

RADICAL HUMANISM AND MANAGEMENT: THE IMPLICATIONS OF HUMANISM FOR BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION AND STUDIES

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Abstract

The dialectical nature of the current socio-economic process at work, namely, the endless pursuit of maximization of profits leading towards a truncated understanding of Man, which in turn leads towards the further quest for maximization of profits, and so on, appears to pose an endless impasse.

Breaking this negative dialectic involves: 1) having managerial studies develop and adopt an understanding and theory of Man that embraces a "radical humanism"; and 2) adopting a conception of corporate governance that aims to serve Mankind in lieu of exploiting it. The radical humanism referred to in this paper considers the human being as a being of speech, of symbols, of senses, of society, of free-will, and not just simply as a resource at the service of the company and of maximization of profit. Embracing a radical humanism, as well as a governance that aims to serve Man rather than exploit him introduces a virtuous dialectic: the adoption of a fuller understanding and respect for Man and Nature leads to the production and subsequent sharing of profits, which in turn reinforces the respect and understanding of Man and Nature, leading to further profits (and subsequent sharing), and so on.

Adopting a humanistic approach within business activities and interactions is of the utmost priority if society, and by extension, we as human beings both in the individual and collective sense, are to survive, flourish and emancipate ourselves.

At first glance, mainstream management literature would appear to be showing encouraging 'signs' of enlightenment across the myriad of leitmotifs that are discerned across such words as "humanism", "ethics", "corporate governance", "social responsibility for business", and "environmental responsibility". In fact, if there is a major point of convergence for the many streams of literature, it is the importance of the human person or personal attitudes and behaviors at work. No matter the trend or topic: whether it is about corporate 'culturalism' (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Ouchi, 1981; Peters & Waterman, 1982; Schein 1985 and 1991) or motivation and the valorization of human resources (Peters and Austin, 1985; Waterman, 1987; Crozier, 1989; Archier and Serieyx, 1987); whether it is across total quality, the re-introduction of the meaning of work, 'empowerment' (Juran and Gryna, 1980; Michel, 1989; Serieyx, 1989; Peters and Austin, 1985; Mintzberg, 1989) or the realization of the workplace as an area of social interactions and sharing (Peters and Austin, 1985; Weitzman, 1984; Peters, 1987; DePree, 1989); or whether it is the various pre-occupations on ethics, ethico-spirituality or other management methods aiming towards cohesion, participation, initiative and creativity at all levels, what stands out most clearly is the insistent call from all quarters on putting the human element at the forefront. *Yet let us not fool ourselves into thinking that these various streams reflect any significant attempt at creating business frameworks or management practices that embrace man's emancipation as a finality onto itself, or "man as being the measure of all things".*

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The Deleterious Dialectic

One of the telltale signs that make us adhere to such a skeptical view involves a dialectical process working as a vicious circle, which when viewed from afar seems tautological: the endless pursuit of maximization of profits leads to a truncated understanding of the complex and profound nature of Man, which in turn leads to the further quest for maximization of profits and monetary wealth, whereby cause and effect become interchangeable. But the various mechanisms behind the scenes of this process (of which we will only discuss a few) indicate to us that this process is far from being banal or tautological.

One half of this process (that is, the endless pursuit of maximization of profits leading to a reduced or truncated understanding of Man) involves the very visible "global" context of unbridled capitalism, eagerly pursuing "maximum profits" in the shortest amount of time possible for shareholders, all the while, seeking out infinitely exploitable labor. On a macroscopic level, adherents to such economic interests and passions (which Hirschman (1997) so eloquently described) attempt to paint these surrogate desires as being purely rational in nature, with more contemporary followers such as Baechler (1995) going through great pains to convince us that this is all about economic or corporate 'efficiency' (that is, the striving to maximize profits while simultaneously trying to reduce economic costs to the barest minimum). But, as Godelier (1974) repeatedly pointed out, such an 'efficiency' is merely a masked ideology, since the word "efficiency" by itself carries a neutral connotation that adheres to no specific objective; and that the choice of any output objective (whether it be a specific objective such as 50%, 200% or a generic one such as the maximization of 'xyz') for any given input, involves a decision on the part of an individual or collective subject having roots in a specific ideology. Such an ideology (or 'rationality') is also one of the prime motives for management's notion (and treatment) of the human being within the work environment as an instrument of production, a sort of "mechanical being with needs", a selfish maximizing and rational being, and as a cost that must be controlled and minimized. Hence, all reference by mainstream management theory towards putting the human in the forefront is (whether intentionally or not) but a means towards a financial end. Yet paradoxically, the attainment of this crude (and often obscene) objective has been a fleeting success at best for most western businesses. Many have noted with astonishment and anxiety that good management, success, productivity and profitability has shifted towards areas such as South-East Asia, and that North American industry has stagnated in comparison to the more dynamic Nordic, Japanese and emerging Asian countries (we only have to look at the decrepit and nearly-bankrupt US automotive companies in comparison to the persistent, long term profitabilities of Honda and Toyota), while the degradation of nature and quality of life has only gained in amplitude. Stuck in a theoretical gangue that is cemented by functionalism and an ideology of consensus, dominant management theorists cannot see that the root cause of the problem remains a question tied to the fundamental negation of humanist thought by a technocratic order striving for maximization of profits at all costs. Nonetheless, as of the 1990s, there has been an insistent call for bringing to the forefront a more "humane" corporate "ethic". But what human are we referring to? Unfortunately, it is a truncated human reduced to his "functional" dimension: dehumanized, instrumentalised, and reified.

A closer look at the 'first' leg (in actual fact there is no 'first' or 'second' leg in a hierarchical sense, but simply two complementary legs working together simultaneously) of our "deleterious dialectic" unearths further contradictions and paradoxes. For example, it has now been close to 25 years since *In Search of Excellence* (PETERS and WATERMAN, 1982) and its various derivatives have been circulating within academic and orthodox professional management circles, and we have yet to see members of corporations all working together, standing as one person, within an organization teeming with social interactions, enthusiasm, participation and mutual aid. Reflecting a simplistic, reductionist understanding of

Man, the vogue of "management by excellence" and "corporate culture" that followed in reaction to the German-Japanese corporate onslaught consisted (and still consists today) not only of manipulating perceptions, but personal values, beliefs, mental representations, symbols, self-image, identity, etc; with the aim of affecting the most intimate feelings and sentiments of the individual. All employees, including management and salaried workers are, as a result, expected to confound their own ideal of the self with that of the organization that employs them. Yet all of this is doomed to failure, since the most elementary knowledge of anthropology shows us that subjectivity, ontology and values cannot be manipulated or fabricated via the revamping of symbols, rituals and ceremonies, since all of these are artificial and "dead" in the sense attributed by Branislaw Malinowski: a myth cannot be "operational" unless it is "alive"; that is to say, actively integrated and based in mythology and the sacred as well as in the real life experiences of individuals. Predictably, in trying to 'motivate' workers, management's evacuation of the sacred and spiritual is most easily seen across their use of truncated versions of Maslow's (1959 and 1969) pyramid: that is, without the use of the spiritual top level – a level, which when incorporated, sheds a very different light and perspective on the subsequent levels of the pyramid. Without attempting any 'illuminated' journey on our part into 'spiritualism', we can argue that part of Man's spirituality involves an acceptance of his own mortality. For example, Sievers (1996: 56-57) explains that the fundamental split in corporations between those at the top (management) and those at the bottom (the workers) is due to a more fundamental split occurring in contemporary Western societies – namely "the split between life and death...the reality of death and mortality as constituent human qualities is neglected and denied in contemporary enterprises and in society in general. It seems that people are aberrantly pre-occupied with the notion of life, and this can be correlated with our predominant organizational concerns for growth and survival. Through the fragmentation of work life and life, we have more or less succeeded in expatriating death and mortality from our institutions, and it seems that enterprises are exclusively devoted to an ongoing, permanent notion of life [immortality]".

But as Sievers explains, the corporation does not provide 'immortality' for all its members, whereby in the Calvinistic sense: "immortality is a scarce resource, available only to the happy few; and immortality of the enterprise as well as its few members can only be achieved and maintained at the cost of many others and their lack of immortality". The infantilisation of the worker becomes one of many consequences of the 'management of excellence' movement, whereby management is deified simultaneously with the worker's reification.

Management's attempt to incite the worker to participate ends in a "false" interaction between the worker and the manager, based on a "collusive quarrel on immortality" which occludes any true participation based on equality: workers resent the fact that the managers become 'immortal', while managers look at the workers as 'mere mortals'. This also provides the basis for Western management's adoption of a theory of motivation based on the reification of the worker (Sievers), whereby the worker is perceived as not being able to think or get involved in any *significant* decision-making. If we take Hegel's principle that "Man has no essence. His essence is within his action" (that is, when Man is denied the opportunity to create he cannot emancipate his humanity and transcendence), then the worker, as an object, can no longer bring any meaning to his life. But management tries to convince the worker that what has no meaning still has meaning by using 'motivation' as a surrogate for meaning. We now have a process whereby management has inhibited action on the part of the worker via his reification, while trying to motivate him at the same time. The resulting double-bind is nothing short of tragic.

Needless to say, such a situation renders many corporations vulnerable whereby machinism, robotisation and even the information age have attained their limits. Product obsolescence has become evermore rapid, while the flexibility of the human mind is becoming more and more indispensable even if all we are aiming for is an impudent improvement in profitability. But is this the only goal? Before attempting to answer this question, perhaps we should first ask ourselves a question

related to the 'second' leg of our dialectical process: where does this truncated understanding of Man lead to? The quick and superficial answer to this was in effect highlighted in our analysis of the 'first leg', in that a truncated understanding of Man paradoxically leads to lower profitability in the long run. Hence, we seem to be in front of a downward economic spiral: the quest for maximization of profits leads towards the adherence of a truncated understanding of Man, which in turn leads to lower long-term profitability, to which management, in their continued quest for maximization of profits try to address via the 'development' and use of further truncated notions of Man, which, in turn, only exacerbates negative corporate performance. But far more alarming is the deep and irreparable damage that this truncated understanding of Man wreaks on his own identity and *Ego*. For example, a purely behavioral theory and understanding of Man based on 'measurable' empirical data ostracizes any of Man's specificity not falling within established 'norms' or 'averages'.

Conversely, psychoanalytical, ethno-psychoanalytical coupled with anthropological approaches have shown that any attempt to repress, as opposed to express/sublimate one or more of the aspects of the *Self* (be it the collective, the individual, the instrumental, the critical rational, the emotional, the spiritual, the sexual, etc.) leads to schizoid or near-schizoid identities, emotions, values, 'rationalities' and behaviors (LAPLANTINE, 1973; BESANÇON, 1974; DEVEUREUX, 1973; ERIKSON, 1993), which attempt to compensate these same initial repressions via obsessive addictions to surrogate substitutes. These surrogate substitutes, in turn, often have deleterious effects on both the subjects themselves as well as the environments in which they (and we!) subsist in. Two of the major categories of such substitutes includes the limitless accumulation of wealth, and its close corollary, the quest for all-mightiness and immortality. Hence, we now have the 'second leg' of the dialectical process we alluded to earlier on: a truncated understanding of the self (or Man) leads to the quest for maximization of profits.

This modest examination on our part of both halves of the full dialectical process alluded to at the beginning of this section allows us to confirm a conservation of the status quo with respect to all that is related to power, managing of profits, division of labor, incessant operations of re-engineering, and fusion-acquisitions, whereby we can only conclude that all these management methods use humanism as a façade, humanism to deceive and carrying the seeds of its own destruction. To borrow the words of V. De Gaulejac's at the World Congress of Sociology, Madrid, July 9-14, 1990: "Today it is as if the new management were trying to transform the psychic drives feeding the individual's narcissism into added work and an additional source of relative surplus value."

The Need for a Radical Humanism

How does one break this endless impasse? We believe the answer lies in 1) having managerial studies develop and adopt an understanding and theory of Man that incorporates, as Rosaldo (1989) puts it, "the whole self", and embraces what we term as "radical humanism"; and 2) adopting a concept of corporate governance that becomes a natural extension as well as a natural support for such an understanding of Man (as opposed to the current situation of having Man serve and support the corporate governance as we currently know it).

Various fundamental and radical shifts in management practices and their concepts of both work and the worker are part of the proposed agenda. For example, management, rather than relying on organizational behavior methods that try to find ways on 'how to' motivate employees, must try to understand *why* employees are not motivated. This means looking at things from the point of view of the employee. As such, three corollaries can be stated:

1) The outdated nature of orthodox management based on unilateral privileges, exclusive "rights" and authority (often concealed behind manipulations of perceptions, subjectivity and symbols);

2) The outdated nature of “organizations” and “strategies” imposed by top management (often with outside “consultants”);

3) The outdated nature of various “scientific” methods that have successively invaded management (scientific organization of work, behavioral science, science of decision-making, science of information management, econometric models, etc.)

Our proposed concept of radical humanism involves selections from each of today’s major schools of thought that are convergent, complementary, and enlightening in the difficult and complex quest for a more human conception of “man”. The humanism that we allude to involves a radical in-depth re-introduction of the source and root of things related to historicism, diachrony, the social and economic structures at stake, and the sharing of power. And above all, the “nature” of what it means to be human:

- To consider the human being as destined (owing his unique status to his “self-consciousness”) to the pursuit of what will liberate him, emancipate him (from all forms of obstacles that we will analyze a bit further in this text), and lead him towards fulfilling his inherent vocation: that is, a being endowed with consciousness, self-judgment and free will who aspires to his own elevation. Thus, each person in humanity is a “generic being” who creates his own milieu, society and, therefore, himself.

From principal authors such as Aristotle, Marx, Fromm, Sartre, Freud and Evans-Pritchard, we also retain the following essential points:

1) The humanism that is proposed here is one that is completely centered on Man; and the significance to Man in regards to whichever activity is undertaken. The definition of humanism put forward by Erich Fromm (1961: 147) best summarizes this:

[Humanism is] a system centered on Man, his integrity, his development, his dignity, his liberty. [It is based] on the principle that Man is not a means to reach this or that end but that he is himself the bearer of his own end. It is not just based on his capacity for individual action, but also on his capacity for participation in history, and on the fact that each man bears within himself humanity as a whole.

2) A long tradition, from Aristotle (“man is a political animal”), to Weber (the central idea of the passage from an organic society to a mechanical society; or from the *oikos* to bureaucracy) by way of Marx (on the importance of social relations, and class phenomena), makes of man a being fundamentally defined by community, society, and his relations with others. Relations in and through which he lives, constructs and makes sense of himself (a sensemaking which becomes the basis and condition for his self-realization). It is neither disparities nor similarities between Aristotle, Marx or Weber as theorists that is of interest here, but rather, their shared understanding of Man’s nature as being undeniably social and community-oriented.

3) Given that the main idea of this reflection has to do with men and women in the workplace, it would seem that the author that is most pertinent on this issue is Karl Marx. But it is not such an easy matter to position oneself simply and clearly amongst the infinite positions Marxist schools have previously established or retained with respect to humanism. For this reason, certain key theoretical clarifications are in order. Relying on the work of a few experts in the subject (Kolakowski, Mandel, Calvez, Lucaks, Gramsci, Fromm, and Heilbroner), and without minimizing the nuances or discrepancies between some of these authors, one must *consider the work of Marx as a whole*, including the works said to be “mature” and structural (*Capital*) while finding frameworks and roots from his more “youthful” anthropological and philosophical works (the *Manuscripts* of 1844). As Kolakowski (1987: 377) explains, “although Marx’s terminology and mode of expression changed between 1844 and 1867...the driving unity of Marx’s thought can be found in the unrelenting search for the conditions dehumanizing man and for possible ways of restoring more human conditions”.

Thus, a central element in radical humanism is the question of alienation and of alienated work. We will return to these terms shortly but, for the moment, let us remember that people are most in danger of "ruin" and "losing themselves" (alienation), through the very act by which they can express their generic essence: the act of work. In other words, *the heart of the process of dehumanizing Man is alienation through work*. Hence, the reason for our first and foremost interest in what takes place, concretely, in the work process. In this process, the worker alienates himself by selling his capacity for work (and not his actual work, which is the expression of his creative act) while contributing to the development and consolidation of power (merchandise, profits, capital) which are exterior, foreign, and, in the final analysis, hostile to him, and thus even more "dehumanizing". The finality pursued is no longer the person and what is most human in him or her (e.g. satisfaction of needs through utility value) but the "unlimited growth of exchange value" (KOLOKOWSKI, 1987: 280). It is within a "radical humanist" framework that this alienation must be addressed if we are to accede to a managerial conception that integrates a "re-humanized human" as well as an "ethic" in the communitarian-humanist-Aristotelian sense.

4) Finally, we also must consider a humanistic position which tends towards a theory of the subject. In this sense, Marx can be supplemented by Sartre (1948, 1966 and 1976) and by Marcuse (1964), whereby the notion of "bad faith" joins that of "false consciousness" and "alienation" and where the human being is, by definition and necessity, a being whose destiny is meaning, intentions, and projects – thus, by nature, a person is involved in his or her being and in his or her becoming (to which alienation is an obstacle): a subject whose being is meaning and which has need of meaning. Along these lines, we can also refer to a certain social anthropology, represented by people such as Evans-Pritchard (1950) who states that human beings are definitely not like mechanisms, machinery or organisms: they are ruled by reasons, feelings and choices and *not* to "causes" or stimuli's (unless, to repeat, they are forced, other-determined, or alienated, in which case there is no longer a subject but something objectified and reified so as to become an instrument).

These are the main points of the humanistic position and concepts proposed in this paper. We also propose other works in the field of management that can genuinely contribute towards a more humanistic path in one or more of the ways just discussed, by directly attacking specific problems seen as flagrant disregards for the human aspects within the corporate organization. A non-exhaustive thematic listing of such works includes:

1) A re-questioning of the established order, unilateral power, corporate monopoly of profits, instrumental conceptions of the employee...as so many obstacles to collective creativity, adaptation and innovation (ATLAN, 1972 and 1985; CLEGG, 1975; VARELLA, 1980; WEITZMAN, 1984; MORGAN, 1986; VILLETTE, 1988; ORGOGOZO et SERIEYX, 1989; DEPREE, 1989).

2) A call towards the struggle against the fragmentation of work, against the destruction of its meaning, against the overspecialization and sub-division of tasks, against the disregard for Man's need for symbols...all reasons why work is becoming more and more alienating, de-motivating, uninteresting and source of suffering and tensions (TERKEL, 1972; BEYNON, 1973; BRAVERMAN, 1974; PFEFFER, 1979; DEJOURS, 1980, 1990 and 1998; CHANLAT and DUFOUR, 1985; SIEVERS, 1986a and 1986b; TURNER, 1990).

3) A reflection on the of the relation between language and work, on Man as a being of speech, the place and the role of dialogue, the possibility for self-expression, and on the pathologies of communication caused by violence to Homo loquens in the industrial world (CHANLAT A. and BÉDARD, 1990; CROZIER, 1989; GIRIN, 1982 and 1990; CLEGG, 1990).

- 4)** A call to recognize that managerial conceptions and practices foil any real possibility of giving Man the status of subject, that of an actor personally and ontologically justified to identify with and question the firm, to re-appropriate the acts he or she is assigned to do, and to experience them as an expression of his or her own desires (DEJOURS, 1980 and 1990; CHANLAT and DUFOUR, 1985; SIEVERS, 1986a and 1986b; SAINSAULIEU, 1983 and 1987; PAGÈS et al., 1984; CROZIER, 1989).
- 5)** A reconsideration of the relationship to time in the industrial workplace, and the denunciation of the sufferings and violence (physical and symbolical) inflicted on workers via the imposition of a dehumanized pace and fragmentation of time (HASSARD, 1988 and 1990; KAMDEN, 1990; GASPARINI, 1990).
- 6)** The denunciation of certain absences in ethics and honesty towards employees, of the damage done by monopolizing the fruits of worker commitment and productivity, and of the selfish and short term behavior of management... all of which prevents employees from living and being treated as human beings (ETZIONI, 1989; OLIVE, 1987; PACKARD, 1989; SOLOMON and HANSEN, 1985).
- 7)** The re-questioning of narrow utilitarianism and economism in which prevailing managerial theories and practices are imbued, and which turn managers and corporations into cynical predators having little consideration or respect for nature, personal integrity and dignity - whether of employees, consumers, or citizens having the right to a certain quality of life (CAILLÉ, 1989; GALBRAITH, 1987; ETZIONI, 1989; MONTHOUX, 1989; PFEFFER, 1979; RIFKIN, 1980; MITROFF and PAUCHANT, 1990; CHOSSUDOVSKY, 2003).
- 8)** And finally, the growing and persistent call for a kind of epistemological and methodological radicalism highlighting the complex, systemic and multi-dimensional nature of everything which has to do with individual human beings as well as groups, including and above all, people at work and in organizational life. Contributions along these lines include multi- and inter-disciplinary approaches, dialectical and circular causality, the self-organization and general theory of systems (VARELA, 1980; MORGAN, 1986; CHANLAT and DUFOUR, 1985; CHANLAT J.F. et al, 1990; VINCENT, 1990; ATLAN, 1985; MORIN, 1993; MATURANA, 1992).

These are the themes which can be considered as being of a more radical and humanistic tendency. Finally, there is a study of the human being, no longer through the sole eyes of profitability and Man as simply an instrumental being, but across the lenses of more fundamental disciplines and human sciences (anthropology, linguistics, psychoanalysis, psychology, sociology, biology, etc.) which treat Man not as a de-incarnated, and isolated object of production, but as Man for what he is, the entire him – Man as a being of speech, of symbols, of senses, of society, of free-will; and not just simply as a resource at the service of the company and of maximization of exchange value. This means the embracing and synthesis of Man's inherent ambiguities and complexities; and not just limiting ourselves to the illusion of his so-called 'rational side' (for example, Levy (1997) highlights the synthetic aspects of the human being's brain, across its various interconnections between the reptilian, limbic and neo-cortex sections, whereby the human being cannot be viewed as being neither completely logical nor completely irrational; or Damasio's (1995) past work and studies on the neurobiology of decision-making showing that the repression of emotions and intuition significantly decreases one's capacity for effective decision-making). Otherwise we risk falling into schizoid traps that not only truncate Man's inherent richness, but often attempts to pass various ideologies and passions of the dominant few as being completely 'rational and reasonable'.

This movement towards a more humanistic path within the firm is neither a romantic ideal, free act of philanthropy, or utopia, *but a necessity* – even for those who simply think in terms of productivity. It is primordial to remember that it should be absolutely out of the question to conduct research in 'productivism' for the sake

of 'productivism'. Yet in simply trying to catch the advocates of maximized 'productivism' within "their own trap": it is in their own interest, as selfish as they may be, to be more humanistic.

Towards a Beneficial Dialectic: the elimination of alienating work and the adoption of a humanistic governance

To attain the conditions that will give workers reason to be motivated in what they do, several radical changes must be implemented. But it is important to first arm ourselves with a conceptual framework that allow us to ask the right questions. And it is along this reasoning that we ask ourselves how can management thinking pretend towards radical change when it does not re-question its secular presuppositions and premises. When we look at reflections on Man within other disciplines centered towards the understanding of Man (e.g. Evans-Pritchard in anthropology), it is easy to understand why management theories on motivation fail abysmally to motivate people within the workplace: they merely consider humans beings as organisms ("termites", according to HERZBERG, 1980) which obey to "causes", instinctive needs and external stimuli's. We must replace our behavioral sciences by a theory of Man that allows the human subject *to find both by himself and for himself the reasons to make it his own what we ourselves would like him to do, all the while being a full partner to what is projected, planned and intended.*

Marx's theory of alienating work is a solid framework from which to start our reflections on the synergies required for real productivity within traditional industry. Restoring a sense and meaning to work, as well as permitting the appropriation-commitment sought by 'corporate culture' and 'total quality' depends on nothing less than putting an end to the following four estrangements of alienated work:

- 1)** Estrangement from the product (whereby the employee has no control at what, how or for who the final product is being produced; as well as no control on its destination, nor the profits derived from it).
- 2)** Estrangement from the act of work – a break perfected by Taylorism – whereby employees are reduced to muscular or mental stores of energy who accomplish tasks that are never their own but always dictated and imposed by bosses, assembly-line speed machines, corporate goals and strategies.
- 3)** Estrangement from nature – whereby working hours make time an artificial, saleable product as opposed to the natural time of the seasons, the cycle of day and night, and the biological clock; while substituting the satisfaction of natural needs with those dictated by money and capital.
- 4)** Estrangement from the human element – whereby workers become estranged from their own generic essence, their capacity to create their own surrounding and themselves, as well as their own free-will; while being put in conflict with others who use and exploit them. Furthermore, the "exploiters" themselves are in turn just as alienated by their subjugation to the laws of maximum fructification of capital.

There is not only a need to recognize that the meaning or the sense of work is the foundation for worker motivation and interest, but also a need to expand our reflection on all industrial, flexible and virtual work that has essentially lost all meaning. By wanting to regain this sense of meaning is to also recognize, after one century of management that aimed towards negating or masking it, that work alienation is the heart of the problem of commitment and motivation. Within this perspective, there is only one possible solution for companies to surmount such problems: workers must experience their relation to their work as a real, rather than a formal, appropriation. What they do in the firm must be experienced as a

real extension of themselves, as an occasion for self-expression as well as for the pursuit and satisfaction of personal desires and interests that converge with those of the firm. Thus, the firm would become a place for partnership and dialogue, and a workplace no longer run by the unilateral usage of force. The question must no longer be how to motivate the worker but rather why is he so little motivated within the current financial and socio-economic context.

To question oneself on this aspect is, as Sievers (1986a, 1986b and 1996) pointed out, to question the significance of work, the concept and organization of work, which in turn brings up the question of the status of the human being and his relationship with others. It is not hard to imagine that the functionalist-pragmatist conceptual framework of traditional management is rather ineffective in the face of such questions, which has always rejected such questions as being outside of its field of preoccupations and that they relate, at best, to philosophy, if not towards a more or less subversive, or leftist sociology.

The answer to the question of lack of motivation, interest and implication of the employee within a traditional management also has to do with a reintegration of diachrony for which the anti-historicism of managerial functionalism has completely evacuated. One must remember that the modern, industrial and post-modern company has been constituted – and continues to be constituted – most often on the basis of violence and suffering (in both the physical and symbolic sense). It has taken long struggles and terrible confrontations, whereby laws were attained one by one to arrive at work conditions that are less unjust and more humane. We, via a return in history, can come to realize the pertinence of the element which Marx has always put in the heart of its analysis of work relationships: the contradiction, which is very much “alive and well”, between the interests of the owners and managers on the one hand, and those of the workers and nature on the other. For the former, it is always a matter of making the largest possible profits – which is synonymous with, amongst other things, of having the lowest possible salaries and a continuously unchecked pollution – ; while for the latter, it has been an incessant battle and struggle in reaction to the former, so as to try and attain a better quality of life, better working conditions and more decent salaries (regularly gouged away shortly after having been attained).

In order to truly attain a company that is a place of consensus, partnership, and trusting relationships, one must also adopt one of the key and dear principles of Marx: *the abolition of wages* (salaried remunerations within the definition of it being a quantifiable remuneration completely dissociated from the true work value which the worker contributes). Highly preferent economies such as those of Japan, Germany and Sweden already practice several different forms of more equitable sharing and re-distribution of the produced riches. Many such as Weitzman (1984), Archier and Serieyx (1987), Orgogozo and Serieyx (1989), De Pree (1989), Crozier (1989), etc. speak of sharing – specifically profit sharing – as well as dialogue, listening, and community. They, whether explicitly or not, are advocating for the abolition of wages, especially when they propose to inspire themselves from the forms of remunerations found within these countries. For example, Peters (1987), calls for profit sharing as part of remuneration; Perrow (1979) argues that control and coercion will be the only ways (more costly than profitable) to obtain maximum productivity as long as the salary system is the rule; while Etchegoyen (1990), sees salaries turning employees into mercenaries working in soulless enterprises (the “mercenary” element is seen here as an obstacle to individual commitment – a person no longer satisfied with doing what is asked, who has neither interest nor “soul”). Even if sharing of profits is not sufficient in itself to entrain a profound change in the nature of power and influence, of de-alienation, and even less so with the end of exploitation, it is certainly a significant step towards more equity (it is ironic that many corporate managers adhere to current ‘theories’ which see salary increases as being mostly ineffective for worker motivation, yet rarely hesitate to award themselves astronomical salary increases, bonuses and stock options in recognition for their individual ‘performances’). This, along with a true and concrete participation in management, and the orientations of the company, as well as a

larger degree of autonomy and multi-valency with respect to the worker, coupled with a basic level of security and quality of life are the necessary conditions towards addressing stagnations in productivity (productivity in the original sense of the word, that is producing to satisfy "reasonable" needs, by reducing the amount of degradation and exploitation of nature and humans).

Hence, workers must no longer be viewed as a cost to reduce, but rather as an ally to convince. Conversely, managers must stop seeing themselves as the only people fit to think, decide, and manage. And while the pursuit of profit is a legitimate objective, it must no longer be maximalist or short term in nature, and neither must it be managed in a selfish manner for the sole advantage of shareholders and managers, but rather, must be considered as the fruits of labor for all, whereby the rates, destination and usage must be decided in common between the worker and managers, as well as between the business environment, the State and society.

The price for this is the renunciation of numerous secular privileges amongst management and shareholders so as to be able to move towards a form of organization whereby flexibility, creativity and quality can occur and evolve from the one and only source that must be respected at all times: the human person. This is a necessary condition to address in order to improve the management capability of organizations in the face of growing complexities. It is also a difficult path, strewn with numerous forms of resistance, often deeply rooted in the unconscious, like those psychic prisons mentioned by Morgan (1986), or the delusions of immortality and grandeur referred to by Sievers (1986b and 1996) and Kets de Vries and Miller (1984). Yet the adoption of a radical humanism and conception of corporate governance which becomes a natural extension as well as a natural support for the profound nature of Man not only breaks the vicious circle or dialectic we described much earlier, but introduces a virtuous one: the adoption of a fuller understanding and respect for Man leads to the production and subsequent sharing of profits, which in turn reinforces the respect and understanding of Man, leading to further profits (and its subsequent sharing), and so on. The exact starting or end point of this process is, as in all dialectical processes, non-existent, but who's circularity implies long term viability for Man, Nature, and for the more financially minded amongst us, the corporation.

Key Lessons

Numerous streams of management literature placing a central importance of the human person or personal attitudes and behavior at work fail to reflect any significant attempt at creating business frameworks or management practices that embrace man's emancipation as a finality unto itself, or "man as being the measure of all things". Within the endless impasse that is posed by a endless pursuit of maximization of profits, that leads towards a truncated understanding of man, which in turn leads towards the further quest for maximization of profits, closing a cycle in which many interlinked negative paradoxes and contradictions can be identified, including: 1) management inhibiting creative action on the part of the worker via his reification, while at the same time trying to motivate him, produces the psychologically destructive "double-bind"; and 2) the downward economic spiral which consists of the quest for maximization of profits leads towards the adherence of a truncated understanding of Man, which in turn leads to lower long-term profitability, to which management, in their continued quest for maximization of profits try to address via the 'development' and use of further truncated notions of Man, which, in turn, only exacerbates negative corporate performance. Breaking this negative dialectic involves: 1) having managerial studies develop and adopt an understanding and theory of Man that embraces a "radical humanism"; and 2) adopting a conception of corporate governance that aims to serve Mankind in lieu of exploiting it. The radical humanism referred to in this paper considers the human being, no longer through the sole eyes of profitability and Man as an instrumental

being, but across the lenses of more fundamental disciplines and human sciences (anthropology, psychoanalysis, biology, linguistics, etc.) which treat Man for what he is, the entire him – Man considered as a being of speech, of symbols, of senses, of society, of free-will, and not just simply as a resource at the service of the company and of maximization of profit. As such, *the heart of the process of dehumanizing mankind within our current socio-economies and corporations is alienation through work*. The theory of alienating work is a solid management framework from which start in order to restore a sense and meaning to work, as well as to permit an appropriation-commitment on the part of individual workers, by eliminating the sources of estrangement related to the product, the act of work, nature, and last but not least, the human element (including the Self and as well as the Other). In order to truly attain a company that is a place of consensus, partnership, and trusting relationships, one must also *abolish wages, and replace it with the sharing of profits*. Embracing a radical humanism, as well as a governance that aims to serve Man rather than exploit him introduces a virtuous dialectic: the adoption of a fuller understanding and respect for Man and Nature leads to the production and subsequent sharing of profits, which in turn reinforces the respect and understanding of Man and Nature, leading to further profits (and subsequent sharing), and so on.

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