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management: 'Productivity diversity'  
in the global context**

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## **Managing hybridity by hybridising Management: 'productive diversity' in the global context**

How is it that we have come to see management as something, reinvented - protecting the nation, liberating talent and potential, when in truth, it is little changed either in terms of form, process or substance from the Taylorist principles of mechanized mass production? (Collins, 2000: 76).

Paul Ricoeur (2000) perceives globalisation as a megalopolis related to time-space compression. As a product of the 'phenomenon of universalization' it is an advancement...at the same time as it constitutes a sort of subtle destruction...[of] the creative nucleus of great cultures, that nucleus on the basis of which we interpret life...This threat is expressed...by the spreading before our eyes of a mediocre civilisation...Everywhere throughout the world, one finds the same machines, the same plastic or aluminium atrocities... (<http://it.stlawu.edu/~pomo/mike/timespac.html>).

**Abstract** *This article undertakes a critical theoretical evaluation of the contextual issues surrounding the development of workplace cultural diversity<sup>i</sup>. The author calls for a social revolution, in management education and organisational practice, to keep pace with the technological and cultural revolution currently impacting on countries across the globe. Focusing on the paradigms of thought, discursive constructs and rhetorical formations that underpin Fordist/post-Fordist change processes; a new embryonic perspective entitled 'productive diversity' (PD) is identified and extended. Themes of 'interdisciplinarity' and 'hybridity training' frame this model, which delineates more appropriate ways of managing the increasingly complex 21st century work environment. The author argues that a critical version of PD can lead to more appreciative forms of management understanding, sensitive to the plurality and complexity of organisational experience. Evidence is provided as to why managers informed by this approach would be better placed to contribute to building productive forms of workplace mutuality.*

*Key Words: Diversifying Management; Critical Perspective; Interdisciplinary/hybrid education; Management-science paradigms & discourses; Relationalism as Praxis.*

## **Background**

The most dominant marker of the global workplace is diversity, represented in the range of consumer goods produced, the services provided, and the variety of people involved in such processes. In the area of management theory however, most of the interest in globalisation has concentrated on the economic and technical aspects while consideration of the accompanying cultural revolution has been neglected<sup>ii</sup> (Dunphy & Griffiths, 1998). The limited analysis of organisational population diversity that has taken place has tended to remain confined within ethnocentric conceptions of cultural difference (see Hofstede, 1994 for example). This literature reflects an assimilationist approach to organisational culture coupled with an instrumentalist ethos that assumes organisational needs take priority (see Chemers, et al., 1995, for example).

In contrast, outside of management, commentaries on the cultural aspects of globalisation have proliferated in fields like sociology (Bauman, 1998), postcolonialism (Kahn, 1995; Radhakrishnan, 1996; Bhabha, 1994), and feminism (Spivak, 1999; Fraser, 1998). Furthermore, this literature expansively explores the implications of the widespread migration of peoples across national and cultural boundaries and the subsequent formation of diasporic communities, as well as the en masse entry of women into the paid workforce (Poggio, 2000). However, due to the modernist tendency to atomise knowledge into narrowly framed categories (packaged as 'professional specialisms') mainstream organisation/management theorists have overlooked this body of learning.

Despite the lack of substantive management analysis there is growing awareness, within many contemporary states, that population diversity will prove to be one of the major issues affecting new economy organisations and societies in the century ahead. Nation states, faced with having to accommodate to the changing circumstances brought about by such widespread migratory shifts, have recently begun to contemplate more appropriate modes of governance beyond assimilationism. An espoused legislative discourse of multiculturalism has emerged in a number of Western countries, which is said to embrace diversity by facilitating coexistent states of integration and disparity at the same time.<sup>iii</sup> Of late, organisational representatives too have begun to articulate a concern to develop a similar mutualist based approach so that the needs of diverse groups of employees and management might both be served (Neil, 1999).

### **Post Fordist Paradoxes**

Advocates of this more socially attuned approach argue it has emerged in relation to radical technical changes that have transformed the entire infrastructure of organisational contexts (Ancona, et al, 1996). They hold that the Fordist mass assembly-line mode of 'fragmented specialisation' has given way to an automated, computerised production system described as Post-Fordist 'flexible-specialisation', where advances in technology allow machines/people to turn out a diverse array of niche-marketed items (Wall & Jackson, 1995:145). In turn, these high-quality, customised goods and services are targeted at an increasingly diverse consumer profile facilitated in part by globalised migration patterns. Complementing the soft reprogrammable technical production system, a parallel flexible method of people management (e.g. total quality management,

business process re-engineering, teamwork arrangements) is claimed to have replaced the traditional top-down, command economy approach. The general emphasis on quality (surpassing the spiritless Fordist preoccupation with quantity) is thus framed as driving both commodity production and human relationships in the organisation (Bissett, 2001).

In regard to organisational practice however, these claims are challenged by a number of critical research evaluations (Thompson & Warhurst, 1998; Sewell, 1998). Despite the market savvy awareness of companies in targeting their products to take advantage of increasing levels of pluralism in the wider culture (see du Gay, 1997 on Sony), internally many appear ill equipped to deal with the current cultural global change process. Reviews of the diversely populated Australian organisational context for example, describe these work environments as riddled with significant problems of inequity and the inefficient use of people's diverse talents (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997). This situation is said to emerge primarily from the persistence of a culture of uniformity and lack of opportunity that has been extensively documented throughout the 20th-century (Bertone, et al, 1998; Wajcman, 1998). Gender segregation and the formal discriminatory structuring of minority groups has received both applied and theoretical attention (Burton, et al, 1987) and a range of government anti-discriminatory measures have been introduced (EEO and AA, equal pay, multicultural human rights, freedom of sexual orientation, etc). Yet while there may be more tolerance of difference generally in countries like Australia, the figures on organisational participation (particularly at the higher levels) suggest a failure to utilise this presence of diversity to meet organisational efficiency needs let alone

include possibilities for individual employee self-fulfilment (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2000).

In this paper I argue the problems surrounding the management of population and organisational diversity issues are closely related to inherent inadequacies in managerial conceptualisations of diversity. For example, the tendency in management practice is to replicate the shortcomings apparent in the popularist managerial texts (Collins, 2000) where behaviourist rather than social constructionist understandings proliferate. While population diversity is generally based on 'social identity' characteristics (e.g., race, gender, social class, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability and age), most of the traditional diversity management literature fails to situate these factors into a broader relational and structural context. By focusing on individual and group differences, narrowly defined according to a range of assumed psychological aspects (personality traits), these categories become overly standardised and reified (see Chemers, et al, 1995, for example). This leads to issues of identity and difference in the organisation being framed oppositionally; either negatively portrayed as creating a 'diversity dilemma' that must be contained (managed), or depicted as just another resource factor that needs to fit in with "the way we do things around here."

In light of these anomalies, how then can we make sense of this apparent contradiction between the rhetoric and the reality between the espoused post-Fordist management declarations of a commitment to pluralism and the conflicting evidence of institutional uniformity and conformity pressures? I maintain that it is vital to engage in both

historical and comparative analysis of the broader context of change in order to make some sense of this apparent conflict. Hence the following evaluation will situate post-Fordism by reference to its predecessor Fordism, drawing on the underlying sets of paradigmatic ideas and their relationship to discourse.<sup>iv</sup> Analysis of the generalised viewpoint and subsequent forms of expression (my working definition of these two terms) that underpin and give substance to both Fordism and post Fordism, will explain why the current attempt to break out of modernist restrictive ways of knowing/being has been so unsuccessful. Contextualising the interdependent relationship that exists between work organisations and the wider society, I identify the change process as related to an interactive chain of social, political and economic effects/influences rather than simply technologically determined. Giddens (1986) describes these patterns of interrelatedness as comprised of both 'the median and outcome of action'. I consider that the enriched reflective understandings that follow on from such situated analyses - pertaining to the issues surrounding management, workplace dynamics, and organisational change - should enable managers (as well as researchers) to advance more progressive and sustainable ideas on the convergence of economy, culture and governance.<sup>v</sup>

### **Fordism: Machine Metaphors and Discursive Rationalism**

Throughout the 20th century Fordism has characterised the imperative of the modernist mechanical era, where technology has fuelled desires for bigger, better, faster products/discoveries/lifestyle. In contrast to this preoccupation with largesse, the exercise of labour has been marked by practices of minimalism with simple repetitive tasks performed according to the piecework mentality derived from principles of scientific

management. This has been accompanied by a fixation on achieving order through linearity and hierarchically structured forms of organising (Cope & Kalantzis, 1998). This has applied to both production and people processes with management performing a hands-on, overseeing role underpinned by hegemonic conceptions of their inalienable right to exercise rationalist authority. Each of these elements has individually reflected the broader paradigm of scientific rationality, with the organisation mirroring science's own dichotomous take on scale and form. For example throughout the modernist era, science has been typified by grand schemes that seek to achieve forms of ultimate knowledge and predictive capacity. At the same time the production of knowledge processes have been tightly controlled by formally structured/imposed modes of operation that are highly reductionist (Harding, 1986). In turn, these knowledge acquisition practices have been circumscribed by rigid sets of principles that privilege atomistic, repetitively mechanical approaches. In terms of Clegg's (1989) model of circuits of power, this represents the 'Dispositional Circuit' where fixed relations of meaning and membership are imparted through bodies of rules.

To gain a contextual understanding of the Fordist paradigmatic worldview and modes of practice (the reification of empirical practice in particular), we need to appreciate the significance of its discursive underpinnings as derived from modernist scientific assumptions/applications. For example, the rationalist paradigm has reflected a dichotomized view of the world that sanctioned instrumentalist practices where ends and means became segmented; public and private worlds divided; men and women relegated to separate work locations; and humanity itself was split asunder into two opposing,



rational versus emotional, mind/body spheres<sup>vi</sup> (Bissett, 2001). The logocentric representation of language itself has reflected this estranged, myopic worldview dominated by oppositionally structured binary sets of meanings (Derrida, 1978). The rationalist Enlightenment philosophy that underpinned this world order reflected an epistemological/ontological shift from the pre-modern state of dependency on nature to a control focus where power-over nature, and the management of people, was justified on acclaimed superior material outcomes. Workers became the productive means to achieve consumptive ends. The application of this progress discourse was facilitated by the introduction of clock-time that compressed time into a mechanical sphere, replacing the expansive pre-industrial, corporeal experience of time. In terms of the employment relationship, clock-time provided a way of disciplining a reluctant work force that became drawn into the tightly monitored labour contract system (Thompson, 1967; Bissett, 2001).

To understand the significance of hegemonic paradigms and their discursive expression, in relation to a specific epoch, we need to identify their relationship to everyday lived experience. Clegg (1989) identifies the complex of social relations, agencies, means-resources control and outcomes that comprise daily interactions as the micro expression of power politics, which he names the Episodic Circuit. In terms of expression, it means that a dominant worldview, and accompanying rule-determined sets of behaviors, are not just confined to the specialist activities of science or the capitalist production process, but come to be mirrored in the common ways of knowing and being (epistemology and ontology). While these processes are under constant challenge and negotiation, as

Foucault (1991) so comprehensively documents, the technologies of production and their associated techniques of discipline extend into all aspects of the materiality of life. For example, Habermas summarises the pervasiveness of this governing 'technocrat consciousness' as producing a disembodied effect where 'the relationship between the body, self, others and the world comes to be seen exclusively in instrumental terms' (Roberts, 1996 57).

To clarify these points and draw out the distinctiveness of the Fordist paradigm it is useful to compare it with the pre-modern mode of life. Whilst not seeking to overly-romanticise pre-industrialism, in contrast to the rationalist logic of Fordism the predominant markers of the cottage farm way of life are represented by the terms integration, connection and continuous flow. This is because rural activities took place in a specific domestic environment that featured the integration of all manner of activities, as well as a parallel task structure, so that visitors for example, would be received into this fluid context where work and leisure merged. These aspects of interwovenness were related to the fluctuating seasons that led to a variety of work tasks being undertaken at different times. Giving expressive form to the respective paradigms of action, the pre-modern focus on 'task-related' activity meant that terms like 'timed labour' were absent from the discursive lexicon (Bissett, 2001). This stands in sharp contrast to the mechanical structuring of timed-labour with its associated segmented-practice, which were to become distinctive features of industrialism.

### **The Post-Fordist Promise: Reintegration or Incorporation?**

Celebratory new times writers argue that post-Fordism recaptures the best of pre-industrialism (accompanied by the benefits of modern lifestyles), through the birthing of a new values-based, mutualist paradigm (Neil, 1999; Turner, 1999). Specifying the elements of the paradigm: technology is said to allow variety; the task structure becomes expanded to include multiskilling; and management engages in delegation (Ancona et al 1996). In terms of the interconnected social processes described earlier, management is able to continue calling on scientific credibility<sup>vii</sup> to justify its modus operandi because science itself is described as less dogmatically absolutist in the postmodern era (acknowledging the possibility of conflicting theories of light, for example). Epistemologically contemporary science has recently undergone a paradigm shift to more relativist approaches such as chaos theory that ontologically matches the plurality and unpredictability of organisational experience. Mirroring science, organisations are said to abandon rationalism, unitarism and hierarchy in favour of organic modes of networking in relation to both people and production processes.

Discursively, post-Fordist writers refer to a shift in organisational focus from formal rational language processes to informal storytelling approaches where oral modes of communication are privileged. This is related to attempts to build commitment to community conveyed through family-like images depicted in vision statements, and the like (Bodi, et al, 1997). This enculturation process is facilitated by the increasing incorporation of the social into the organisation through company social events/retreats etc. In terms of the stated philosophy, modes of practice and rhetorical formations

referred to, a reintegration of the body, alienated within the modernist setting, is sought. Hands, head, mind, heart and soul are thus reunited to live out a new spiritual existence where 'work [is] intended to have a community feel, the feel of a village' (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997). Moreover replicating pre-modernism, all manner of boundaries begin to blur, including work/leisure, public/private, etc.

The problem with this new times scenario however, is that closer observation reveals a much more erratic and contradictory social landscape. Analysis of the 'flexible specialisation' paradigm in action for example reveals that, like Fordism, post-Fordism operates according to parallel techniques of discipline in relation to the specific technologies of production. Examining the discursive term 'empowerment' (so central to the acclaimed new times thesis), Foucauldian researchers note the embedded rationalism associated with this particular management 'grammar' (Collins, 2000). The unitary manner of socially constructing and policing notions of "effectiveness", "quality", "world-class performance" and so on' (Collins, 2000:103) for example, represents decidedly familiar normalising processes of disciplinary-power. Examining the heightened attention to rhetorical framing in this era, what also becomes apparent is the way that organisational language is used to describe the very opposite of what is taking place, such that contradiction becomes the dominant marker of these new times (as distinct from modernist alienation). For instance (as a number of theorists/researchers have pointed out), despite the rhetoric of liberation, present empowerment moves are essentially disempowering (Boje & Rosile, 2000).

Equally, so-called qualitative change practices mainly represent the extension of rationalist technocratic quantitative control initiatives. Consequently Woolly (1993) claims that the 'information age', rather than promising liberation, poses a 'threat that management, and perhaps the state, will use technology to invade more and more of the space previously claimed by workers and citizens for unsupervised, discretionary activity' (Collins, 2000: 340).<sup>viii</sup> Hence while Collins' comment that 'empowerment [is] a rather flimsy concept within a glib line of argument' (2000: 226) is apt, at the same time it underplays the integral relationship between discourse and action that leads to the expression of disciplinary-power (Foucault, 1991).

Focusing on post-Fordist social processes, Cope & Kalantzis (1997:73) demonstrate that despite the acclaimed respect for diversity the preferred form of 'organisational culture' is one that replicates a modernist consensus managerial model where cohesion is achieved through emphasising sameness.<sup>ix</sup> Accordingly, work teams are formed to advance homogeneous ideals and expectations with 'corporate cloning' as the desired outcome. The term contradiction (yet again) best describes the problems of this pressure for uniformity where teams become sites of submission and compliance rather than avenues to stimulate the innovation and creativity that globally competitive organisations need to survive (Harvey & Denton, 1999). Moreover the social order itself has become increasingly fragmented and dysfunctional due to the recurrent waves of fads and fashion change and lack of management communication (Harris & Ogbonna, 1997).

It seems then that while post-Fordism may well reflect a more complex perception of the work process it still retains a simplistic, reductionist view of work culture that obscures the productive potential of diversity. The next section analyses the underlying reasons for this disjuncture, relating it to the inadequacies born of the instrumentalist focus of management training. I develop a schema for a borderless form of management education, that transcends the traditional science/arts divide, and promote this as an appropriate model of organisational learning for the postmodern era.

### **The Vocational versus Educational Paradox**

One of the other central flaws of post-Fordism relates to the continuing reification of technical skills and downplaying of social capacities.<sup>x</sup> For example, the educational training approach, in relation to management in the 20th-century, has been orientated towards the acquiring of skills rather than knowledge. This is partly related to the reductive modernist processes (described earlier) where theory and practice are juxtaposed as contrary forces. In terms of the integral relationship of science to everyday culture, the empiricist reification of practice has led to a concentration on acquiring operational skills in such fields as engineering, accountancy and finance. Due to their acclaimed technical expertise, graduates of these professions have tended to dominate the higher echelons of organisations over the last few decades. Relatedly, management education schools have focused on flagship courses in strategy (the arena of senior management Harvey & Denton, 1999: 903), which are considered to build rationalist scientific capacities through the study of quantitative techniques referred to as hard data procedures. This techniques mode of decision-making is `justified and potentially

mystified by reference to the 'objective' facts that they generate...[and] since objectivity can only be established through empirical method; ideas and values which by their nature cannot be verified in this way are reduced to the status of being merely subjective' (Roberts, 1996: 57).

Since the people, power and political elements of organisations tend to be dismissed as purely soft factors, this formulaic approach overlooks the culture-bound nature of management decision-making. This means the complexity and ambiguity of the strategic role is little understood. Due to this minimal attention to the day-to-day processes of managing it's hardly surprising that managers should be deficit in oral communication skills (Mickelthwait & Wooldridge, 1997). This is compounded by the persistence of hierarchy, which serves to separate managers from ordinary folk in the organisation on the basis of assumed technical skills. As Roberts suggests, '[t]echnical management education is clearly in the business of providing the symbols of legitimacy to managers: [represented through] the label of an MBA, the neutral rhetoric of efficiency and objective necessity [and] the backing of facts and figures' (1996: 65). It seems then that while institutionally organisational structures are in the state of flux at the same time embedded management processes appear resistant to change.

Management 'guru' Senge (2001) observes that Buddhist followers believe that individuals need wisdom to build skills. The discussion above suggests the Western paradigm of knowledge takes the contrary frame of reference as its starting point. Moreover, this predilection for technically orientated knowledge has become ever more

narrowly defined in the post-industrial era as companies engage specialist knowledge worker professionals (Handy, 1997). With organisations utilising hi-tech machinery (flexible specialisation), the intersection between these employees and their working environment has led to organisations themselves being described as evolving knowledge systems. While this has produced a degree of awareness related to the intersection between theoretical knowledge and social context, the embedded technical and social relationship, regarding the nature of the knowledge produced and its impact on the organisational environment is still little understood. Hence, while the focus of organisational learning (OL) over the last few decades has evolved from empirical, to case study, to theoretical orientation, each of these phases has continued to privilege the technical component of the knowledge generated.

I believe the resulting lack of appreciative wisdom leaves managers/organisations floundering in this time of unprecedented change and is largely responsible for them turning to the guru-induced fads and fashions techniques (Collin, 2000; Mickelthwait & Wooldridge, 1997; Abrahamson, 1991). The problem with these symptoms-focused remedies is that they are based on failed prescriptive recipes (Jacques, 1996). Yet it is not surprising that practitioners resort to these 'carpetbagger' offerings given that they are underpinned by the same types of scientific claims to certainty that managers have been exposed to in their formal training experiences. Nonetheless, Harvey & Denton suggest a 'shift in the relative importance of factors of production away from capital towards labour' (1999: 897) has occurred, such that companies are now much more people-orientated and prepared to invest in their development. If Harvey & Denton are right



then at some point the glaring contradiction related to the continuation of disembodied, unitary, instrumental approaches to organisational learning/processes will need to be confronted if firms expect to survive in the 'desperate for innovation' global context.

Analysing Harvey and Denton's (1999) empirical study (in relation to the factors surrounding OL) reveals the perpetuation of a resource-model, commodity-orientated attitude on behalf of management that fails to address: a) how knowledge of the workplace environment might be improved to meet diversity criteria; b) how a learning model might lead to improvements in the employment relationship generally; and, c) fundamentally how the quality of management itself might be improved. Instead this study demonstrates that OL figures as the latest in a long series (following BPR & TQM) of unsuccessful techniques-orientated, knee-jerk reactions to change (Harvey & Denton, 1999: 905). It's rather ironic, given this poverty of appreciative ways of knowing, that the discourse surrounding OL – 'capturing, generating and exploiting' (Harvey & Denton, 1999: 904) - is all about *mastering* knowledge. This representation of the ineffectiveness of the macho management paradigm provides an opening to begin the discussion of reframing management learningpractice (sic) along the lines of the 'productive diversity' paradigm in order to more effectively serve the needs of all organisational participants.

### **Diverse Learning as the Model of Diversity**

'Productive diversity' (PD) is a term that refers to managing a diverse workforce in a manner that leads to productive economic and social outcomes for both employers and

employees (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997). As a twofold approach, the perspective suggests employers can gain rewards from recognising the potential of human diversity as a vital resource for the organisation and, at the same time, progress social justice objectives of equal opportunity legislation through the removal of discriminatory employment barriers. In part, this is achieved through the development of a greater understanding of the etiology of informal, as well as formal, ways of managing organisational interactions (for example, processes of recruitment and advancement). However, conceptions of PD also reflect a broad vision of the possibility of extended relationships between organisations and the wider society, based on a model of civic pluralism that combines various diasporic interests (Barak, 2000; Lessem & Sudhanshu, 1999). A key theme of PD involves workshopping ideas in the current organisational context as a platform to develop more complex awareness of diversity and build conceptions of cultures of 'cohesion-in-diversity' which displace the simple 'culture-as sameness' model (Cope & Kalantzis, 1997; Bond 1999).

In order to provide new capabilities for firms to gain sustainable competitive advantage, a new social order of participative management is called for on the grounds of social justice and to overcome the limits of instrumental rationality. Rather than representing a purely utopian vision, PD seeks to expand on the policy platforms of mainstream institutions that are beginning to reflect 'triple bottom line' intentions (Elkington, 1997). The Dow Jones Sustainability Group for example, defines a sustainable organisation as one that aims at increasing long-term shareholder value by integrating economic, environmental and social growth opportunities into corporate and business strategies (Sustainability

Group Index, 2000).<sup>xi</sup> However, before a broader set of objectives relating cultural diversity to this newly espoused corporate social responsibility agenda can be advanced, the fundamental instrumentalist underpinnings of current incorporation strategies need to be made transparent (Dunphy & Griffiths, 1998).

Referring to the porous boundaries of the nation state (discussed earlier) that have led to the emergence of diasporic populations (Cohen, 1997), a related factor to this new economy agenda is that these populations are characterised by shifting, hybrid forms of cultural identity. There is now a considerable body of literature in the arts field (Smith, 2000; Naipaul, 2000), as well as more intellectualised postcolonial reflections (Said, 2000; Appadurai, 1991), documenting the complex ways of seeing and surviving that emerge from this fractured identification process. A more sensitised management community would be in the position to address the productive contribution these global citizens might make to organisational knowledge, learning and capabilities, based on utilising these tensions. For example, the comparative understandings that evolve from occupying different life worlds tend to produce unique ways of experiencing the organisation. Under a model of civic pluralism, the organisational social order would need to represent a diverse web of relationships to allow for this variety of styles to come to the fore. A form of 'representative mutualism'<sup>xii</sup> where the organisational culture was based on processes of collaborative negotiation rather than uniform replication could lead to a relational way of thinking/being/acting that went beyond relativism.<sup>xiii</sup>

Earlier in the century Follett (1941: 91) [a management consultant in the systems theory rather than guru mode] envisaged moving beyond the mechanised atomism of modernism by imagining an alternative dynamic form of organising which involved ‘not only the relation of parts, but the relation of parts of the whole, not a stationary whole, but a whole a-making’ (cited in Boje & Rosile, 2001). Boje & Rosile describe Follett's relational theory of power as based on mutualist notions of empowerment. Jayapal (2000) also documents an economic/social development model, reflecting these ideas, operating in India involving over 100,000 villages named Swadhyaya. The movement involves a multilayered approach to local community development framed around the ideas of connection, integration and continuous flow, that I earlier classified as pre-modern. However, rather than symbolising an outdated concept/practice, I believe this embedded relational philosophy represents a profound praxis approach, appropriate to a world order that respects diversity (Swadhyaya is founded on a Hindu philosophy, yet embraces all manner of peoples regardless of religion or cast). Based on an articulated relational model, the movement espouses a way of knowingbeing (sic) that recognises we are each related to one another, as well as our environment. As related beings therefore we have responsibilities to each other, and relatedly, to sustain a communal way of life. Many thriving, democratic communities have been built in India drawing upon this business model of stewardship, such that the World Bank has begun to take interest in the programme. The demonstrated economic, social and ecological success of this approach indicates that, we in the West could learn a great deal from such a broad-based agenda.

### **Critically Orientated Praxis: Hybrid Analyses**

However, before we can begin to reshape the organisation to respond to its inhabitants (local communities and global markets) in this power-sharing manner, the instrumentalist paradigm and behaviourist discourse that continues to dominate management learning and practice needs to be rescinded. Hence, if we are to move beyond the current 'warrior' management mentality towards this more wisdom-centered outlook, then we need a form of education and work context training that produces social entrepreneurs. Put candidly, given the apparent difficulty of getting different people into management positions perhaps the first step required is to get difference into managers. The benefit of this is for managers to be able to develop cultural, as well as technical, literacy. Reflecting the influence of Buddhism, Senge (2001) depicts substantive leadership as a paradox because it is both deeply personal and inherently collective at the same time. He suggests new economy approaches are called for that rethink the underpinnings of the traditional leadership role. In this regard, in order to get to a point where an authentic dialogue<sup>xiv</sup> between diverse organisational actors can have any meaning, I believe both the form and content of management education has to change. My experience is that managers benefit enormously from being exposed to a diverse repertoire of educational material, drawn from an integrated arts/science (sic) base<sup>xv</sup> and taught from an interdisciplinary perspective. This provides them with essential comparative/historically located cultural understandings pertinent to the diversity of organisational life.

This standpoint runs against the tide of pragmatism underpinning the current trend to education marketisation, where the modernist split between practical vocational training

and theoretical education is being extended by turning universities into technikons that serve as handmaidens to industry. However, I rest my case on the abundant evidence available (Collins, 2000) that instrumental rationalism is anything but practical. Collins substantive appraisal of this realm suggests, for instance, that management trainers rely on texts that are divorced from any semblance of life in the organisation. Students themselves, in my experience, have difficulty adjusting their own complex, messy and contradictory organisational experience to the fantasmic world of rationalist order depicted in managerialist texts. Moreover, Roberts notes that 'the technician approaches to management education typically leave students' "practical consciousness" - the usually tacit and habitual knowledge that informs actual practice - both unquestioned and under reformed' (1996:54). This leads to both the content and form of this blind-faith type of training failing to deliver workable approaches to managing.<sup>xvi</sup>

I believe that critically reflective training procedures can effectively serve the win-win perspective of productive diversity. It isn't simply that critical perspectives call 'the culture of ownership and inequality that is reproduced in capitalist organisations...into question' (Roberts, 1996:65), and thus address the power relations that the behaviourist/instrumentalist literature on 'organisational culture' avoids. Rather, the substance of this approach is that it allows students to develop both self-understanding and contextual awareness, leading to the proliferation of skills that have direct application to organisational practice.<sup>xvii</sup> Thus in developing conceptual breadth and depth, students experience a form of education that moves beyond the dualism of vocational versus theoretical training. Learning in this mode is process *and* outcomes orientated since by

studying a body of socially relevant knowledge students acquire an ability to think differently/analytically. At the same time they build the capacity to reflect on their own role as managers in a broader context of social, political, economic and cultural relationships. Deetz (1992) describes such *responsive micropractices* as a space of possibility where individuals might: 'recognise their own collusion, to speak against their fear, to challenge thought, to act from a sense of care of others - in sum, to take responsibility for the creativity of their immediate actions' (Roberts, 1996:73).

However, teaching from a critically evaluative perspective should not merely represent the deconstruction of one regime of truth in order to introduce another equally authoritarian way of knowing/being. Instead such an approach needs to be enshrined by a commitment to pluralism in every sense of the word. Additionally, teaching from such an interrogatory standpoint requires an appreciation that for those undertaking such deep learning initially this can be a painful process. As Foucault (1991) warns us individuals become wedded to the normalizing techniques of disciplinary power, which yields a psyche of 'technocratic consciousness'. Unlike Thomas & Anthony (1996:29) though, I don't believe that temporary levels of discomfort need discredit the role of critical analysis. On the contrary, I find that once students detach themselves from the Superman model of management, they report a sense of release from the burden of unrealizable goals. They proceed, in their essays/projects, to utilise this newfound sense of liberty to actively participate in imagining more appropriately sustainable approaches to managing as well as to management. It may well be that a long-term mutualist benefit can be achieved through this approach. For example, in addition to developing a heightened

social conscience and commitment to building community, this appreciative type of education enables managers to more effectively address change processes by increasing their comfort with analysing, questioning and challenging taken-for-granted realities. Thus, diversifying management education by enhancing deeper-level understandings/reflective processes should result in the more effective management of diversity in the context of global market networks.

### **Beyond Behaviourism: the Manager as Skilled 'Tactician'**

The central themes that have framed this article concern diversifying management through borderless theorising/forms of application and creating a broader basis of knowledgability. These have been named as a way of surfacing an integrated form of management praxis where theory is recuperated. In my critical evaluation of current management processes I have been guided by Giddens' (1986) notion of 'structuration theory', where the nature of action is perceived as relational in character and thus embodied. The dilemmas of over-generalisation, decontextualisation, and gross-simplification that plague management theory/practice have been outlined in order to avoid 'render[ing] knowing simple, transparent, singular [and] formulaic' (Calais & Smircich, 1999:15). To assist me in that process I have called on two heuristic devices that are usually kept distinct from each other, associated with modernism and postmodernism respectively. By including reference to both paradigms and discourses as productive reference points, I have attempted to move beyond reductionist dualisms that I consider restrict the field of theorising itself. I have tried to resolve this paradox by developing a pluralistic model that reflects the diversity I am recommending for others.



In so doing, I have sought to demonstrate the integration of *epistemologyontology* (sic). I have strived to situate this relationship through reference to Giddens' paradigmatic character of action where he suggests that 'we act in relation to tacit models of [the] self world' (Roberts, 1996:61). I have been aided in this task by my understanding of Actor Network theory, where people and structures (actors and networks) are studied in a manner that pays attention to the interactive processes occurring between the two forces (Law & Hansard, 1998).

De Certeau reflexively grounds this ambitious agenda for me through his observation that we are always limited to micropractice.<sup>xviii</sup> In his text on the *Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), de Certeau outlines the basic conditions within which cultural activity can be produced, making a distinction between 'strategy' and 'tactics'. The strategist assumes subjects can be isolated from the environment to achieve apparent objectivity, as in scientific rationality. The tactician on the other hand, assumes subjects have no 'proper', objective place, and that awareness takes place in a piecemeal manner, related to positionality and context (Latour, 1996; Chia, 1996). Appreciation of the latter position might free managers from the elusive desire to fix meaning (the organisation) in its full determinacy through a 'ready-made' science. Discarding the modernist drive to achieve the standing of the all-knowing strategist, the manager operating from this perspective could become skilled in the realisation that only fragmentary tactics can ever be exercised in time/environment-dependent, opportune ways. Relatedly McIntyre argues:

that in place of the illusory comfort of manipulative techniques, the most important product of a management education should be an insistence that the student recognise that he or she is not in control and instead begin to develop the

habits of mind and action consistent with the reality of organisational interdependencies (Roberts, 1996: 58).

While displacing the omnipotent manager with one who anticipates change processes through a more subtle restrained awareness might be a more modest goal for management, as a more self/contextualised reflective mode of understanding I believe it is likely be more effective in the long run.

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i A more detailed focus on diversity itself is dealt with in a forthcoming paper.

ii The proliferation of writings/attention to 'organisational' culture, which began in the 1980s, will be shown to be distinctly different from the 'diversity' focus under discussion here.

iii Banerjee & Linstead (2001) critique this development, identifying the discourse of globalisation and the discourse of multiculturalism as companion formations 'employed to manage the often problematic consequences of cultural diversity' (2001: 685) [my emphasis].

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v This observation comes from my teaching experience (as well as critical theoretical contemplation) where I expose senior managers to this type of learning process.

vi This has translated into everyday rhetoric with expressions like 'keeping mind over matter'.

vii Here I reject the common contention, forwarded by many contemporary organisation theorists, of the demise of the science/management relationship. Collins (2000) for example, painting a picture of managers as missionaries of salvation, suggests the contemporary offering is in the fads and fashions fixes, which have superseded 'salvation through such routes as science and scientific management' (2000: 53). Fournier & Grey (2000) also share this point of view.

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