands were organised in order to validate the ideas behind the *WijkWijzer*. Dirk, Mandy and Alex organised and facilitated these workshops, together with Harold.

The goal of workshop 3 (August 2005) was determine whether the problem which the project is currently focusing on (“community police officers and emergency police officers do not communicate or cooperate a lot”) and the proposed solution (“the *WijkWijzer* can facilitate community police officers to share their knowledge with emergency police officers”) are perceived as relevant and valuable by police officers. Four community police officers participated, and also one police dog unit manager and three people who work on “Mobile Police Info”.

— The police region where the workshop was organised is one of the pilot regions of “Mobile Police Info”: an innovative information system with which police officers on the street can access several police databases via a PDA. Somewhere in the process of recruiting, selecting and inviting the participants the theme of “Mobile Police Info” emerged and became associated with the workshop. Furthermore, on the morning of the day of the workshop many of the police officers testing this system were disconnected from it, because the system was too costly. As a consequence, a large part of the workshop was about the disadvantages of this system, about why they would they want to use it nevertheless (despite the disadvantages), and about the frustration of being disconnected.

During workshop 3 role-playing with a “magic thing” (Iacucci and Kuutti 2002) was applied as a method to study the added value of the *WijkWijzer* in work situations. For two situations three police officers were invited to play three roles: a community police officer, an emergency police officer, and a person at the emergency room (different officers for the two situations). Each situation the played two times: first how they would currently handle it (without the *WijkWijzer*), and then how they would handle that situation *with* it. An empty PDA-size carton box functioned as the “magic thing” with the *WijkWijzer* in it. The police officers were given small cards with a partial descriptions of the situation on it:

*Without the WijkWijzer – card for the person at the emergency room:*

At 9.00 AM the emergency room receives this report: Burglary at Vinkenstraat 34. They used a ladder to enter the apartment via the back garden. The emergency room then calls Nick, a police officer within response, to go to this address.

*With the WijkWijzer – card for the emergency police officer:*

The *WijkWijzer* sends a hint to Nick, an emergency police officer:  
**Report: Burglary at Vinkenstraat 34.**  
**William knows more about this (click to contact)**

*With the WijkWijzer – card for the community police officer:*

The *WijkWijzer* also sends a hint to William, a community police officer:  
**Report: burglary, Vinkenstraat 34.**  
**Nick is working on this case (click to contact)**

The idea is that without the *WijkWijzer*, Nick would probably do his task without William's help or advice, but with the *WijkWijzer*, Nick may contact William to seek his advice, or William may contact Nick to offer his help.

The police officers recognized the problem and the opportunity. However, they were critical about whether police officers would indeed contact each other based on the of the *WijkWijzer's* suggestions. Would the *WijkWijzer* be able to compose a list of people who are indeed relevant? Such a list may contain people whom you already know, and then it has no added value. Or it may contain people whom you do *not* know and the hints fail to make clear *why* you should contact them. This means that special attention should be paid to the software behind the *WijkWijzer* which compose the list of people and the reasons for contacting them.

The community police officers told about how useful their knowledge would be for emergency police officers, and how these two groups of police officers work differently:

There is much in my head. It is very handy for an emergency police officer to know that when this person becomes annoying [in the case of domestic violence], that you must ask his neighbour from the left, because he will make him quiet, and not his neighbour from the right, because he will irritate him.

Community police officers are proactive, they listen to all broadcasted messages over the radio phone and initiate communication with their colleagues [to help them].

Frequently only one person out of a group of ten is the real trouble maker. If [a community police officer] can pick and identify that one person and you can address him with his name, then you have effect.

[An emergency police officer] would first speak to the group and only later contact the community police officer. That is more practical. You don't call the doctor if you do not know yet that you are sick. (project memo)

The community police officers told about how emergency police officers often do not contact others while they hurry to an emergency. They are doers, go-getters. They suggested that emergency police officers seem reluctant to ask for their knowledge. They suggested that the *WijkWijzer* should support a community police officer to *proactively* offer her knowledge to an emergency police officer – rather than support an emergency police officer to *ask* a community police officer for her knowledge.

Because only community police officers participated in workshop 3, the perspective of emergency police officers was missing – although some community police officers also work regularly within emergency response. In order to learn both perspectives a mixture of both groups were invited for workshop 4 (November 2005). In that workshop three community police officers, three emergency police officers, and one person from the emergency room participated. (One community police officer and the person from the emergency room also participated in workshop 3.)

The emergency police officers told that they have their own kind of knowledge – knowledge that may be valuable for community police officers. Emergency police officers drive around during evenings and nights, also when they are not rushing to or from an emergency, and they cover a larger area (larger than one neighbourhood). They see a lot. And when e.g. a community police officer has an appointment with people *not* to hang around on a certain spot, or with a café owner *not* to be open after a certain time, then it would be valuable when a police officer within emergency response notices – e.g. while driving around in the night – whether they are hanging around or whether the café is open. It is even interesting to know that “nothing happened”. However, many of these little observations are not entered into the police database – and remain implicit knowledge of emergency police officers.

This observation – that emergency police officers have knowledge that may be useful for community police officers, just like community police officers have information that may be useful for emergency police officers – led to the idea that the *WijkWijzer* should support reciprocal communication: both should be able to initiate communication. Community police officer Ad may want to offer his knowledge to emergency police officer Theo, or Theo may ask for Ad's knowledge, or Theo may want to offer his knowledge to Ad, or Ad may ask for Theo's knowledge. This means that the Ad gets Theo on his *WijkWijzer* screen, and Theo gets Ad on his. This is the idea of reciprocity, which was a key idea of we-centric services right from the start of the project.

From workshops 3 and 4 the project team members learned more about two kinds of annotations police officers can make in the police database: "appointment on location" (AoL) or "appointment on person" (AoP) – these annotations indicate that a certain location or a certain person need special attention, e.g. that a person is known to be using firearms. The project team members chose to use these two kinds of annotations for further development of the software behind the *WijkWijzer* (next section).

— Oh irony. We have so long tried to focus on communication (and to neglect the police's information systems – nobody likes the idea of introducing new tasks of data entry or data editing) of ) and only if we think that we can *use* their information system for *our* communication system we become interested in it. Now that it can help us forward with our plan, we start pay attention to their stories.

— After workshop 4 we had lunch with the police officers. They talked heatedly about their uniform's trousers. They currently wear cotton trousers, and management wants them to wear woollen trousers. They are furious about this: "We don't want woollen trousers!". They told us how an emergency police officer must hurry, how you must kneel down in the mud, and how easily you get blood or other stains on your trousers. They are responsible for their own uniforms, and they can easily wash their cotton trousers, but such woollen trousers they must bring to the dry cleaner. And woollen trousers must have a crease in them. Additionally, their cotton trousers and belt have a handy place for their gloves, at the front, where they feel their gloves belong. These woollen trousers do not have such a place for their gloves. Listening to these stories we might have learned something about what it means for them to be a police officer, what their equipment means for their work, what it means for them to have managers above you who force something down your throat – woollen trousers or a *WijkWijzer* – and how they are trying to be professionals, almost despite the rest of the organisation.

## Developing the *WijkWijzer* prototype

Based on these workshops, project team members Mandy and Dirk, together with Henk (responsible for the technical development) further developed a prototype of the *WijkWijzer*. The following "use case" (a situation in which the *WijkWijzer* is used, to illustrate its putative added value) guided the development of this prototype:

- When an incident is reported, a report is generated and assigned to one police officer (A); [this police officer then goes to that incident, request or emergency – this is the current process, the next three steps are added with the *WijkWijzer*]
- The police's database is searched for police officers that may have relevant implicit knowledge about this incident, and for each police officer found, a "utility" is calculated based on relevancy and availability – this function is explained in the next section;
- The report is sent to the police officer whom was assigned to that incident (A), with a list of supposedly "useful" police officers (B), their contact details, availability, a reason to contact them, and an indication of their "utility";

- The name, contact details and availability of the police officer whom was assigned to that incident (A) is sent to all the supposedly “useful” officers (B), with the reason they may be contacted, and an indication of their own “utility”. (project memo)

A software application behind the *WijkWijzer* taps into the reports database and searches for similar reports, and for occurrences of “appointment on location” or “appointment on person”. It also taps into the police officers’ schedules, rosters and their current availability. Based on matches (calculated by a simple algorithm) the *WijkWijzer* can produce a short list of (supposedly) relevant people, plus reasons why they would be relevant. See Figure 2 for a user interface of the prototype.



**Figure 2. Prototype of the WijkWijzer (project memo)**

In the summer of 2006 this prototype was evaluated together with police officers in the north of the Netherlands. In June a workshop was conducted with six police officers (both community and emergency police officers) to discuss the functionality of the *WijkWijzer* and the user interface. In July a small-case test was conducted in which police officers used the prototype on the street during their work. During this test the *WijkWijzer* tapped into a “simulated” database in which “simulated” reports were entered by Harold during the test. The purpose of these evaluations is to assess the added value of the *WijkWijzer* for the end-users.

## Conclusions

In order to address the research question – When researchers or developers interact with end-users in the early phases of an innovation process, how does that influence their decision making? – let us review how the project team members’ interactions with end-users relate to their design decisions, especially decisions about what target group or what problem to focus upon. See Table 1.

- At the end of 2003 the project plan was written, in which the development and evaluation of we-centric services was one of the main goals. The idea behind such services is to facilitate people to communicate and cooperate in heterogeneous, spontaneous or dynamic groups, and to combine possibly conflicting tasks or roles.
- At the start of the project, the spokesperson of project partner JKL proposed to improve area-bound work of the police, e.g. to support community police officers to communicate with others, both inside and outside the police.



- After workshop 1 it was decided to focus on community police officers, and to help them to communicate and cooperate with their (external) network partners: people at the municipality, the swimming pool, at schools, the supermarket, etc.
- After the observations and workshop 2 this focus shifted towards helping community police officers to share their knowledge with emergency police officers – because communication with external network partners seemed to go fine.
- During workshop 3 it became clear that the community police officers are willing to share their knowledge, but that emergency police officers are reluctant to ask them – so the focus became to stimulate emergency police officers to access the knowledge of community police officers.
- After workshop 4 it became clear that emergency police officers also have valuable knowledge, which may be used by community police officers. So the focus became to support both kinds of police officers to communicate and exchange knowledge with each other, on a reciprocal basis.

**Table 1. Interactions with end-users and design decisions during the project**

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Interactions with end-users</b>	<b>Design decisions: What the service under-development (WijkWijzer) must do</b>
End of 2003	Before the project	To facilitate people to <b>communicate and cooperate</b> in heterogeneous, spontaneous or dynamic <b>groups</b> , and to combine possibly conflicting <b>tasks or roles</b>
Apr 2004	Start, project partner JKL	To support <b>area-bound</b> police work: support police officers to communicate and cooperate – both inside and outside the police
July 2004	Workshop 1	To support <b>community</b> police officers to communicate and cooperate with network partners: others <b>outside</b> the police
Aug 2004 – Oct 2004	Observations, storylines and workshop 2	To support <b>community</b> police officers to share their knowledge with <b>emergency</b> police officers
Aug 2005	Workshop 3	To stimulate <b>emergency</b> police officers to access and use the knowledge of <b>community</b> police officers
Nov 2005	Workshop 4	To stimulate community police officers and emergency police officers to share knowledge <b>with each other</b>

Each interaction with end-users had *some* influence on the decisions, and the project team members allowed for a gradual drifting of the project's goal and focus:

- the goal to support community police officers to cooperate with parties outside the police changed, via several steps, into the goal to support community police officers and emergency police officers to communicate with each other;
- the focus on communication (and neglecting information systems and databases) changed into stimulating communication based upon recommendations that are made based on information in a database.

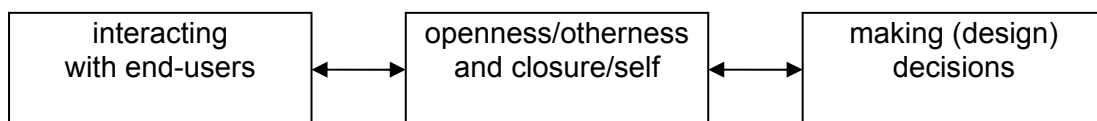
It is considered good practice for a research project to let the goal and focus of a research project to drift gradually, especially if that is done based upon interactions with end-users. This may be different e.g. from what is considered good practice for a product development project, where sticking to the initial goal or focus is considered to be good practice.

When we look critically at the project, we can also see that the project team members missed several opportunities to learn about police work: to learn about what it means to work as a police officer, what it means to work in a hierarchical organisation. However, this paper is *not* about good guys versus bad guys. Both the project team members

and the police officers did their best, given their respective tasks and roles. The project team members had their agenda: to develop and evaluate the concept of we-centric, context aware telecommunication services – a concept that is not yet implemented and not yet working properly. They went into the field to observe police officers and invited them to participate in workshops. The project team members encouraged them to talk about their daily work as police officers, their problems and practical solutions they can think of. Looking back it seems like the researchers and developers implicitly assumed the following: “We will have some empathy, but not too much. We will allow them to participate, but not too much. We will not dive too deep into their world, into their problems, and we will not produce solutions that they can use immediately.” Given their task and role, this seems appropriate. They cannot follow-up on 100% of what the police officers tell them, nor did they follow-up on 0% of what the police officers told.

## Discussion and further study

The relation between “interactions with end-users” and “design decisions” is not a one-way or straightforward one. In social life – which consists of researchers, developers, police officers and others – one will not find one-way or straightforward effects. Asking a question like “How does violence on TV affect aggressive behaviour of children?” does not do justice to the complexity of social life and should be rephrased in something like “What can we say about violence in media and aggression in children’s lives, and about various (two-way) relations between these?”<sup>11</sup>. This paper’s research question should similarly be rephrased into: “What can we say about how researchers and developers interact with end-users, and how they make decisions, and about various (two-way) relations between these?” In addition, I would like to speculate that there is something that sits in-between interacting with end-users and decision making, which can be thought of in terms of openness/otherness and closure/self, see Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Reciprocal relations between interactions with end-users and design decisions**

The project team members made moves towards *openness* (towards otherness) when they sought interactions with police officers, when they tried to understand police officers’ experiences, and they made moves towards *closure* (or towards the self) when they stuck to their task and role to work on *we-centric* services, and when they re-used ideas developed in forerunners of this project. Not only do the interactions with end-users affect on the process of making design decisions, but also do the design decisions affect the interactions with end-users, e.g. on the nature and quality of such interactions. After you made a design decision, you are likely to be interested in one part of reality (and less in other parts), and in your next interaction with police officers you will pay attention to that part (and less to other parts).

An interesting topic for further study is how the researchers’ or developers’ professional identities help or hinder them to make moves towards openness/otherness or towards closure/self. These movements can e.g. be observed when they create personas or storylines. Such practices show how they reify end-users’ otherness and how they mould them into their own fiction. One way into this is to study the creation and application of different storylines, e.g. what kind of elements to include (e.g. with or without cynical jokes), or different audiences (e.g. the project team or the end-users).

Furthermore, it would be interesting to reflect critically upon the methods that the project team members applied. Their approaches were inspired by human-centred design or empathic design, which tend to be geared towards interacting with individual people, whereas approaches like contextual design or participatory design could have been more appropriate, because they tend to be geared towards interacting with

groups of people within a (complex) organisational context. It also seems like the project team members could have benefited from a little less focus, delaying their tendency for closure, e.g. not deciding to privilege one problem and neglecting others after only one workshop at the start of the project.

Or, in a similar vein, they could have benefited from a more open stance towards topics that they think are outside their scope. Imagine what they could have learned about how police officers work and their reaction to innovations when they would have listened better to what the police officers told them about their woollen trousers? Listening to their stories about woollen trousers – how these do not match with what being a police officer is about, how management tries to shove these down their throats – could have taught them something about their *WijkWijzer* – how using the *WijkWijzer* relates to being a police, how they may react when managers try to introduce it. They often spoke about their work experiences, their ways of doing things, their organisation, the hierarchy, the power, and culture. But these were never studied seriously.

In this respect, it is noteworthy that the project team members were aware of the anti-authoritarian tendency of we-centric services, and of the *WijkWijzer*: it is a telecom tool that facilitates people to communicate and cooperate outside formal or hierarchical paths. Yet they rarely explicitly stated or studied that. In several occasions it was mentioned that using the *WijkWijzer* may disturb the current working processes, and in workshop 4 it was noted that the *WijkWijzer*'s function of providing additional information before going to an emergency would compete with the current job of the person in the emergency room (who currently provides this information).

Another interesting topic are the ethical qualities of doing research and development. With the word *ethical* I do *not* refer to good or bad, but, following one thread of Derrida's philosophy, to a situation where I must choose, where I have (some) freedom, and where rationality or morality are of no help. I cannot follow rational rules or moral laws in order to make my decision. There is an "aporia", "a tension between demands that pull us in two directions", and it is this undecidability that makes action possible: "It offers us the very possibility of choosing" (Jones 2003:p.228-9). I am interested in e.g. situations where a researcher privileges a certain problem (and neglects another), or where a developer prioritizes a certain solution (and marginalizes another). Why did he or she choose that target group, that problem, that direction, that solution?. Exploring ethics is like a "putting into question of my spontaneity" (Critchley 1999:p.5), where spontaneity can be thought of as similar to creativity.

I would to re-use one key strength of the approach of science and technology studies, namely that it conceives of actors as within a network of relations (Latour 1987; Latour 1996): the action is in the relations. Therefore, I will *not* conceive of ethics as happening within (the inner live of) one person, but of ethics as happening between people. I will study how researchers or developers base their decisions upon their (ethical) relations with others, how e.g. an encounter with an end-user, or a discussion with another project team member enables one to make a decision.

E.g. the project team members showed a preference to focus upon community police officers (rather than on emergency police officers), probably because they wanted to empower them, to help them with their work within the police organisation – also in line with Albert's preferences. They also preferred to focus on communication, maybe because they had the idea that communication and cooperation between people is good, and they chose to neglect processes of information, maybe because they believed that police officers have too much paperwork already. Wouter Stol's ethno-graphical study further supported their thesis that police officers do communicate little, and that their work would improve when they do. Nevertheless they happily took several elements of the information database (AoL and AoP) after workshop 4, when it suited their purpose to make their communication application work.

## Action research – to be continued...

The contents of this paper was discussed with Mandy, Dirk and Harold, as a form of “respondent validation”, and to turn this study into action research (Gummeson 2000): to facilitate the participants (including myself) to reflect and to think of alternative ways of doing the project. That discussion, as well as (possible) effects of this intervention will be studied during the rest of 2006. I plan to continue participant observation and to conduct additional interviews with e.g. Mandy, Dirk and Harold.

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<sup>2</sup> With *researchers and developers* I refer to people who work in a multidisciplinary research and development team: people who do applied technological, marketing or user research, and people who do concept, product or user interface development. I am interested in how people with different roles interact with end-users, and with each other during a project.

<sup>3</sup> With *end-users* I refer to future, putative or potential users. Talking about *end-users* is strange when there is not yet a product or service that can be used. I use *end-users* for readability. Furthermore, I use *end-users* to refer to people for whom the product or service is meant primarily or ultimately, rather than *users*, because that would refer also to e.g. a repair-person.

<sup>4</sup> I do *not* find the activities of end-users less relevant or less interesting than the activities of researchers and developers. It is just *not* the focus of this study, which focuses on researchers and developers and their attempts to interact with end-users.

<sup>5</sup> I call my approach *modest*, because am not able to do a "tight-rope" act, I am not be able to "take up a position exterior to logocentrism, if such a thing were possible" (Critchley 1999:p.29) in the way that Derrida does. Derrida plays with language to deconstruct the foundations of language, of logocentrism – but, because he does that with texts, he *needs* to play with texts.

<sup>6</sup> The project is divided into three work packages (WP): WP1 focuses on we-centric services and on the end-user perspective on such innovations; WP2 focuses on service bundling and on the provider's perspective on such innovations; and WP3 focuses on technology and on building of prototypes that can be used for research and evaluations in WP1 and WP2.

<sup>7</sup> Other project partners are active in other parts of the "police track" that I am not studying in this paper, or active in the "dementia care track" which I describe in another paper.

<sup>8</sup> Names of organizations are made unrecognizable.

<sup>9</sup> Names of project team members are made unrecognizable.

<sup>10</sup> It is common to invent a name that captures the functionality, because that helps to communicate the idea to project team members and stakeholders.

<sup>11</sup> Example provided by Steve Brown in a PhD/DBA workshop at the University for Humanistics.

## ***Effecting Genocide: A Call for a Deeper Questioning of 'Ugly' Silences on Genocidal Acts and Episodes in Organization and Management Studies.***

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**ABSTRACT:** Genocidal acts have been a painful and recurrent feature of human history yet, in spite of this, they have proved strangely difficult to define. The United Nations (1951) has stated genocide as deeds: “committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group”. However, irrespective of these definitional challenges, it is incontestable that images and accounts of genocidal atrocities, particularly those associated with mass exterminations in the Twentieth Century, have come to epitomise evil, demonic and depraved conduct. Literature and disciplinary fields of study, in particular history, sociology and psychology, have provided many accounts in an attempt to explain the motives and processes of the dark phenomenon and deed of genocide (Levi, 1963; Bauman, 1989; Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990; Rees, 2005; Balakien, 2005). Within the sphere of organization and management, there exists a recognition and acknowledgement of the scope to scrutinise, cast light on and develop analyses in relation to genocidal episodes (Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis, 2005: 178-179; Grey, 2005: 25). Typically, many of these commentaries access Zygmunt Bauman’s seminal work *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989) and it is perhaps this text which, more than any other, has been influential in management and organization writing. This tentative canon of (management and organizational) work on genocide has shed valuable light on the issues involved, however, consideration of this difficult subject has been underdeveloped in the field and the paper calls for and embarks on a timely exploration of the development of a management and organization epistemology of genocide.

This is a brief paper produced in the tradition of a discussion paper for conference. As such it comprises a series of installation arguments and interventions. The argument points up a need to revisit and develop fresh analytical frameworks that assist in developing deeper understanding of the potentially sinister role of power, bureaucracy, management and organization. Following motive and political act, it underlines and evaluates existing understandings which, in relation to genocide, indicate that large-scale killing inevitably involves, *inter alia*, logistical and organizational pre-requisites. It confers with the notion that genocide does not ‘just happen’. Whether in the Holocaust, Stalin’s purges, Mao’s Cultural Revolution, Burundi or ‘ethnic cleansing’ in the Balkan conflict genocide is likely to require extensive and sustained Tayloristic, Fordist and Post-Fordist processual and spatial (re-)structuring in order to organise and manage the identification, registration, logistics and extermination of genocide’s victims. Sustained focus on the act of genocide by the organization and management academy is perhaps long overdue. Imperatively, episodes which have challenged the very limits of humanity’s own perceptions and conceptions of possibilities for good and evil should invoke a more intense and constant gaze. The paper resurfaces and reappraises the function of organization and management in genocide to bureaucratises, systematise, categorise, sanitise, neutralise and distance the human lived experience of the act (Knights and Willmott, 1999). Above all, it considers the central role of complicity, collaboration, tacit alliances and silences (following Gramsci’s notion of ‘tacit collaboration’), in genocide and it argues that these analyses provide many poignant and discomfiting ethical and organizational insights in relation to contemporary corporate experience.

## **Introduction.**

This is a short paper with the purpose of producing preliminary discussion at conference. It aims to examine genocide in relation to organization and management and prepare the ground for what is intended as a wider and expanding debate. In terms of sheer depravity and horror few human actions parallel that of the act of genocide. While nobody would profess confusion over the ugliness and 'wrongness' of deeds committed under genocide, it has nevertheless persisted as a difficult phenomenon to define for legal or pan-international institutional action (The United Nations 1951). The term genocide was coined by the Polish scholar Raphael Lemkin (1900-1959) and is derived from the roots *genos* (meaning tribe or race) and *-cide* (to kill, to massacre). It is evident that genocide often requires extensive organization and management however well or poorly conducted for the end of mass murder. The paper considers the degree of engagement of extant organization and management literature and in particular textbook and student focused writings. Within this review the paper notes many of the better known and already acknowledged aspects of the role of organization and management in relation to genocide, particularly in relation to the bureaucracy of the Holocaust, for example, detailed logistical, documentary and statistical processes. It progresses to focus more precisely on notions of the role compliance, collaboration and complicity within genocidal situations and begins a process of exploration of a nexus and common value between contemporary organizational and pedagogical contexts.

## **Organization and Management Commenting on Genocide**

Genocidal episodes have generated a considerable breadth and depth of literature across a span of disciplines. In particular history, sociology and psychology have, from within their respective frames of reference, produced much commentary. (Levi, 1963; Bauman, 1989; Chalk and Jonassohn, 1990; Rees, 2005; Balakien, 2005) These bodies of works point up organizational and managerial aspects of genocide, however, this has not necessarily been their central concern. The apparent space left for organizational and managerial analyses has been only partially addressed by organization and management studies writings.

Thus, the initial contribution from the paper to the debate is a recognition of a paucity of commentary on the genocide within organizational and management writing. This has important implications for those students accessing texts in academic programmes and institutions. Evidently, it means that while some references to, and learning in relation to genocide, may be present it is likely to be fleeting, situated in a labyrinth of other informational and programme learning demands. The gravely serious issue of genocide thus jockeys for position next to, for example, multifarious models, charts,



theories of structure, metrics – profit, market share, product impression measurements and theories.

Even in the face of the role and usage of the internet, journals, and other media, given the still important role of textbooks in student learning it is notable that in texts aimed at student's reference to genocide is almost invisible. The second contribution of the paper therefore seeks to establish the characteristics, occurrence and nature of textbook commentary on genocide in organization and management texts – a sort of taking stock of the contemporary textbook representation and concerns in relation to genocide. Extant organizational and management accounts have indeed challenged the relative potential silence of organization and management members in relation to the value of learning lessons from genocide. However, in an absent reflexive turn perhaps the general silence of the field or discipline overall is less noted (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000). The accounts perhaps understandably tend to focus attention on arguably the most commented and documented of the twentieth centuries genocides, the Holocaust. Indeed a, if not *the*, key contributor to the theoretical structure of these contributions is Zygmunt Bauman's major work *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989). Grey (2005:25) points up of Bauman's book that:

'... the genocide instigated by the Nazi's represents the extreme application of a bureaucratic logic. For what makes the Holocaust so peculiarly appalling is the way in which it was constructed industrially – with a systems of rules, impersonally applied, which made it as technically efficient as genocide could be.'

Crucially, Grey underlines a central point from Bauman's thesis that we should not consider the Holocaust to be an exception to society's rules. However troubling and disturbing it may seem the Holocaust emerged, and was a product, of modern Western societies accumulated organizational, managerial and bureaucratic expertise. Implicit within these processes is the separation of means and ends. Where this occurs many things seem to become, albeit counter-intuitively, 'acceptable' to a range of individuals involved.

Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis, 2005: 178-179 outline a particular argument in relation to Bauman's work:

"At the heart of the moral question is the interpretation of power and ethics. Why do ordinary people in organizations do morally bad things when asked to do so? What aspects of an organization make unquestioning obedience feasible?" (*ibid.* p.79)

Drawing on Kelman (1973) they provide a response through the identification of three key catalytic conditions: 'When the highest authority sanctions the organizational action in question... When the actions that enact the organizational action in question are routinized...When those who are the victims of the actions are dehumanised...'. And, they cite that this

processualization of genocide leads to what Arendt (1994) (in referring to the trial of the Nazi, Eichmann) as the 'banality of evil'.

Jones, Parker and Ten Bos (2005: 90-95) make one of the more extensive presentations concerning the causes, effects and implications of the Holocaust in relation to Bauman's work. Interestingly, in a similar manner to Clegg, Kornberger and Pitsis, they draw on this material through the notion of moral distance expressed as: 'How is an organisation member encouraged not to care about the Other?' They provide striking illustrations of how this might be related to contemporary contexts. In particular, they draw on the idea that a soldier asked to hurt a child would not do so but placed in an aircraft carrying bombs they may readily turn the incendiary bomb release lever causing appalling injuries and death. In a similar vein, those who manufacture weapons are dislocated from the end act of killing or maiming a human being.

All of these commentaries and observations make apposite and valuable contributions to a body of work which students might examine and from which they might learn much regarding organizations. As such these arguments and positions offer rare voices on the topic of genocide in a plethora and cacophony of management commentary. Genocide was not their central purpose but an important event from which learning for the future might be gained. Nevertheless, building on this work, the paper believes that there is scope to engage in concerted analysis of genocide or the Holocaust within organization and management studies. The work of Bauman has been borrowed and incorporated from the field of sociology. This inter-disciplinary infusing of ideas is a common and valuable practice in organization and management studies and is particularly valued and recognised within critical management approaches. In sum, my third intervention is to suggest that a dedicated and more focused study of genocide is now timely.

### **Engaging with the Genocide and the Holocaust for Learning.**

There is currently much debate concerning the condition of learning in business schools (Jones and O'Doherty, 2005). The paper advocates that in association with much of the work which is already taking place in business schools and other academic and reflective for a and colloquia a consideration of genocide provides distinctive opportunities for a greater focus on genocide may have for student experience and exploration of self. For the purposes of the argument, the Holocaust makes a particular useful example. Firstly, the Holocaust has received extensive coverage and there is considerable documentation. Perhaps too, significantly and with some concern a rhetorical banality is in danger of becoming 'real' for audiences. Holocaust becomes history we have seen before and we think less about what is seen often or frequently.

Clearly, within this canvas it is possible to consider the application of Tayloristic, Fordist and Post-Fordist processes and ways of organizing. This would lead the analysis into a spatial, processual or bureaucratic exploration

of the events of genocide. Of course, in many respects this is not novel observation and it has been a well-recognised and commented on, particularly in relation to the Holocaust.

Rather, it is to the notions of complicity, collaboration and silences to which the present paper turns. In particular it is interested in exploring these in the context of a lecture-seminar. In particular the paper focuses the notion of 'moral distance' discussed above (Campbell, Parker, Ten Bos: 2005:90) Why would this be a valuable topic for contemporary students to explore? It is possible, as is already widely accomplished in the corporate social responsibility and ethics bodies of literature to demonstrate how our actions affect the remote Other. Popular illustrations of this in corporate social responsibility lectures might include how the purchase of Nestle products sponsors Nestle's activities in developing countries with dire impacts on infant mortality through the use of baby milk products in poor hygienic conditions. Equally wide consensus notoriously points at our desire to support local and national sports teams by purchasing sports clothing produced in purported sweatshop operations of sportswear manufacturers. Yet in spite of this well-publicised linkages, and considerable ethical activism against them, many other corporations continue to conduct cost-effective operations while impinging on the lives of many people. Vitally, individuals, frequently in more affluent western nations continue to sustain these processes. Yet these examples are common-place. And, these examples, are large-scale and by their spatial and definitional nature, 'distanced'. They are so well-commented as not to raise genuine attention in some audiences. Tragically, in a similar manner to violence on the evening news many people barely turn from their domestic preoccupations. As such we have arguably (re-) entered Arendt's banality of evil. Companies such as Adidas, Nike and Nestle become the ready (and willing?) 'evil fall-guy' corporate figures of a changing globalized world. In so doing they become a rhetorical evil masking the more widespread operations of many other processes and organizations. While this wider net of undesirable practice and activity may not escape the eye of expert commentators and academics, more public or populist perceptions do not stray beyond the 'usual suspects'.

This discussion points up an uncomfortable macro-situational truth. It is on the assumption that it is by myriad and multifarious small steps and silences in communities and groups that undesirable, and even evil, events are permitted to take place. It is thus to the more immediate and local micro setting that the argument wishes to turn its gaze. The paper engages with a statement as a provocation to conference debate. As the English philosopher Edmund Burke (1729-1797) commented:

"All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing"

Clearly, Burke's comment now, in gender and phrasing terms, appears rather time bound. However, the message arguably still holds valid. Necessarily

implicit definitional difficulties will occur over what is meant by 'good', 'evil', 'triumph', 'nothing'. And so on and so forth. Nevertheless, within the terms of the paper the phrase stands as a provocation to debate.

The paper suggests that a consideration of relationships at the smallest level of detail and action can illustrate that a careless or malicious small gesture is but the 'thin end of the wedge'. Worse will follow and following the broad tenet of Matthew 5:38-42 'evil begets evil'. Clearly, then this is seemingly potentially advocacy for some form of a code of conduct or ethics. A call for a realisation in our workplace and private space behaviour that there are no little lapses that we can hope to get away with. Eden points at this consequential situation through his idea of Negotiated Social Organization (NSO) and Socially Negotiated Organization (SNO) (Eden, 1992). In the former we are constantly aware in the office that our actions have implications. Hence we are mindful that tomorrow is another day and we have to live it with others. Thus we do not take liberties with them. However, in SNO we have a more intimate relationship (for example, family or friends) and this may afford certain eruptions of emotion or fierce exchanges without incurring longer-term damage to the relationship.

The paper turns the arguments developed hitherto towards the Holocaust as a difficult context in which to infuse and consider many of the above issues. It focuses on the university lecture and seminar setting as a locale to conduct the debate. Given the paucity of commentary on genocide in organization and management studies, the project will be likely, initially, to need to draw on inter-disciplinary resources from sociology, psychology and further literatures. Included in this are likely to be novels, reportage, and dramatic reconstructions (Czarniawska-Joerges, B. and Guillet, P., 1994; Hassard and Holliday, 1998; Knights and Willmott, 1999). By way of example, referencing dramatic presentations such as television drama-documentary *Conspiracy* which dramatically portrayed the 1942 wartime meeting of senior Nazi officers and party officials to create 'The Final Solution' for the total extermination and destruction of the Jews of occupied Europe. The film shows very powerfully and chillingly how a series of conversations and weakly resisted forms of words condemned millions of people. While such representations can only attempt to portray a sense of 'lived experience' (Knights and Willmott, 1999) they provide a canvas against which personal values and beliefs may be examined. Clearly, also discussions around such presentations need to be set in the context of wider hegemonic power relations and conditions (Pfeffer, 1993; Hardy, 1995; Buchanan and Badham, 1999).

However, it is the ambition of this debate that more in-depth and focused writing will emerge from organization and management as a consequence of the process. The work hopes to develop data sets which examine student sense-making of an amalgam that embraces: organization and management commentary as it might be applied to genocidal situations, the issue of creating awareness and exposure and 'lived experience' to materials so that debate can be generated and a reflexive gaze of the morality and ethics of the very conduct of such a project itself. Of the many emergent questions, one might be is it morally 'right' or ethical to presume a comparison of complicity

and collaboration in genocidal contexts and office settings and office politics. The argument within the debate opened herein suggests that this is not only reasonable but crucial. Within contemporary corporate situations, it is not only the spatial moral distance of action but the cognitive and temporal distance that many people maintain a mental silence. A small transgression against the Other in the office will dissipate and be forgotten. The conjecture herein is that this is rarely the case. There are very few 'free' acts of damaging behaviour. The 'death' within these contexts is perhaps only metaphorical. However, this may be a delusion. Companies and their agents, it may be argued, kill people through stress, bullying, serving them bad food (unhealthy or poor food quality) or through industrial accidents (Fineman, 1993, 2000).

'People think we don't have genocide in Blighty but the work-related death of the British over the centuries easily counts as such' (Birchill, 2003:7)

Tragically, corporations have a long legacy of corporate manslaughter grimly underlined by, for example, by the catastrophes of Bhopal, the capsizing of 'The Herald of Free Enterprise' ferry, and the rail accidents of Clapham and Potters Bar. Burrell is more adamant on this point:

"The successful [business] barons 'know' that business is war and their real death - not some metaphorical disappointment - is at stake. It is at this time [1929] in US business history that people start to talk of strategy, for the military analogy takes on a potency that all recognize. Failed leaders expected no golden handshake from shareholders distant in time and space. The market was 'red in tooth and claw' and 'strategy' and 'war' became ways of dealing with 'opposition' (Burrell, 1997:199).

The consequences of actions are often more potent and dangerous than hurt feelings alone. Within organization and management studies it is therefore time to overcome our spatial and temporal silences.

## **Conclusion**

This tentative canon of (management and organizational) work on genocide has shed valuable light on the issues involved, however, consideration of this difficult subject has been underdeveloped in the field and the paper calls for and embarks on a timely exploration of the development of a management and organization epistemology of genocide.

This will be facilitated through the development of a further key objective of this initial step which is to afford opportunities for students to explore how a series of relative small steps leads to major consequences. Something as stark as the holocaust or other genocidal setting provides a powerful setting to achieve this. Importantly, the paper also argues that it draws, certainly for many western audiences, genocide into hard relief and shows that rather than bring distant in time and space episodes like the holocaust can and should be

drawn upon to show us the dangers of certain courses of action in everyday life. The paper welcomes the consequent and emergent debate.

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# DEMON NOR ANGEL OR BOTH?

VONDEL'S *LUCIFER* AS AN ANALYTICAL  
EXAMPLE FOR CRITIQUE IN ORGANISATIONS

JAN VAN BAREN  
AND  
DOUWE MEIJER

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## Introduction

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In this paper the authors will use *Lucifer*, a 17<sup>th</sup> century drama by the Dutch writer Joost van den Vondel, for the analysis of critique in governmental organisations. We think that this drama, staging the fall of Lucifer and the actions of the different factions in heaven leading to this moment, is an excellent description of what we see as the ambiguity of what is regarded as ‘good’ and ‘evil’. An ambiguity that we think plays an interesting role in critique.

It is not our intention to join in the metaphysical debate on the nature of good and evil. To do so would be too big an assignment for this paper.. Our approach is a more direct analysis of the above-mentioned ambiguity in governmental organisations in the context of critique, using Vondel’s play as an analytical example.

We will focus on governmental organisations for the purpose of clarity. But we think the dynamic is at least partly comparable to other types of organisations.

With the ‘ambiguity of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ we mean to say that that in our opinion a clear division of actions along the line of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ is not possible. A lot of effort has been put into dividing human actions and decisions along a clear line into what is ‘right’ and what is ‘wrong’ but without final success. In organisations this effort can be found in many management handbooks, organisational guidelines, theories on business ethics and the like.<sup>1</sup> Something always escapes the clear recipe of how to act ethically. This impossibility to locate exactly what are good and evil acts is what we call the ambiguity of good and evil.

The figure of Lucifer, a critic par excellence, is a good example of this ambiguity.

Throughout the ages, in both literature and Christian theology, there have been attempts to put him in the corner of radical evil as well as attempts to put him down as the good guy, opposing the oppressive evil of God. However, what keeps popping up is the portrait of Lucifer as a very human figure with a complex character. Being both angel and demon, he can neither be labelled completely ‘good’ nor completely ‘evil’. His actions are driven by multiple motives that are interwoven with actions and motives of the other inhabitants of heaven. The stories in which Lucifer is a complex character include the radical viewpoints and show the impossibility of sustaining a radical position.

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Covey for instance in his *Seven habits of highly effective people*, gives a guideline for success thus defining good habits. Peter Block in his *Flawless Consulting: A guide to getting your expertise used* gives the method to make a successful consultant. Henk van Luijk in his *Integer and verantwoord in beroep en bedrijf*, sketches a checklist for integrity in organisations.

Vondel's Lucifer is one of those versions. It is here that in the figure of Lucifer we experience the impossibility of making definite judgements about goodness, badness, beauty and ugliness. We see that it is not all that simple. There are too many different elements within character of Lucifer to label him easily.

The ambiguity is in Lucifer himself. This is unlike Faust for example, where the human being Faust is torn between two extremes that do exist as opposing powers while in Vondel's *Lucifer*, the ultimate symbol for evil is himself ambivalent towards good and evil.

There are different reasons why we chose this particular version of the story of Lucifer's fall out of the many that exist. We have mentioned the most important one: the excellence of the example of the ambiguity of good and evil. Another reason to choose this particular version is that with Vondel's play *Lucifer* (1654) the story of the fallen angel for the first time in history becomes the sole theme of a literary work.<sup>2</sup> Also, this drama caused a big controversy when it came out. It was forbidden after the second performance, although the printed edition sold out in just eight days. This shows that the ambiguity exceeded the stage.

What we will do in this paper is first analyse Vondel's Lucifer in the light of the ambiguity of good and evil. Who is Lucifer in this drama? What are his motives and how can we see his actions? In what way does the ambiguity of good and evil manifest itself? In the second chapter we will present and analyse two cases on governmental organisations. We will not always use the big terms 'good' and 'evil' but often the more daily terms of 'right' and 'wrong' which in the core is based in the same dichotomy. In the conclusion we will bring the different analyses together for some careful generalisations.

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<sup>2</sup> Becker (1958), p. 147

## Vondel's Lucifer

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The figure of Lucifer, his characteristics, and the reactions of people to the figure of Lucifer have been changing considerably in the course of time. The many faces of Lucifer, his wide variety in characteristics, his richness of character, the ambiguity of his considerations and motives and his influence in literature and theology make him a very interesting character.

The character of Lucifer sprung from what was called an autonomous might in this world, a powerful demon contesting God as an opposing power. Where the devil had long been something to fear, at the end of the sixteenth century he lost some of his ominous threat and acquired traits that had been part of his make-up in late medieval drama: he became ludicrous, a source of mockery. In the sixteenth century the presentation of the Lucifer figure was much determined by the religious enthusiasm of dramatists, who presented the Devil in mostly Biblical situations. The Prince of darkness was perceived as a very personal enemy. This made an empathic feeling for Lucifer almost impossible. Gradually however the Lucifer motif was presented in more human centred dramas and other literature for instance in Goethe's Faust.

In the seventeenth century Lucifer acquired tremendous dimensions in literature and drama. Under the influence of Greek Mythology, The Devil became identified with Pluto of the underworld. While in Catholic presentation the Prince of Hell became a tool by means of which the dramatist urged man's subservience to the Deity, with the protestant, Lucifer was used to give expression to the author's personal problems and philosophical doubts and considerations. As a result the Lucifer figure, in protestant portrayal, became secularized himself and began to acquire human characteristics. The God opposing figure was no longer seen as the mere personification of evil but began to express the longing for individual, spiritual freedom that characterizes the outlook of the seventeenth century.<sup>3</sup>

Vondel's Lucifer is a drama. The drama is there because of an interpersonal struggle within the person, the character of Lucifer. Lucifer, the central character, is in doubt. His position is ambiguous until he finally grasps arms. We are no literary experts nor do we claim to be Vondel experts. Our aim than is not to present a literary interpretation of the

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<sup>3</sup> Bekker (1958), p. 0-i

drama or even to present what we think Vondel meant with this play. Our aim is to present a perspective that is useful in exploration of organisational practises.

At first sight it appears Vondel emphasises the reasoning, the debate and the arguments in the dialogues. However, in the undertone we, the authors of this paper, read and feel much of Lucifer's motivation, intentions and doubts. The different drives within Lucifer are also voiced by secondary characters in the play<sup>4</sup>.

As clear as the reasoning and the arguments are presented, so clouded are Lucifer's precise reasons and motivations. There has been much controversy about this point and the Vondel interpreters don't agree. We will argue that instead of detaching separating and the different drives and motives within Lucifer from each other, the ambiguity, the cloudiness and the unclearness is itself a very valuable and useful perspective.

What follows is a summary of the play in which we try to identify the elements of ambiguity in Lucifer's' position in each scene. In this summary we use many quotes to give the readers a feel of the play without having to read or see it. Although we do hope that everyone who has the chance to see it will do so.

We use a translation by Noel Clark. Not only recommended for those who don't understand Dutch, but also as a translation when the original version in Old Dutch is too outdated for ones vocabulary.

## **Act one**

Act one starts with Apollion, coming back from Eden where he went on an errand to see what the situation of humans was like. When he comes back he meets Beelzebub, and tells him what he has seen. He relates of his journey and how beautiful paradise is and how man (sic!) rules there:

Apollion       ...

Indeed, Beelzebub! Heaven looks high:  
But truth to tell, we're lower. Trust my eye!  
I've seen Earth's luscious gardens and I swear,  
This Paradise with Eden can't compare...<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Janssen (1954), p.33

<sup>5</sup>Vondel (1990), p.12

He speaks of all that is beautiful, but can hardly speak when remembering the moment he saw Adam and Eve making love. He ends with:

Apollion:        ...  
                      We're poorly off, alone and celibate –  
                      Denied the joys of sex, the married state;  
                      Deprived of consort, starved of loving tryst:  
                      Some heaven, this- where women don't exist.<sup>6</sup>

Jealousy is introduced as a motive at this point. Apollion further mentions that man (sic) 'rules god-like in a subject state'<sup>7</sup> and has a soul, which is a spirit not a thing. Humans are endowed with virtue and free will. Given their possibilities to procreate, Apollion foresees that with their rapid growth humans could become a threat: a second motive related to jealousy.

Beelzebub:    From what you say, Man threatens to displace us?

Apollion:        His rapid growth will frighten, than – disgrace us!  
                      At present, Man holds sway beneath the Moon;  
                      His power is limited but all too soon,  
                      He'll set his throne on Heaven's topmost peak,  
                      And if God lets him – who are we to speak?  
                      God loves this Man! For Man, God made Creation –<sup>8</sup>

The angels see that humans have qualities they do not have and they fear that they may be replaced by humans. Gabriel, the herald of Gods word, confirms this when he reveals to the angels what God wants the relative position of man and angels to be:

Gabriel:        ...  
                      Long did the Spirit-world all else outshine,  
                      Now to exalt Mankind is God's design:  
                      Preferred to angels even, Man will be shown  
                      A path to splendour equalling God's own.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Vondel (1990), p.14

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p.14

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p.15



Gabriel voices the Will of God. The angels should now serve Man. They loose their position, after they have been in God's favour for a long time. Not a position they would like to loose. Lucifer, as the highest-ranking angel, second only to God, looses most. He must now bear a whole race between himself and God. Act two starts with his worries, uttered to Beelzebub.

## **Act two**

Lucifer:        ...  
                  The future's black for angels here above,  
                  Since Man has captured God's Almighty love.  
                  In this new Paradise man takes first place:  
                  We angels shall be slaves to this new race –  
                  Lackeys to honour, pamper, serve Man's whim!  
                  This Man was made for God – and we for *him*!<sup>10</sup>

We see that Lucifer feels betrayed by God. He thought he was created to have a special place, a noble task in God's work but he now discovers God's plan with him is rather different than he imagined. He now has to serf Humans. Lucifer experiences this as unjust.

Beelzebub has a way with words. He strengthens Lucifer in his concern. At the same time he praises Lucifer's power; he knows how to trigger Lucifer's pride and than draws a picture of what will happen to him in the new situation. Lucifer is horrified and exclaims that he will never let this happen:

Beelzebub:     ...  
                  Heaven's about to change. The stars burn low,  
                  Made weak by yearning to salute the glow!

Lucifer:        That, they will not, as long as I'm alive

Beelzebub:     There speaks our Lucifer, whose power can drive

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<sup>9</sup> Vondel (1990), p.16

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p.20

The shadow of black night from Heaven's face!<sup>11</sup>

We see that Beelzebub appeals to two different drives within Lucifer. The first and most important is personal threat to Lucifer that is contained in the creation of humans. Connected to that is the threat posed to heaven, Lucifer's world, by God's decree. Beelzebub flatters Lucifer and to the prospect of Lucifer becoming heavens saviour, an even more interesting position than lieutenant of the big chief.

Lucifer:        You judge aright! Ordained by law to rule,  
                    Who would let slip his kingdom, but a fool?  
                    Since God's own law constrains the Godhead's might,  
                    Change should become him least. As Son of Light  
                    And Lord of Light, my status I'll protect –  
                    Yield to no force, no tyrant leave unchecked!  
                    Succumb who will, I'll not be budged as Master!  
                    This is my Fatherland! No set-back or disaster,  
                    No curse shall frighten me, still less restrain:  
                    Either I'll perish, or dominion gain!  
                    If fall I must – rank stolen, honour shed –  
                    Than let me fall with crown upon my head,  
                    This sceptre in my grip, stout hearts about me –  
                    And thousands more besides, who'll never doubt me!<sup>12</sup>

Lucifer feels trapped: he and the other angels will loose their position, apart from that, God is about to put His own position in danger as well. Beelzebub gives Lucifer the solution: with this decree, they will get enough support for a rebellion. Lucifer is the very first character that, just after creation, thinks and acts out of individual thoughts and considerations. He ponders over his position and the meaning of the new decree. Lucifer decides that he will not give in to God's command unconditionally. He is prepared to risk his position in heaven, that for his feeling has devaluated anyway, to fight for his and the other angels' rights. Whatever his motives, his fight will be for the freedom of heaven from humankind. We can't but sympathise with Lucifer at least for this. The alternative is to blindly follow God's plan that they don't even know and that won't be revealed to them, as we will see soon.

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<sup>11</sup> Vondel (1990), p.21

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p.22

Lucifer has questions, lots of questions. And he needs answers. He asks what is behind all this. Gabriel confirms his worst fears, but he cannot reveal God's reasons. Gabriel says that too much knowledge often serves one ill and that, in spite of the mysterious reasons, Lucifer should bow to God's decision:

Gabriel:       ...  
                  The Lord, who'll rule in time, as God and Man  
                  Made one, and whose authority will span  
                  The Earth, stars, oceans and all life we know,  
                  Heaven hides from you. Why? ... Time will show.  
                  Meanwhile, obey! God's edict you have heard!<sup>13</sup>

But that is not enough, Gabriel warns Lucifer as well:

Gabriel:       ...  
                  Your dignity is God-given, like your state  
                  Above all angelkind, the Lord set you –  
                  But not to grudge another glory due!  
                  A rebel hazards crown and head the day  
                  He flouts the Lord's commandments! Need I say  
                  Your brilliance stems from that of God alone?<sup>14</sup>

After this Lucifer commands Apollion and Belial, another one of his lieutenants and the best in deceit, to prepare a rebellion. The plan they prepare is to get a large part of the army on the rebels' side. For this they will spread dissatisfaction first. Then the leaders will come to their aid of the dissatisfied angels, so that it seems as if the masses started the rebellion and the leaders merely intervene to prevent more trouble or to defend their rights. Lucifer will have to be asked to lead the rebellion and he has to commit himself reluctantly.

Lucifer commands that God should not be part of the rebellion: their attack will not be on God Himself, but they will 'pit like against like'.

So we see that Lucifer and his lieutenants cover themselves from all sides and use clever tricks to get enough followers. This makes the rebellion a doubtful expedition again in that the leaders seem to use the masses for their own purposes, rather than leading a

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<sup>13</sup> Vondel (1990), p.23

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p.24

rebellion for the purposes of the masses or at least for joint purposes. That being said: it can't be denied that the situation remains the same: the angels are loosing their favoured position to newcomers without being informed why. Speaking of Lucifer's position and motives we see that it is ambiguous at least. It is clear that he is in it for his personal reasons but the purposes of the other angels are involved as well. So is Lucifer a freedom fighter or is he a potential tyrant, about to take over dominion and impose even more restrictions on freedom?

### ***Act three***

In act three we see the plan unfold in a scene where dissatisfied angels speak their discontent, while loyalists try to persuade them not to question God's plans. The loyalists try to convince the rebels that God must be obeyed, even if one doesn't understand His motives. We can see this argument between loyalist and rebel angels also as an interpersonal debate within Lucifer himself:

Loyalist 1: If it's the will of God, you must obey it!

rebel 1: But how have we transgressed? What rhyme or reason?

Loyalist 2: You're questioning God's will; that smacks of treason!

rebel 2: We're voicing grief, that's all – dissatisfaction –

Loyalist 1: Compliance with God's will's the sole reaction!

rebel 1: We claim our rights, as legally conferred –

Loyalist 1: Your rights, your Charter hang upon God's word!

rebel 3: How can the greater to the lesser be subjected?

Loyalist 2: To serve God is to rule, where God's respected.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Vondel (1990), p.34

Belial and Apollion enter and after some small signs of reluctance take the side of the rebels to defend their rights. Then Beelzebub arrives and says that, although he understands the cause, he wants to prevent violence, this way making the rebels convince him that battle is the only way at this stage. Michael, the general and the leader of the loyalist and rebels, who apparently are all soldiers, comes in and warns that rebellion will fail against God's powers. Than finally Lucifer arrives. The rebels beg him to be their leader in the rebellion. Lucifer tries to persuade the rebels to be loyal to God:

Lucifer:        ...  
                  Being Critical is not itself a crime:  
                  It all depends on where it leads in time –  
                  To meek submission or to stout resistance.  
                  I pray that God may pardon your persistence.<sup>16</sup>

He feigns loyalty to the Almighty but the rebel convinces him that if Lucifer will lead the rebels a third of the angels will join their cause. Beelzebub tells him that they have enough support to win, and the kingdom is as good as theirs. Lucifer answers:

Lucifer:        Bear witness, Beelzebub – all heads of legions –  
                  Apollion, Belial – witness the fact  
                  That, taking command, reluctantly I act  
                  God's Kingdom to defend, our Rights to shield!<sup>17</sup>

It is clear from earlier in the play that Lucifer is faking here. It is part of the plan to resist first and than take the lead so that he cannot be accused of the initiative later. But the fact that Lucifer had decided to rebel does not mean there is no possibility for doubt, as we will see later on in the play.

In name of God and Lucifer, the rebels go to battle. On Beelzebub's command, Lucifer is honoured with incense, fragrant bowls, candles, music and song.

## **Act four**

In act four we see the generals of both armies prepare for the fight. In the loyalist army, Gabriel and Michael talk about what has happened before God send them to battle.

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<sup>16</sup> Vondel (1990), p.44

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, p.45

Apparently God has considered mercy for the rebels, but then something made him decide otherwise:

Gabriel:       ...  
                  God seemed inclined to reconciliation...  
                  But then, the reek of incense fuelled vexation –  
                  The rising fumes of Lucifer's enthronement,  
                  Trumpets and songs of praise. Hope of atonement  
                  Vanished, for Heaven frowns on idolatries,  
                  Condemned by God and all the Hierarchies.<sup>18</sup>

Here we see God the ruler. He alone may be praised and no others. As soon as God sees that Lucifer is gaining so much power His mercy for Lucifer fade's away. This is the tyrant that Lucifer is fighting. But at the same time Lucifer is on his way to gain enough power to be a tyrant himself.

In the rebel camp everything is ready for battle: the army is ready and eager. A third to a half of the angels joined the rebel's side. Than Raphael enters the rebel camp. He bears an olive branch and tries for the last time to convince Lucifer to better his ways and stop the rebellion now the battle has not started yet. He offers medicine: the salve of Holy Grace. Raphael tries to convince Lucifer it is not too late to repent.

Raphael:       ...  
                  By earnest pleading let your heart be melted!  
                  I hear the dreadful sound of chains being smelted,  
                  To drag you, shackled in defeat, across the skies  
                  In triumph. If I can trust my ears and eyes,  
                  Michael's close by, with many a battalion:  
                  High time, my Lord, to end this mad rebellion!

Lucifer:        No good being sorry now... It's too late!  
                  No hope of peace...

Raphael:                               There is! I'll mediate;  
                  I warrant you that mercy shall be found.

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<sup>18</sup> Vondel (1990), p.49

Lucifer: To see my Star disgraced, in darkness drowned,  
Proud enemies usurp my Throne and rule...<sup>19</sup>

Is Lucifer in doubt here? He doesn't start with the second argument that he won't give up, in stead he uses as an argument that it is all too late. There does seem to be room for doubt now that a civil war is about to start. Raphael continues:

Raphael: Lord Lucifer! I see the sulphur-pool,  
With throat agape in grisly expectation!  
Shall you, most handsome being in God's Creation,  
Be cast as prey, that greedy maw to stuff –  
The fire that can't be quenched or fed enough?  
May God forbid! I beg of you to cease!  
Accept this olive-branch! Receive God's peace!<sup>20</sup>

These words appear to touch a nerve in Lucifer. Raphael is genuinely disturbed by Lucifer's (in his eyes) ridiculous plans. He is shocked and desperate. It seems that Raphael is talking to a close friend who is about to undertake some mad expedition. Lucifer's heart seems to open for Raphael's pleas and warnings. Something in Raphael's words make him reconsider. Lucifer's conception of himself changes and Lucifer even seems to actually change his mind:

Lucifer: So wretchedly, did creature ever veer  
Between faint hope and overwhelming fear?  
If victory's doubtful, is defeat in store  
Who, of the first time ever, takes a stand  
Against God's Holy Will and high command,  
Leads insurrection 'gainst the Godhead's Throne  
To change the laws of Heaven for his own –  
...  
My steps have strayed too far from duty's path!  
I have abjured my Maker, scorned His wrath!  
How can my blasphemous arrogance be concealed?

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<sup>19</sup> Vondel (1990), p. 55

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem

There's no way back! I've climbed too high to yield!  
What shall I do? How act in my despair?  
Time brooks no pause. Had I a minute spare,  
That were not time enough – if time at all-  
The instant twixt Salvation and the Fall!  
Too late! No cure for blemish so profound!  
All hope is lost. I hear God's trumpet sound!<sup>21</sup>

As we can see, he despaired. Maybe Lucifer could play his reluctance in the previous scene so well because in his heart he was not so sure about his rebellion. His rage and fury caused him to prepare an expedition that makes his position as high angel impossible.

In this scene it seems as if Lucifer suddenly realises this dualism within himself. On the one hand he is still a Seraph, the highest of the angels, on the other hand he has changed his fate precisely because of his opposition to the decree of the Almighty hereby contesting the very order in which he has a high position. His decision not to accept and obey this decree but to fight and oppose this, even with violence against his brothers makes that he will either gain dominion or lose everything. He knows this and act consciously. But as the confrontation draws nearer Lucifer seems to lose his self-confidence and instead focuses on what he is losing. He realises his own misery. As opposing and criticising character he attacks the very order in which he himself holds the highest place, second only to God. It is this dualism that makes Lucifer a tragic figure in doubt, misery and desperation.

But at the sound of the trumpet these reflections vanish. Apollion rushes in telling Lucifer that Michael summons Lucifer to the field. Thus Apollion urges Lucifer to battle. Raphael is not given more time to convince him which Raphael deeply regrets since 'he (Lucifer) was already undecided'<sup>22</sup>

### **Act five**

Act five takes place after the battle, which we do not see. Michael marches in with a chorus on a sort of victory tour. He describes the rebels' fall:

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<sup>21</sup> Vondel (1990)l, p.55-56

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 56



Michael: ...

They're tumbling now, head over heels through space –  
Into the nether depths, far from this place –  
Blinded and fog-bound, fearsomely deformed –  
As they deserve, God's Heaven having stormed!<sup>23</sup>

Then Gabriel comes in, deeply distressed. He tells the others that their victory has been in vain. After his fall, Lucifer has sworn revenge to heaven and mankind. He will continue to frustrate God's plans with humankind by corrupting and seducing Adam and Eve, tempting them to flout. He sends Belial to arrange man's fall. Belial tempts Eve and through her Adam, to eat from the tree of knowledge. It looks like Lucifer pulls off a devastating trick.

However at the end of the play, the Chorus together with Gabriel predict the revival of humankind through Christ the Saviour.

Chorus/

Gabriel: Saviour, whose foot the Serpent's head shall cleave  
And fallen Man from Adam's Sin retrieve,  
Who, to Eve's children – for so long denied –  
The Gates of Paradise shall open wide –  
The centuries we'll count, year, day and hour –  
Until, by virtue of Your grace and power –  
Nature revived, bodies and soul made well,  
Man mounts the Throne from which the angels fell!<sup>24</sup>

So does Lucifer really loose that much by loosing the rebellion? Relative to the position he leaves behind he seems to be better off. When in act two he pondered the possibility he said: *So Glorious a death wins fame undying. Better be first in some kingdom lower-lying than second - if that- in this Realm of Radiance! Feeling no hurt or pain, I'll take my chance.*

Although he lost his status as angel, he still can see himself as higher than humans. He even still has power and uses that power to corrupt humans. Lucifer's envy of humans

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<sup>23</sup> Vondel (1990), p.65

<sup>24</sup> Ibidem, p.69

has not changed and one could even argue that since Lucifer fell and became the Devil, he has all the more opportunities to unfold his dark works. Lucifer is clearly beaten but he doesn't seem to be permanently slain, or is he?

It seems at the end that Lucifer puts up a last but devastating trick. But in the chorus we hear the angels announce the coming of Jesus, the incarnation of God, and the salvation of humankind through Jesus and thus the tragedy ends in a climax. By opposing God, and losing the battle Lucifer is cast down. As a result Lucifer thinks he plays a trick on go by seducing humankind resulting in the fall of humankind.

However, this seems to fit into God's plan all too well. Only now the conditions to fulfill Gods plan of the salvation of humans by Christ, the Son of God, are successfully met.<sup>25</sup> So Lucifer the critic is an essential element in Gods plans with the world.

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<sup>25</sup> According to some Vondel critics (Stuiveling, Kazemier) this climax presupposes a predestination view. Others (Becker, Janssen) oppose this and mark that Vondel, throughout his life has opposed the doctrine of predestination. Nevertheless the dramatic effect remains in place.

## Two cases

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One of the main aims of this paper is to analyse critique in governmental organisations in terms of good and evil, with help of Vondel's Lucifer. To do this, we have selected two cases that in our view are a good example of this. As is said earlier, we focus on governmental organisations, but we think the dynamic is at least partly comparable to other types of organisations.

In the first case we will analyse a Dutch law for the protection of whistleblowing civil servants. We selected a case of whistleblowers because they voice their critique publicly. The second case we selected is a case of a soldier refusing to go on a mission in Afghanistan. His case is interesting since his critique is given through an act of protest, rather than only in words.

Before we present the cases we will give a definition of critique. This definition was formed in the process of writing the paper and was formed in a struggle to make it consistent with the Lucifer text.

With critique we mean not simply opposition or protest but individual or 'subjective' thinking: outside the limitations of the perspective of the organisation and considering the personal (referring to personal concerns) and individual (as opposed to community) perspective. We use the term 'subjective' to oppose the idea that critique is or even can be objective. This implies that being critical is to consider concepts and occurrences from a personal perspective, making a connection to direct personal experiences.

To be critical requires some sort of subjective, individual distance. This discerns (naïve) criticism from critique. One can express criticism without any personal effort or commitment while they are crucial elements in critique.

A person voicing critique takes a special position towards the organisation. She takes a position that is neither inside nor outside the organisation.

### **Whistleblowing**

Around the year 2000 whistleblowing was in the news a lot in the Netherlands. Some cases of whistleblowing with large consequences stirred up the media. In nearly all cases the whistleblower got fired or at least experienced serious trouble in their jobs.

Since several of these cases had to do with governmental organisations, the Dutch government decided to introduce a law to protect the jobs of their whistleblowing civil servants. This law soon turned out to be very inadequate.

To start with, this law prohibited exactly that what in our opinion defines whistleblowing: to go outside of the organisation. We define whistleblowers as people who openly provide information about a practice that they don't agree with to a third party: often the press or some authority. We do this to distinguish from leaking: a practice where confidential material is leaked to the press anonymously.

This law stated that a potential whistleblower was to go her or his superior or a 'person of confidence' first. If that did not result in any changes, there was a special governmental comity they should turn to. If these criteria were not met, the whistleblower was still unprotected.

What this law does at best is to confirm the suspect status of whistleblowers; in the worst case it can legitimise the punishment of the whistleblower.

This law understandingly received a lot of critique in the press and elsewhere because of its inadequacy.

However, we think the inadequacy does not lay in the way the law was formulated, but that it stems from the thought that it would be possible to make whistleblowing an official part of organisational practice. By making rules for the regulation of whistleblowing, this practice is accepted and internalised in the organisation. In this case a law was needed because it concerned civil servants.<sup>26</sup>

## **Two sides of the medal**

We see that what the Dutch government tried to do here was to filter the 'good' element from the whistleblowing, taking away the 'evil' element in the process. They tried to catch the critical note that could be a good thing for the organisation, without having to face the shame of exposure. But they could only do that by splitting the act of whistleblowing in its very nature and so could only fail. The terms 'good' and 'evil' may be a bit strong in this context. We use them because they are taken from a comparison with Vondel's Lucifer. A comparison that we think has some ground.

Whistleblowers share with Lucifer the demonic/angelic reputation: the double reputation of hero and outcast, maybe even pariah. Demonic in that the whistleblower exposes dirty secrets to someone outside or even the press: she or he is a traitor. It is regarded as something you just don't do: it is wrong. angelic in that whistleblowers nearly always risk their jobs and not seldom expose situations that many agree should be exposed so

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<sup>26</sup> Berkeljon (2004), Dirks (2000), Klein (1999) *Volkskrant* (1999 and 2001)

that something can be done about them, often with little or no self interest. So the act of whistleblowing is at least two sided in its reputation.

### **Taking risk**

We see that Lucifer feels trapped in his situation. He is about to lose his position and he feels there is nothing that he can do without breaking the trust of his highest superior. He feels there is no other way than to rebel but at the same time he doubts it is the right thing to do as we see in his conversation with Raphael. The interesting thing is that he rebels against God, the one that gave him everything, as Gabriel rightly points out, but who seems to be planning to take it all away again. The solution seems strange: He decides to rebel against God's decree, but aims his attack at the angel army, not against God. This illustrates the double position they are in.

Whistleblowers like the heavenly rebels, take risk. Not only do they risk their positions, they also risk harming the organisation they work for. This will fire back at them, since the organisation plays an important role in how employees perceive themselves and how they are perceived. At the same time it means risking other people's jobs.

Apparently for Lucifer as well as the whistleblowers there is a drive that makes it worth the risk. They feel a situation they perceive as wrong or unjust should be exposed, even if that means snitching (in case of the whistleblowers), in spite of the fact that they would in other circumstances think this is wrong. They don't see an opportunity to voice their critique within the organisation or they have already done so, but without satisfactory effect. Apparently the whistleblower sees no other way than to go outside the organisation with his or her critique.

If an organisation, like the Dutch government, tries to solve this problem by internalising the act of whistleblowing they fail to see her ambivalence towards her own act and the ambiguous situation in which the whistleblower finds herself.

### **The echo of the environment**

Going back to Lucifer we see that the ambiguity of his position is not only part of his person, but that it echoes his environment. The act of rebellion is a reaction to an act of God, who gives humans a higher position than the angels without further explanation. God, in every other situation the first place Lucifer would go if he experiences a problem is now the source of the problem.

The whistleblower finds herself in a comparable position. Something is fundamentally wrong in an organisation, which he probably regards as mainly positive. When it has become impossible to find a solution within the limits of the organisation, the last place to turn to with critique is an element of the organisation itself. So the ambiguity of the

situation the whistleblower finds herself in, reflects her ambivalence toward her act and vice versa.

### **The Alloy of good and evil**

From the perspective of the organisation the act of whistleblowing can never be seen as completely good, even where the positive effects are recognised, since it carries a possible negative effect: whistleblowing might lead to destruction.

Every attempt to filter the good side out of the whistleblowing for the good of the organisation must fail because it tries to separate something that cannot be separated.

Trying to separate the good from the bad, the policy makers perceived whistleblowing as a two-sided dilemma, where the one side of the act is angelic, while the other side is demonic: two sides of the same medal where all you have to do is to split the medal to separate the sides. But the medal is not made out of good on the one side and evil on the other. The medal is an alloy of these materials. The angelic and demonic are not two opposing, schizophrenic forces in Lucifer or the whistleblower. They might be in people's perception, even in the perception of the whistleblowers themselves at the moment that they argue with themselves whether to act or not. But in the act of blowing the whistle, as we saw in Lucifer's rebellion, the angelic and demonic are not separated. It is not possible to blow the whistle without intending repercussions for the organisations; it will always have this element. The act of rebellion or of whistleblowing cannot be separated into right and wrong.

To take another look at the law protecting whistleblowers, it becomes visible that the government tries to separate the 'good and 'evil' aspects. However it is precisely the ambiguity of the position of the whistleblower that defines her. The good and evil aspects cannot be separated. This means that the only way to truly protect a whistleblower is to protect the whistleblower as a whole: in all her or his good and evil aspects. But if whistleblowers are protected no matter what, it could turn out that there are a lot more potential whistleblowers about than we see now. Not held back by the risks, the consideration if the whistle should really be blown loses its intensity. With this loss of intensity the great measure of whether or not it is really necessary to blow the whistle vanishes.

This leads us back to the last ambiguity we find in Vondel's Lucifer. After all his effort and losing his rebellion we cannot say if Lucifer really won or really lost. Did he win by securing a free position for himself or did he lose because he was part of God's plan all along and not free at all? There is no way to say if one or the other is true.

Again a similarity can be found with the whistleblower. Because although in many cases an organisation likes to get rid of their whistleblowers as fast as they can, we think the whistleblower might fulfil a vital role in the organisation. By blowing the whistle on a practice that is unacceptable they might stop the organisation from making even bigger mistakes that might lead to more substantial repercussions when found out in a later stage.

### **Insubordination**

In April 2006 the Dutch Journal 'Vrij Nederland' published an interview with Jonas, a soldier in the Dutch army who refuses to go on mission to Uruzgan in Afghanistan.<sup>27</sup>

*Jonas (20 years old) reveals that his battalion selected to go to Uruzgan is not, as the Minister for Defence promised, the group of the best-trained soldiers. Rather Jonas says his battalion is inexperienced, does not take the job very seriously and most important the soldiers do not trust each other enough. To Jonas, his battalion is more like kindergarten than like a professional fighting force. During the training Jonas noticed that the battalion scored low. They only just qualified for a mission of such difficulty. The spirit of the soldiers was more like a game than like a combat training. Jonas feels the battalion is not qualified enough to undertake this mission. The lack of thrust, inexperience and the poor training result make him doubt. He tell his lieutenant that he doesn't want to go on this mission*

What we want to analyse in this case, with help of the Lucifer perspective, is critique. As we have said earlier by critique we mean the individual or 'subjective' thinking, beyond the limitations of the organisation. In Lucifer we have seen that his actions spring from a personal way of thinking that exceeds the limitations of his position in the hierarchy. In accordance with the hierarchy would be to accept God's decree and carry out his will. Lucifer refuses and has multiple reasons for this. This case shows that Jonas is in a similar position.

We see that there is a variety of reasons, personal thoughts and considerations that make Jonas refuse. It is possible the soldier is concerned mainly about his own safety. It can very well be he's having second thoughts about risking his life for some international, military purpose. Jonas is concerned about his colleagues and co-workers as well. He voices his concern for the safety of his colleagues as well as his lack of faith in them.

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<sup>27</sup> Lo Galbo, Niemantsverdriet (1996)

Ethical and moral considerations such as the legitimacy of the war and/or if the people of Afghanistan are really helped by the mission might also play a role, though they are not specifically stated. At least it is clear that reasons for his refusal to go are multiple, as are Lucifer's motive to rebel. Many considerations are part of the final decision. All these considerations involve the personal ethics of the soldier and ask him whether or not he wants to participate in this particular mission.

By refusing to go on mission, Jonas opposes the decision of the organisation. As soldier he is in a position where the organisation dictates him what he should do. By refusing to do what he is told he breaks with this hierarchy and questions the legitimacy of the command. Within the organisation of the army the individual freedom of the soldier is very restricted. The selection of troops to go on a mission is not something the soldiers themselves can influence. However, to be sent on mission has a lot of personal and professional implications for the soldier. With his refusal, Jonas criticizes the organisation.

### **Power positions**

*The army responded by suspending Jonas. He is recommended for dishonourable discharge. On top of that Jonas will face legal prosecution for insubordination and could face jail for two years, as Jonas learned from television. He is stressed by all the commotion, lost 20 pounds and is fatigued. According to Jonas the army is so strict because they want to set an example. Jonas thinks that with this particular mission, if everyone who hesitates refuses too, there simply will not be enough soldiers left to let the mission take place.*

We see that the army organisation responds strongly to Jonas' refusal. We think this has partly to do with the relative power position. In Lucifer we see that God is willing to forgive, until he sees that Lucifer gets too much honour, the praise he gets from the other angels, at that moment He cannot forgive: Lucifer is gaining too much power.

By voicing critique Jonas not only challenges the power within the organisation, he also changes his own power position. If Jones' critique is contagious, the power of the rebellious soldier could grow significantly, although he could lose any influence he has if no one takes his critique seriously. So it is the relative power relations in the organisation that are threatened by Jonas critique.

While Jonas is not organising or planning rebellion it is clear that he is aware of the possibility of revolt, as we see when he states that if all hesitant soldiers refuse to go to



Afghanistan the army has a serious problem for there will not be enough soldiers for the mission.

It is thus in the army's interest not to let the critique of Jonas develop to a strength that spreads through the organisation as the spirit of rebellion spreads through heaven in Lucifer.

Particularly in an organisation emphasizing hierarchy such as the army, where power plays an important role, individual thinking and actions opposing the instructions of the higher ranked officers are generally not welcomed and perceived as threatening.<sup>28</sup>

Critique is oppressed and individual or 'free' thinking (outside the boundaries of the institution) is usually seen as a threat for the very existence of the institution and thus as wrong. The individual practicing this 'free' or subjective thinking and having critique often is of the opposite opinion. He feels that the oppression of free thinking is 'wrong' and he is 'right' in voicing his critique, though being trained as a soldier he might feel uneasy about not following orders.

We have seen that Lucifer is convinced that he is actually helping and protecting God with his opposition. We can imagine that Jonas' critique is for the good of the organisation. It may well be that Jonas acts out of the best interest for the organisation, trying to help and better the organisation with his critique. From an academic perspective we can see a clash between the controlling, organising and ordering impulse of the organisation versus the drive to escape boundaries and the development of personal thinking and acting in the individual.

The struggle for personal, individual recognition is a main theme in Vondel's Lucifer. In opposing the tyrannical aspects of the categorical treatment, Lucifer symbolises the resistance of the individual to this categorical treatment and to oppression by a tyrannical decree.

## **Obedience and rebellion**

In Lucifer we see that the loyal angels in calm trust in the deity accept the decree. They understand it is not their position to oppose the thoughts and wishes of God. Although God's plan remains hidden the angels accept it unconditionally. Their feelings about the decree remain hidden but they accept it as something that has to be carried out. It is God who imposes strict rules and moderation upon the angels with his will and word. The angels are perfect and obedient. They are the perfect soldiers.

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<sup>28</sup> Of course we take a rather extreme case in which the power and hierarchy are more clearly visible and work a lot stronger than in most organisations. We do this however to focus on our main point: critique and power related to Good and Evil in organisations.

We also see that heaven counters Lucifer's individual thinking in all possible ways. Gabriel tries to reason with Lucifer and warns him. Michael threatens him and Raphael puts doubt in his mind. Every effort is made to let Lucifer return to his place in the hierarchy.

The leading officers of the army might believe that the army apparatus as it functions now would collapse if all soldiers are going to follow Jonas in thinking and acting for themselves. The army needs to rely on the categorical treatment and predictable behaviour of the soldiers. The army-organisation thus discourages and even counters individual thinking. In order to be effective as an army it looks inevitable that orders and protocol take precedence over individual thought and considerations.

But however much the organisation tries to stop this personal thinking they cannot prevent it. Soldiers are, despite the efforts organisation, having personal, ethical and maybe even political considerations.

As a soldier, Jonas committed himself to the decisions of his superiors on which he himself has little or no influence. It is important to note that in this case the Jonas signed up for the job voluntarily. Lucifer didn't choose his role. God created him but Jonas made a soldier out of himself voluntarily. The Netherlands has a strictly professional army and that means that the soldier signed a contract. He knew that going on military missions was going to be part of his job.

But Jonas feels at least as tricked as Lucifer, as he explains in the interview.

*Jonas feels the army tricked him. At 17 they promised that Jonas could do all kind of education and training and get his drivers-license as well as a lot of exercise. He would be in great shape, physical as well as have followed a good education. On these promises he signed a contract.*

*After a year in the army Jonas was sent to Afghanistan. This experience changed his perception of the army. At only nineteen he decided that it was a very risky job. He didn't want to risk his own life. Back at home he decided that he didn't want to go on a mission again. But he didn't yet complete his education. On the promise that Jonas could finish his training, including an internship of 4 months, he prolonged his contract with a year. Jonas asked for the agreement to be put in writing, but that never happened. And then all of the sudden there was this new mission to Uruzgan. Jonas feels cheated.*

The conflict arising from a clash between obedience, and the impulse to rebel, makes the tragedy of Jonas visible. He is caught in a situation where there is no comforting solution. If he gives in and ceases his opposition, he will put himself in danger and could blame

himself for letting a dangerous situation exist without speaking up. If on the other hand he persists in his resistance and acts in accordance with his own opinion, he will probably lose his job and can even face prosecution. Maybe the very act of refusing an order feels wrong to him as a soldier. This is the tragedy of the soldier refusing to go to on a mission: his position has become such that he cannot be satisfied with the outcome, he will always loose. Jonas' misery, bad shape and fatigue seem to be a result of this tension.

## **Public opinion**

In the case of Jonas public opinion seems to play an important role as well. The public opinion has its influence on Jonas' considerations but he needs the public opinion to legitimise his rebellion, like Lucifer needs the angels' support. Public opinion has a large influence on what is considered right and wrong. In Lucifer we see twice that he is urged by others to take the lead. Belial and Apollion both tell Lucifer that their force is strong enough now and thus he can lead the rebellion. Lucifer is much influenced by his lieutenants (Belial an Apollion) but the support of the angeles is even conditional for his attack. Although they are not directly visible their presence is imperative.

The critical voice is influenced and shaped by others. We see that Jonas needs the support of public opinion, but it is not unlikely that public opinion had an important influence on how his doubts took shape. The general opinion on this particular mission in the Netherlands was hesitant at least. Though it might not influence the legal procedure enough for Jonas to win the case, Jonas can feel supported and has an opportunity to express his critique in a major journal.

## **Right and wrong**

In this case we have seen that the power struggle between the army, trying to enforce central command and categorical, predictable behaviour on the one hand and the drive for individual, personal thinking and acting on the other hand. We have also seen that what is considered right and wrong depends on the position you have (or take) in this conflict.

There is as such no objective, absolute good or evil in this world. We have tried to show the ambiguity and relativity of what is in general opinion called right and wrong.

In Lucifer we see that his actions spring from a personal way of thinking that exceeds the limitations of his position in the hierarchy

The ambiguity of good and evil in this case is presented more as relative to ones position than as ambivalence within a person. Jonas considers sending his group on a mission as wrong, so his refusal is right, tough as a soldier he might have second thoughts on refusing an order. The army organisation in the person of his superiors, consider it wrong to question an order. In our opinion this is not a tension that can be solved by making out

who is right or wrong in this case. In the same way as Lucifer is angel and demon at the same time; Jonas is right and wrong to rebel. He is right in that things are seriously wrong in his battalion, but also because the mission is questionable. Even if this is not a consideration of Jonas himself, it is an important source for the support from the side of the public opinion and thus plays a role in his refusal and his clash with the army organisation.

He is wrong in that by voicing his critique he puts the army organisation in danger, even if his solitary case would be a small danger in itself. Apart from this specific mission, if soldiers start to question every order, this might pose a threat to the army and thus to the defence system of the army.

In the act of refusal both elements are present. Jonas can't partly refuse just to do the right thing: he either has to refuse or go on, both acts containing different elements of right and wrong for the different parties, in this case at least Jonas, the army and different sides of the public opinion.

## Conclusion

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The question that the conference organisation asked us to ponder was how good and bad, beautiful and ugly interrelate with each other.<sup>29</sup> As a starting point for this we have taken a symbol that contains all of those elements: Lucifer. angel as well as demon, good as well as ugly is the personification of a mixture of those elements. The play by Vondel shows us the ambiguous angelic and demonic practice, the impossibility to corner those elements and separate them into different practices and different personalities.

We see that Lucifer is portrayed by Vondel as a character with many vices. Can we then conclude that he is all bad, that he has made all the wrong choices and has happily marched in the wrong direction? No we cannot. As spectators or readers of the play we cannot make any definite conclusions about the motives of Lucifer's actions. His motives are rebellious, but whether they are so only because of his own hunger for power, his fear to lose his high position and be enslaved or that less selfish motives play a role as well, is not entirely clear. We cannot say that his moment of hesitation before the battle is a moment of strength or of weakness. We don't even know whether he really hesitates. Lucifer's motives are so clouded not only because it is hard to know someone else's motives but also because of the intrinsic ambiguity in the character of this angelic demon or demonic angel. He neither is the heroic rebel nor the dangerous terrorist or he is both at the same time.

Sure he is selfish in his intentions: he wants to keep his position and at some point even gain more but is that all that can be said about his intentions? We see him hesitate at the last moment before the battle. He is about to stop the whole expedition, but then he gets swept back into the game.

It is impossible to conclude that Lucifer is right or wrong, angel or demon because he is all of those. He is both freedom fighter and terrorist, not just because one can look at his actions from two different angles, but because the freedom fighter is always a terrorist, he will have to destroy before he can build something new. And the terrorist is always a freedom fighter in the sense that he wants to set people free from one oppression or another.

Lucifer is also both leader and follower in the rebellion. When he hesitates his lieutenants keep him on their track, when he is desperate, others know what to do and when he wants to give up it seems already beyond his influence. So we cannot say the demonic rebellion

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<sup>29</sup> [http://www.ru.nl/scos/the\\_conference/the\\_good\\_the\\_bad\\_and/the\\_good\\_the\\_bad\\_and/](http://www.ru.nl/scos/the_conference/the_good_the_bad_and/the_good_the_bad_and/), 14-05-2006

is based on the intentions of Lucifer alone. All the participating demonic angels have their share.

It is this Lucifer, this rebellion that we think is an excellent symbol to examine organisations.

Using Vondel's Lucifer as an analytical example we have looked at two cases of government organisations. By combining the play and the two cases we came to some insights, of which we want to summarise the most important ones in this conclusion. In the case of the deserting soldiers we saw that by criticising the army organisation the soldier not only challenges the power of the organisation, he also changes his own power position, thus posing a threat to the army organisation. Critique is thus considered dangerous because it challenges the existing power constructions. In both the case of whistleblowers and of the deserting soldier we see that public opinion can be an important factor to what their new power position will be: whether their actions are seen as right or wrong.

So while the persons who hold powerful positions in an organisation see the critical soldier and the whistleblower as a threat, their critique could be vital to the organisation in that it is a warning that the organisation is about to go too far away from what is acceptable in public opinion or law, thus saving the organisation from even stronger loss of face, legal or public punishment (boycott for example). This is certainly the case where the public opinion favours the critic in question. From different perspectives the critic can thus be seen as bad or even evil or good or at least right in her actions.

We think that it is precisely in the act of critique that the aspects of right and wrong cannot be separated. We see that in the case of Lucifer's rebellion, in Jonas' refusal to go on a mission and in the act of blowing the whistle good as well as bad elements can be pointed out. These elements will be different from different perspectives, but even from the point of view of one person an act can contain right and wrong elements that cannot be separated into different acts. Jonas can't partly refuse to go to Afghanistan, a whistleblower can't partly blow the whistle and Lucifer cannot partly rebel.

We think that as a result critique can never be fully appreciated, nor will voicing critique ever be fully free of risk. Risk is a part of voicing critique, because it will always contain an element that some people will perceive as negative.

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Douwe is interested in unconventional, practical and systematic responses to the problem of goal-orientated, teleological, directive and manipulative management. In his internship at Intercollege and Team-Academy (Finland) he has studied pragmatic, person-centred learning approaches in business schools. In his work with Axis Management and the development of its 'Common Sense Development Program' he has learned that systematic development of freedom, integrity, and common sense can lead to remarkable results in organisations.

Jan is interested more specifically in critical theories and its implications for practical organisational contexts. He has practical experience in organisations as a student representative at the UvH and in his internships with consultant organisations: one in integrity in governance (Governance and Integrity) and one in scenario planning (The DTN).



## **Naud van der Ven**

### **Don't call it ugly, call it bad**

Many people, in- and outside organizations, display a deep contempt for the bookkeeper. Not because he is considered as being bad, but as being ugly.

In this statement the bookkeeper stands for 'clerical staff': administrative employees who perform registrations, treat invoices, make bookings and keep the files. Sometimes the ugliness that is ascribed to those clerks has to do with a lack of good taste as to their appearance. And in some cases this may be right. As a professional group these cipherers and other clerical staff do not reach, in their style of dressing, the sophisticated level of let's say marketeers or self-conscious managers.

But the actual ugliness that is at stake is not about the way bookkeepers dress. Ugly is called the baldness of their subject, the linearity of their thinking, the monotony of their routines. Confrontation with this area of elementary organizational rationality evokes, especially with middle- and topmanagers, a spontaneous desire for embellishment. Embellishment of their buildings, their offices, their mission or their management-philosophy. The most important intended effect of this beautification is the creation of a distance with respect to that bleak dullness, an elevation above that grim elementary organizational rationality. It is an effort to escape from ugliness.

Indeed, this distancing themselves of managers with regard to their clerical personnel is relative. Others, like intellectuals and artists, in their turn consider managers as bearers of organizational rationality, with the association of dullness and linearity that belongs to it. They try in their own way to keep the ugliness of managers at a distance by means of embellishment and cultivation of higher skills. And some managers are but too conscious of their own grimness, as comes to the fore in the song *Le blues du businessman* in which the businessman regrets he is not an artist.

In this contribution I want to focus on the alleged ugliness of the elementary organizational rationality. That's to say the ugliness that middle- and topmanagers attribute to routinelike clerical activities. I want to put forward the question whether labeling that rationality as ugly is right or not. My thesis is that that rationality is not just ugly or dull and that the use of those adjectives obscures matters. For that characterization hides from view the possibility that organizational rationality might be called 'bad'.

I come to this thesis via the observation that organizational rationality can be repugnantly instrumental, totalizing and blind. A such-like negative assessment of organizational rationality can be found in the management-literature where quite often is spoken of the dehumanising pressure of modern industrial society. Authors point to the linear and dogmatic character of organizational rationality which forces people to work according to pre-programmed patterns. Rational thinking, according to many analyses, knows only its own logic and produces schemes that leave little space for people's own initiatives. It puts people into a straight-jacket. This is closely linked up with the orientation on control which is inherent to all rational action and which does violence to people.

However, the meaning of organizational rationality is not exhausted by these objectionable features. There is also a good side to organizational rationality and that good side resides in the contribution it provides to man's struggle against chaos. Rationality makes the world understandable and controllable and it is difficult to think of organizations and the good of organizations without rationality.

This means that, in my view, organizational rationality is inherently ambivalent because its merits and its violence are inextricably intertwined. In organizations the negative and the positive aspects of rationality come together. It is this combination, this intertwining of

good and bad which confers on organizations the dim, barren character that they are so commonly associated with. The all-over effect of this ambivalence is experienced as soul-killing, it makes workers bored and arid.

Now, calling organizational rationality 'ugly' seizes upon that grey colourlessness and stereotyping which are the results of organizational rationality's ambivalence. But, and this is my point, this interpretation of organizational rationality as ugly obscures its objectionable aspects. By calling it *ugly* the organizer does not have to bother anymore about the *bad* of organizational rationality, which resides in the violence it does to workers. It enables the organizer on the one hand to consider organizational rationality as neutral and self-evident: it is just necessary and functional. And on the other hand he can, but now as a matter of taste, distance himself from it: those elementary forms of rationality like routine activities and dull procedures are just not his cup of tea, fortunately there are others who take care of that.

By this labeling organizational rationality in terms of beautiful and ugly the organizer avoids two confrontations:

1. The confrontation in which the organiser is touched by the resistance and the grief bookkeepers and the like show as a reaction on the experience of the negative aspects of organizational rationality, that's to say its instrumentality and totalizing force.
2. The confrontation which is bound up with the realization that those bookkeepers and other clerical staff do work which has to be done, probably by order of the organizer himself and for his profit.

Let's have a closer look at both confrontations.

The first confrontation is with the fact that the above mentioned stereotyped activities don't leave the bookkeeper untouched. The autistic, rationalized routines which he performs can be oppressing and may evoke resistance and grief with the bookkeeper. This may come out explicitly as grief, but can also manifest itself as melancholy, job-refusal or, quite the reverse, as attachment to routines. In all cases there is a degree of suffering by the bookkeeper in the organization. This suffering is the subject of quite a few organizational studies, both on the academic level (think of CMS) and on a more popular level (for example in Corinne Maier's book *Bonjour Paresse*).

The second confrontation is a consequence of the observation by the organizer of the bookkeeper's grief and resistance. It is the awareness of his own violence and complicity in the bookkeeper's grief. It means the end of the justification of that violent rationality by way of entertaining the thought that rationality may be ugly but at the same time comfortably self-evident. The bookkeeper's reaction forces the organizer to take his grief seriously and prevents him from maintaining the familiar rationality dogmatically. Here appears what I call 'rationality-shame': the shame for your own rationality, forced upon other people.

When organizers manage to escape from the above confrontations by way of beautification that's regrettable for three reasons. First because it's always good to call things by their real name. What properly speaking is a matter of good and bad should be called so and not as just a matter of taste. Further, and connected with that, because the organizer's complicity in the objectionable routines by means of a certain division of work is hidden from view. For, if there is no question of good and bad but of beautiful and ugly there is no reason to be worried by the contemptible routines and your share in establishing them. Finally it's a pity that, by avoiding confrontations with organizational rationality, chances to improve the situation are left unused.

This last point is bound up with my view on organizational rationality. As said, I consider organizational rationality as having an ambivalent nature, a vessel in which good and bad are mixed. The intertwinement of good and bad leads to the above sketched dullness, with the appearance of organizations as ethical no man's land. There, as Corinne Maier says, people

speaking a no man's language, words have become meaningless. But this colourless mixture can appear to be unexpectedly explosive. Right in the middle of the detested dullness lightning can strike. By becoming conscious of its objectionable aspects the bad of rationality can appear as bad for the bearer of rationality and by that make its blindness and violence questionable. This is what happens in the just mentioned rationality-shame: the shame that invades the organizer who, in good faith, rolls out his schemes on his workers; and who thereupon is being confronted with the resistance and grief of the workers who are supposed to conform to his schemes. With as effect of this shame that the organizer puts himself and his ideas under discussion. It is true that this will result in new rationality, but maybe of a better quality than the previous rationality.

In this view the two poles of the ambivalence of organization and organizational rationality are not just in opposition to each other as loose elements, but appear as possibly inherently connected. Organizational rationality can become conscious of its own insufficiency. So something truly good can appear at the heart of rationality, in spite of rationality. The condition, indeed, for this to happen is that the objectionable aspects of organizational rationality are not obscuringly called ugly. They should be called by their names as at times oppressing and totalizing. So, rather call the bookkeeper's routines bad, not ugly.

**Making Sense out of Bad Faith:**

*Sartre, Weick and Existential Sensemaking in Organizational Analysis*

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## Abstract

This paper proposes a fusion of Weick's (1995) epistemologically-based notion of sensemaking and the phenomenological ontology of Sartre (1957), to develop an approach which we label existential sensemaking. Through a focus on a well documented mountaineering expedition which took place on the West Face of Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes, we explore the potential for existential sensemaking as a heuristic for understanding the importance of individual decision making in the process of identity work that has profound implications for ethical behaviour in organizing processes, as well as important implications for workplace safety.

Recent debates within organizational analysis have highlighted the notion of identity and identity work (Thomas et al., 2004) while simultaneously reducing, if not eliminating, the notion of the individual (Nord & Fox, 1996). Arguably, this is in part due to the growing influence of postmodernist theorizing and reactions against enlightenment notions of the essentialist individual (Foucault, 1965); in part a reaction against sociohistorical privileging of individualism (Sampson, 1988); and, in part, a simultaneous privileging of social context across social science research (Nord & Fox, 1996). Nonetheless, outside of essentializing psychological accounts, there is some recognition of the importance of the individual self in the process of identity work as she engages in "internal mental work" (Acker, 1992), techniques of the self (Brewis, 2004, Foucault, 1988), and dialogical self confrontation (Hermans, 2002, Lecoure & Mills, 2005). While gendered constructions of identity exemplify the deep-rooted and profound relationship between internal mental work and contextual relationships (Acker, 1992) accidents, disasters, and other life threatening situations provide the most dramatic examples (Weick, 1993). Through examination of one such account – the story of events surrounding the life and death decisions of two mountain climbers – we trace the outline of an approach to identity work that combines sensemaking and existentialism.

It has been argued that Weick's work on organizational sensemaking is "at the forefront" of attempts to reconceptualize the role of the individual in identity construction (Nord & Fox, 1996: 156), which is clearly at the heart of sensemaking (Helms Mills, 2003). It is also of interest, for our purposes, because of its focus on the life and death failures of sensemaking events (Weick, 1990): examination of the failure of the ordinary sensemaking process is intriguing, for there is a corresponding lack of inquiry into the types of situations whereby the ordinary flow of sensemaking is substantially disrupted, only to be reestablished through dramatic recontextualization. It is this type of situation, illustrating the capability of an individual to redefine their reality, which is examined in this paper. Nonetheless, within Weick's framework the individual sense maker is overshadowed by social and ongoing sensemaking contexts and the focus on sensemaking "failures" suggest, if anything, mechanical responses to events that draw on an ingrained collective self rather than those of an individual sense maker. Thus, while Weick's descriptions of sensemaking forms an epistemology which is coherent it is also subject to the type of criticism leveled by Burrell and Morgan (1979) (and explicitly acknowledged by Weick, 1995) as "ontological oscillation". We suggest that this "ontological oscillation" is less of a problematic when normal patterns of interaction break down, and a robust ontology is employed as part of the analysis of these relatively extraordinary situations. That brings us to the existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre.

Sartre's ontology is also useful to us for the purpose of examining these organizational junctures at which ordinary sensemaking has failed, but in a way that

ontologically grounds the notion of sensemaking through a focus on the individual actor. The times when ordinary sensemaking fails, presents the individual a situation that has similarities with the existential anxiety that Sartre describes in *Being and Nothingness* (1957). This anxiety is characterized through the requirement to make choices while at the same time realizing that a desire to choose authentically (i.e. in good faith) is problematic when our underlying nature does not allow us the option of using external forms of validation for our choice. The union of a sensemaking epistemology with Sartre's phenomenological ontology allows us an opportunity to examine how individuals manage both the underlying ethical implications of free will and the simultaneous fracture of the processes by which they interpret their world.

To emphasize the individual in the process of identity work we focus not on the collapse of sensemaking (and the loss of individual identity) but on a situation where individuals have successfully overcome the failure of ordinary sensemaking through, what we call, extraordinary sensemaking. To illustrate how existential sensemaking may be used in organizational analysis, we focus on a well documented mountaineering expedition on the West Face of Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes. Our notion of an opportunity for extraordinary sensemaking, being a time when the day to day sensemaking process has failed and the individual is faced with their existential choices, is well illustrated using Joe Simpson's and Simon Yates' harrowing ordeal chronicled in *Touching the Void* (Simpson, 1988). Notably, this example of the failure of the climbing team organization and the subsequent dramatic survival story of Joe Simpson offers a positive example to augment a literature whose main focus seems to be failure in extraordinary situations.

We conclude our discussions with implications for the self in organizational analysis and suggestions as to how the perspective of existential sensemaking might be employed for further studies of the individual navigating their organized world. Our suggestion is that the examination of successful extraordinary sensemaking efforts would well complement the growing literature that already explores the breakdown of the ordinary, ongoing sensemaking processes.

*“Some would argue that there was no decision to be made; that cutting the rope and the powerful symbol of trust and friendship it represents should never have entered my mind. Others say that it was simply a matter of survival, something I was forced to do...I knew I had done all that could reasonably be expected of me to save Joe, and now both our lives were being threatened, I had reached a point where I had to look after myself. Although I knew my action might result in his death, I took the decision intuitively in a split second. It simply felt like the right thing to do, like so many critical decisions I had taken during the climb. Without hesitation, I removed the knife from the rucksack and cut the rope.”*

**-Attributed to Simon Yates in the epilogue of  
Touching the Void (Simpson, 1988)**

## **Introduction**

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criticism leveled by Burrell and Morgan (1979) (and explicitly acknowledged by Weick 1995) as “ontological oscillation”. We suggest that this “ontological oscillation” is less of a problematic when normal patterns of interaction break down, and a robust ontology is employed as part of the analysis of these relatively extraordinary situations. That brings us to the existentialism of Jean Paul Sartre.

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To emphasize the individual in the process of identity work we focus not on the collapse of sensemaking (and the loss of individual identity) but on a situation where individuals have successfully overcome the failure of ordinary sensemaking through, what we call, extraordinary sensemaking. To illustrate how existential sensemaking may be used in organizational analysis, we focus on a well documented mountaineering expedition on the West Face of Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes. Our notion of an opportunity for extraordinary sensemaking, being a time when the day to day sensemaking process has failed and the individual is faced with their

existential choices, is well illustrated using Joe Simpson's and Simon Yates' harrowing ordeal chronicled in *Touching the Void* (Simpson, 1988). Notably, this example of the failure of the climbing team organization and the subsequent dramatic survival story of Joe Simpson offers a positive example to augment a literature whose main focus seems to be failure in extraordinary situations.

We conclude our discussions with implications for the self in organizational analysis and suggestions as to how the perspective of existential sensemaking might be employed for further studies of the individual navigating their organized world. Our suggestion is that the examination of successful extraordinary sensemaking efforts would well complement the growing literature that already explores the breakdown of the ordinary, ongoing sensemaking processes.

### **Making Sense of the World**

When Simon Yates cut the climbing rope that connected himself to his partner Joe Simpson, he severed more than just the lifeline that connected two climbers together. The gossamer rope connection between mountain climbers in a remote alpine environment represents far more than a simple safety precaution; it is the organization of the climbers made incarnate. There is a shared language, symbolism, and set of goals - even culture - that is evidenced in the connection of the nylon climbing rope. Those who are part of the climbing community subculture may seem casual about how they tie themselves into the rope but make no mistake about it, the creation of the organization they term a "rope team" is not undertaken lightly, nor is the dissolution of such an organization done easily.

The study of the role of the individual during times of organizational crisis and failure is gradually becoming more common. In the broad field concerning organizational crisis, there is a developing application of sensemaking to the analysis of organizations. Karl Weick has undertaken work regarding a number of crisis situations and sensemaking (Weick, 2001) as have others regarding situations as diverse as the Westray mining tragedy (Mills & O'Connell, 2003), the Challenger space shuttle disaster (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988), and even the management of organizational change at Nova Scotia Power (Helms-Mills, 2003). These descriptions and analyses have a singular humanity about them that challenges more mechanistic and positivistic notions of social reality. If we are to gain understanding of the individual in these crisis situations, adopting this sensemaking perspective, which does not exclusively privilege the organization, is useful. Similarly, the failure of sensemaking in its ordinary and daily manifestation calls into question not only how individuals make sense of their world, but also what the very nature of their world might be. The crisis context that we seek to understand might be better viewed as a co-creation between actors and their worlds, for without these individuals there is no organization. Plainly put, when a climber is alone and holding the frayed end of a climbing rope, there is no longer any entity known as the rope team. What of the individual climbers who were once an organization?

The robustness of day to day sensemaking is, to some extent, embodied in its normalcy. It takes exceptional circumstances to allow for a breakdown of this ongoing process and organizational crises and failures offer such exceptional circumstances. The crisis-type juncture is well recognized and utilized in the study of sensemaking (e.g. the Mann Gulch disaster (Weick, 2001) and the Tenerife Air disaster (Weick, 2001)). Notably, less well studied are the success stories of those

individuals who suffer a breakdown of this ordinary day to day sensemaking, only to subsequently succeed in reconstructing their world and overcoming the failure of their organization. We suggest that with the failure of the ordinary and ongoing sensemaking process individuals are presented with an opportunity for extraordinary sensemaking.

Sensemaking as an ordinary and ongoing process is described as being both retrospective and grounded in identity construction (Weick, 1995). The dissolution of the climbing organization of Joe Simpson and Simon Yates, poignantly signified with the cutting of their climbing rope, was a crisis that greatly upset these aspects of the sensemaking process. Through the rope, each climber was responsible for the other, and in turn reliant upon the other for their own safety. If members of a rope team are responsible for each other, but one is forced to cut the rope, the resulting identity construction is confused. Simon Yates writes of such confusion when he recalls the moments after sending his partner on a fall that promises Simpson's death as the only possible outcome:

**“I argued that I was satisfied with myself. I was actually pleased that I had been strong enough to cut the rope. There had been nothing else left to me, and so I had gone ahead with it. I had done it and done it well. Shit! That takes some doing! A lot of people would have died before getting it together to do that! I was alive because I had held everything together right up to the last moment. It had been executed calmly. I had even carefully stopped to check that the rope wasn't going to tangle and pull me down. So that's why I feel so damned confused! I should feel guilty. I don't. I did it right. But, what of Joe...” (Simpson, 1988).**

Sensemaking is a social process, including when it is conducted alone (Weick, 1995), for even an internal monologue presupposes an audience of some sort. The failure of an organization means that the audience has shifted to some extent, perhaps becoming an audience of the self in the case of Simon Yates ongoing musings. Surely this would be both confusing and traumatic when the audience of the

organization has gone, and with it, his very understanding of his role as a member of the rope team. If Yates is on the mountain to climb as a member of a rope team, and now that organization has ceased to exist because of his very actions, then what is he? In the end, Yates finally relies upon a fundamental tenet of sensemaking, that being plausibility over accuracy. Plausibility extends beyond immediately observable phenomena; it attempts to fit together the factual evidence available, thereby completing a puzzle despite having only some of the puzzle pieces at hand. Yates invokes plausibility over accuracy, constructing his reality around his suppositions regarding what others might have done in his situation. With his identity as a team member shattered through his own actions he becomes, instead, a survivor.

Simon Yates might well have simply sat down and allowed himself to die (in fact he had a strong sense of this possibility himself (Simpson, 1988)), yet his experiences are consistent with him personally overcoming a substantial organizational crisis; an example of what we have labeled extraordinary sensemaking. The process of sensemaking was able to be continued, despite the collapse of the organization. This in itself is substantive and perhaps even unusual. If sensemaking is an ongoing process (and we have a literature that examines the failure of ordinary and ongoing sensemaking: see Weick (2001)), then we must ask what allows for these occasions of extraordinary sensemaking in such situations? The descriptions of the sensemaking epistemological process, (that is, how we acquire information about our world) seem unable to explicate completely the nature of these type of success stories. To aid in understanding the ramifications of such Herculean efforts, we turn to Jean Paul Sartre, existentialism, and the experiences of Joe Simpson after his partner cut the rope and he plunged to what would seem to be a certain death.

## The Phenomenological Ontology of Sartre

If Weick's descriptions of sensemaking are the epistemological process by which we acquire knowledge, then to allow for the freedom that Simon Yates shows in terminating both his organization and his own identity as a member of the rope team, we require further detail to understand how his act of extraordinary sensemaking came to be. In this case, the process is only part of the story. There is something fundamental in the nature of individuals and their world that offers the prospect of extraordinary sensemaking, and yet still makes the outcome of organization failures of the type described far from certain. If sensemaking was able to proceed automatically and without difficulty, then tales of the sort endured by Yates and Simpson would be unworthy of a second thought. Similarly, if we believe the outcomes of events such as their struggles on the West Face of Siula Grande in the Peruvian Andes are based upon luck or some such notions of fate, then why bother studying any organizational crises at all? To make sense of how individuals engage in extraordinary sensemaking, we need to examine the nature of their underlying reality. Sartre's *Being and Nothingness, An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* (Sartre, 1956) offers a compatible description of the nature of reality with the opportunity for freedom of choice. Through examining this ontology and its intersection with Weickian sensemaking, we have a unique opportunity to explain Joe Simpson's incredible personal journey from rope team member to abandoned survivor and finally to forgiveness. Through using this perspective, we in some manner interject the role of the individual and choice into the realm of organizational collapse. We are able to partially explicate how the individual survives the loss of their organizational identity only to recontextualize who and what they are.

### *Being in Itself, Being for Itself, and the Being For Others*

In Sartre's phenomenological ontology there is the distinction of two main types of things: those that are constituted as being *in itself* and those that exist as being *for itself* (Levy, 2002). These categorizations are critical, for they not only describe how our reality is constituted, but they also lay groundwork for describing the underlying nature of our condition of freedom.

Things which are described as *being in itself* are those things which exist only in positivity; they do not contain negations nor are they lacking in any way. They cannot be improved upon and they are not self aware. This category of things is familiar to us- the chair I sit upon, the rain which falls from the sky and the keyboard upon which I type are all examples of things which are *being in itself*. The knife that Simon Yates used to cut the rope which connected the two climbers was a *being in itself* thing.

The other category of being is the *being for itself*. The unique ability to question ourselves derives from the intrinsic quality that we alone bring to the world, that of negation. The *for itself* is the means by which a certain lacking quality is introduced to reality. Negation is also an intrinsic part of the ontological split that we humans experience. This split, the understanding of ourselves as both an object and our ability to self-regard ourselves (and thus our being as more than just an object), is at the heart of the potential for inauthentic behavior. This ability, which allows us to treat ourselves as a simple *being in itself* object, while simultaneously being able to transcend that supposed simple nature (via our nature as being more than the simple existence of a rock, for instance) involves a potential denial of our intrinsic nature of *being for itself*.

Sensemaking is only possible through our nature as a *being for itself*, yet we are continually faced with a notion of cold, calculating objectivity that, should we surrender to it, treats events as mere facts with little emotion. After Yates cut the rope Simpson plunged down a substantial crevasse, and came to a stop on a small ledge below the surface. As the former rope team member faced the nature of his predicament, he struggled with the giddy realization of both his survival and the beginning of his battle with self-objectification:

**“I sat, hunched against the ice wall, laughing convulsively, and shivering. It was the cold. Part of me recognized this; a calm rational voice in my head told me it was the cold and the shock. The rest of me went quietly mad while this calm voice told me what was happening and left me feeling as if I were split in two - one half laughing, and the other looking on with unemotional objectivity. After a time I realized it had all stopped, and I was whole again.” (Simpson, 1988)**

Lastly, there is a third category of being in Sartre’s ontology; *being for others*. He describes a situation whereby to fall under the gaze of another *being for itself* is to become objectified by that other. Subsequently, we attempt to avoid the loss of our transcendence through the gaze of the other by preemptively objectifying them. This ongoing objectifying (and thus diminishing the possibilities of the other) and counter-offensive objectification in turn are said to characterize the very nature of human relations.

### *Good Faith, Bad Faith*

Based upon these categories of being, Sartrean ethics offer us a special quandary. The nature of good faith (or perhaps what we might label authentic) behavior is to act in accordance with our underlying being (in this case, *being for itself*). We possess ultimate freedom, unconstrained by anything, through our power of creation and of negation. To act in bad faith (and thus in a fundamentally



inauthentic manner) would be to deny our freedom, to act towards ourselves as though we were simple objects of a *being in itself* variety. Thus, to act in good faith requires that we cannot treat ourselves as victims of circumstance, nor entities at the whim of fate or predestination. We are required to take full responsibility for our choices, with no acceptable alternative that might prevent us from acting in bad faith. Now we are able to identify the source of our existentialist anxiety, our confrontation with our nauseating freedom which stems from a resulting lack of external criteria with which to judge our choices (Lavine, 1984). This is at the crux of our search for meaning.

### *The Temporal Nature of our Being*

So, we find ourselves with a description of the nature of being, but thus far to the exclusion of the passage of time. Any attempt to meld aspects of Weickian sensemaking with Sartrean existentialism requires us to address the temporal issues of both the underlying nature of our world and the retrospective aspect of sensemaking. In considering time, Sartre describes the past as effectively being in itself, by virtue of the unchanging and unreflective nature of the past. This is consistent with the fractured nature of human existence in so far as we are comprised of our past yet we are more than our past at the same time. The future is also quite an interesting situation for a *being for itself* creature such as ourselves. Sartre contends that when contemplating the future, we effectively project ourselves into the future state and in doing so we bring possibility into the world. This possibility is, for all intensive purposes, an *in itself* thing which we have created, but has not yet happened. We might label the gap between the future possibilities which we create and those past *being in itself* things as the present, which is therefore essentially a gap or negation. It

is this gap, the temporal state of the present, which forms a fascinating juncture with aspects of the epistemology of sensemaking as described by Weick. It is also in this temporal gap of the present that we are able to examine the nature of an individual coping with the failure of their organization and the opportunity for extraordinary sensemaking presents itself.

## **Paralyzing Reality Meets Dynamic Epistemology**

### *The Journey is the Destination*

The ordinary day-to-day acts of sensemaking are a full expression of our freedom to (re)create meaning based upon what we feel is plausible, not based upon some positivistic notion of objective accuracy. Thus, any unresolved interruption in this process would be to potentially act in the bad faith manner that Sartre reviles. To not sensemake is to treat oneself as a *being in itself*, as a thing that possesses neither free will nor choice.

We engage in this ongoing sensemaking process within the realm of our social context (Weick, 1995) and utilize extracted cues that are useful based upon the “projects” that we have chosen to become involved in. The ongoing accomplishments of sensemaking are creative acts of individual freedom. The ceasing of this creative process implies a static epistemological process; that is, we would sense reality rather sensemake it.

The very moments when ordinary sensemaking fails (for example in those situations of drama so adequately described by Weick) seem to have much in common with the paralyzing nature of existential anxiety/nausea. Our “projects”, the future things we have constructed (that is, caused to come into being), and past events become misaligned. Ordinary sensemaking fails, in part because we no longer can

reconstruct events into plausibility. The existing facts as we perceive them cannot be massaged into a coherent whole. We are thrown face to face with our freedom. The failure of the ordinary, daily sensemaking process has exposed the potential underlying ambivalence of our decision making and we risk a loss of meaning.

Sensemaking is concerned with plausibility, not some objective sense of accuracy. Nevertheless, ordinary ongoing sensemaking has the appearance of causality. In the failure of ordinary sensemaking, we are now aware of our potential for bad faith in-authenticity and are confronted with the juncture of our self objectification and simultaneous transcendental nature. We become aware of our sensemaking and in doing so we confront the strange nature of how we construct plausibility. The very nature of placing plausibility above accuracy allows us our freedom in good faith; we (re)construct reality retrospectively as we wish and in accordance with our personal projects. The appearance of a positivistic causality is illusionary and yet the removal of this illusion during the failure of ordinary sensemaking is nevertheless troubling to us. The Yates/Simpson drama in the Peruvian Andes provides rich evidence of the type of gap that is formed when the illusion of causality becomes fragmented and we simultaneously recognize that our exertions of choice are responsible for “causality’s” demise. Following the choice to sever the rope lifeline to Simpson, Yates continued alone to escape from the mountainside and he describes this gap between supposed causality and his coming to terms with the choice he made:

**“I turned away from the drop and glared sightlessly at the peak directly in front of me. The cruelty of it all sickened me. It felt as if there were something deliberate about it, something preordained by a bored and evil force. The whole day’s effort, and the chaos in the stormy night, had been for nothing. What fools we were to have thought we had been clever enough to get away with it! All that time struggling just to cut the rope. I laughed. The short bitter noise rang loud in the quiet. It was funny all right, but the joke was on me. Some joke!” (Simpson, 1988)**

Our creation of the future (i.e. as yet unattained *being in itself* things) places us in a predicament that is exposed when sensemaking fails in the present. In so far as sensemaking is retrospective, we are only concerned with its perspective on the past. Sartre however maintains that we bring possibility into the world through our projection to the future. Through seeking to combine Sartre's ontology with an epistemology of sensemaking ***we are suggesting that ordinary sensemaking fails when there is an inability to construct plausibility retrospectively from the viewpoint of a given future projection per Sartre's ontology.*** Put another way, we ordinarily suppose a seamless causality that links our past and the future which we have caused to come into being. This retrospective plausibility that we sensemake is quite robust, and is the normal and ongoing compensatory mechanism for the relatively mundane misalignments between our constructed past and created futures. When our created futures are seen to be incommensurable with our past, no matter how skillfully we sensemake, we are faced with the juncture which we describe as a failure of ordinary sensemaking. In this respect, we are discerning a process that is akin to a failure of what is described by Weick (1995) as a self fulfilling prophecy that is a belief driven process. In so far as self fulfilling prophecies flourish in organizational settings (Weick, 1995), an organizational crisis (or failure, as in the example of the climbing team) causes the collapse of the presupposed causal chain of events. Our created future and the meanings we attribute to the past are incompatible during these times of ordinary sensemaking failures. The temporal gap of the present becomes visceral to us. We are fully aware of our existential existence.

*Paralyzed and the Fear of Bad Faith*

With the failure of ordinary sensemaking, we have an interruption to our ongoing, good faith efforts to espouse our freedom. We still have the projects that we have chosen to work upon, but our constructed future is not able to be made coherent with the past in light of these current projects. The fear of bad faith and the sense of the failure of “causality” as we have constructed it can virtually paralyze us. We have suffered a loss of meaning, much as the firefighters in the Mann Gulch tragedy did (Weick, 2001) when they ceased to be firefighters, but failed (for the most part) to create a new meaning for themselves as survivors instead.

The low probability of an event that contributes to this loss of meaning often renders us unprepared for the shock. We are familiar with the constant stream of sensemaking and its interruption has the potential to allow ourselves to permit a fall into the bad faith trap of self objectification. Sadly, to do so is often not only an existential ethical failure, but also a situation that potentially results in personal catastrophe as well.

When an individual seizes the opportunity for extraordinary sensemaking (resulting from the crisis formed in the collapse of ordinary, ongoing sensemaking), the results can appear astounding. Referring to the case of our climbers, Joe Simpson survived his fall to a crevasse, succeeded in lowering himself further to the chasm floor, and then began crawling (dragging a shattered leg) along a fragile snow bridge toward the surface. His transition from climber and rope team member to survivor was still in process (and somewhat threatened) when he spotted a beam of sunlight and succeeded in making the transition to a new “project”:

**“In seconds my whole outlook had changed. The weary frightened hours of night were forgotten, and the abseil which had filled me with such claustrophobic dread had been swept away. The twelve despairing hours I had spent in the unnatural hush of this awesome place seemed suddenly to have been nothing like the nightmare that I had imagined. I could do something positive. I could crawl and climb, and keep on doing so until I**

**had escaped from this grave. Before, there had been nothing for me to do except lie on the (snow) bridge trying not to feel scared and lonely, and that helplessness had been my worst enemy. Now I had a plan.”**  
**(Simpson, 1988)**

Simpson restored the flow of his sensemaking in the face of what appeared to be overwhelming adversity and despite the failure of the organization that he was part of.

In light of a perceived inability to use the good faith mechanism of ordinary sensemaking, Simpson seemed to have initially lost his freedom to reconstruct events towards plausibility. Yet while a particular incarnation of his existential freedom was no longer useful to him (that of being part of a climbing team), he did have the opportunity to examine the context in which his existential freedom was situated.

***The failure of ordinary sensemaking is only within the context of our existing projects!*** The retrospective sensemaking mechanism we ordinarily use is only rendered static through our current, self-created future. We create our plausible past through sensemaking and we create our future through the nature of our phenomenological existence. As demonstrated by Joe Simpson, we still retain the freedom to reconstitute or recontextualize our projects ourselves. Herein lays our opportunity to move forward and in good faith. We can change, however temporarily, our projects (i.e. our futures) and in doing so we may restore the flow of ongoing sensemaking. We may create whatever future we require to reestablish plausibility and thus sensemaking.

For Simpson, however, this journey was not over and in order for his feat of extraordinary sensemaking to continue we still must address the fact that sensemaking is a social enterprise, and Simpson was alone.

## *An Audience of One*

In *Sensemaking and Organizations* (1995), Weick identifies that “Sensemaking is never solitary because what a person does internally is contingent on others” (pp. 40) and suggests that even monologues are audience driven. In the case of Joe Simpson, the monologue was an internal one that lasted for days as he emerged into the open from the crevasse and staggered/crawled towards the site of the base camp:

**“It was as if there were two minds within me arguing the toss. The *voice* was clean and sharp and commanding. It was always right, and I listened to it when it spoke and acted on its decisions. The other mind rambled out a disconnected series of images, and memories and hopes, which I attended to in a daydream state as I set about obeying the orders of the *voice*. I had to get to the glacier. I would crawl on the glacier, but I didn’t think that far ahead. If my perspectives had sharpened, so too had they narrowed, until I thought only in terms of achieving predetermined aims and no further. Reaching the glacier was my aim. The *voice* told me exactly how to go about it, and I obeyed while my other mind jumped abstractly from one idea to another.” (Simpson, 1988)**

Even in light of the failure of the rope team organization, a social context remained that would allow Joe Simpson to engage in sensemaking (albeit of an extraordinary variety). In Simpson’s case, the social context was that of his own internal monologue.

## **Implications and Conclusions**

What initially seemed a strange union between Weickian sensemaking and Sartrean ontology has offered us some unique insights into the struggles of the individual in times of organizational crisis/collapse. In each their own way, the epistemology of sensemaking and the phenomenological ontology of Sartre’s existentialism have offered strengths to augment weaker points in the other.

Sensemaking is a creative process. The pressure in organizations towards generic roles to be filled with generic people engaged in generic sensemaking threatens to render sensemaking a *being in itself* thing. A misattribution of causality rather than an understanding of how retrospective plausibility is constructed erodes our acceptance of our existential freedom. The addition of Sartre's well constructed ontology is both an implied critique of the potential objectification of sensemaking (and those engaged in it), as well as a profound complement. Through the process of sensemaking our free will to (re)construct reality is exposed. The epistemology of sensemaking offers explication as to how we may navigate in this Sartrean existentialism, authentically and in good faith. An understanding of how we are able to choose plausibility over accuracy goes some way towards reducing our existential anxiety. Thus, this addition of sensemaking renders us an existentialism that is more humane while simultaneously cautioning against objectification of our freedom.

There are a number of implications that arise from the deployment of an existential sensemaking perspective for the study of individuals within organizations. The reframing of organizational crises as opportunities for individuals to use extraordinary sensemaking (as in our example of the two climbers in Peru) puts an emphasis upon the positive outcomes possible when people understand their existential nature and choices. Research conducted from this viewpoint further privileges the individual and their choices in a way that offers another facet to the literature. This counterpoint to the more common analysis of the failure of sensemaking balances our conceptions regarding individual choice in the midst of organizations in crisis.

This existential sensemaking perspective might be interestingly deployed for future research in fields beyond solely organizational collapse of the variety examined



in this paper. Situations which place such demands upon ordinary, ongoing sensemaking as to offer potential for sensemaking of a more extraordinary variety surround us. What of a child immersed in the family dynamics of divorce? Perhaps an alternative view of the executives involved in corporate merger/acquisition situations? How do individuals who acquire a life changing disability recontextualize their social embedment and engage in extraordinary sensemaking? This perspective, one of anti-(self)victimization, offers a rich potential to further illuminate the successful transcending of overwhelming adversity.

However, to suggest that opportunities for extraordinary sensemaking occur is not to suggest that individuals are necessarily equipped to seize them for what they are. We are skillful in our ongoing application of sensemaking; it seems innate and natural to us to the extent that we likely do not cognitively apprehend it. Further, being embedded in a society that espouses predominantly realist ontological perspectives likely contributes to a misattribution of causality to the continuous stream of sensemaking. The very ubiquitous aspect of ordinary sensemaking renders discussions and thought regarding extraordinary sensemaking unlikely to have occurred prior to a requirement to engage in it. Nevertheless, examples of extraordinary sensemaking in action are available to us and form poignant opportunities to examine the ways in which individuals make changes in their projects when faced with an overwhelming collapse of the ordinary stream of sensemaking. Weick's suggestion that "Reflection is perhaps the best stance for both researchers and practitioners to adopt if the topic of sensemaking is to advance." (Weick, 1995) is well taken. The additional richness offered through reflection that focuses upon individual choice in extreme circumstances, may aid practitioners (and we are all

practitioners of the art of sensemaking) in avoiding the kind of generic sensemaking implicated in such tragedies as the Mann Gulch fire described by Weick (Weick, 2001).

It is telling that in many cases where ordinary sensemaking has failed, the post-hoc analysis seems to revolve around the concept of an individual and their failure to properly support an organization. The above described framework of Sartrean/Weickian existential sensemaking challenges us to reframe our understanding of this sort of situation. Initially we are reminded that sensemaking is inherently social in nature; it is the way in which we construct plausibility and escape from the doom of self/other objectification as described by Sartre's being for others. This allows for the good faith authenticity of sensemaking in organizations. When ordinary sensemaking has failed, and a crisis is at hand, the social context of the individual is no longer plausible in light of her current projects. Those aspects of organizations that pressure us towards generic sensemaking (Weick, 1995) no longer make sense. The environment is now not seen as stable and predictable, just as our organizational sensemaking reassured us in the past, but rather we are pulled from the comforting, constant stream of ordinary sensemaking and shown our individual freedom. Likewise, the inexorable push of organizational sensemaking to find a place of generic interchangeability is made clearly implausible to us in moments of crisis when ongoing sensemaking has failed. As much as we might wish it, no one can be substituted for us in these crisis situations; we find ourselves alone and exactly where we are.

We have argued that even in an extreme case such as Joe Simpson's, the social context for the revival of sensemaking exists within that individual themselves. Eventually Simpson, near death, succeeded in getting close to the base camp and the

tents where, by chance, the other members of his party had lingered in sorrow over Joe's certain death. Barely hearing Simpson's feeble cries for help, they found him and carried him to the tent and began to tend to him:

**"Then Simon dragged me into the tent and laid me gently back against a mass of warm down sleeping bags. He knelt by my side staring at me, and I could see a confusion of pity, and horror, and alarm fighting in his eyes. I smiled at him, and he grinned back, shaking his head slowly from side to side.**

**"Thanks, Simon," I said. "You did right.'**

**I saw him turn quickly away, averting his eyes.**

**"Anyway, thanks."**

**He nodded silently."(Simpson, 1988)**

In the end, both men survived their harrowing ordeal of injury, organizational collapse, survival and subsequent forgiveness. In fact, after the ordeal each went on to climb as members of other expeditions and rope teams. They both succeeded in contextualizing the terrible circumstances as part of the risk/reward dyad of the mountaineering pursuit. It would seem that even the most extraordinary sensemaking becomes part of the ongoing flow of plausibility in retrospect.

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