A Brief, 3,000-Year History of the Future of Organization

As the proverbial journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step, so too does the thesis journey begin with a single thought or realization. It seems fitting, therefore, to acknowledge the origin of this thesis's seminal thought by recalling the famous opening of Marshall McLuhan's most influential work, *Understanding Media*:

> In a culture like ours, long accustomed to splitting and dividing all things as a means of control, it is sometimes a bit of a shock to be reminded that, in operational and practical fact, the medium is the message. That is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium – that is, of any extension of ourselves – result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology. … Many people would be disposed to say that it was not the machine, but what one did with the machine, that was its meaning or message. In terms of the ways in which the machine altered our relations to one another and to ourselves, it mattered not in the least whether it turned out cornflakes or Cadillacs. The restructuring of human work and association was shaped by the technique of fragmentation that is the essence of machine technology. The essence of automation technology is the opposite. It is integral and decentralist in depth, just as the machine was fragmentary, centralist, and superficial in its patterning of human relationships. (McLuhan, 1964, p. 7-8)

In essence, the inspiration for this thesis, and the specific objective of this chapter – namely, reconsidering the nature of *organization*, and tracing its history through the cultural epochs defined by successive transformations in human communication – is complete in that one, tightly-woven paragraph. Each successive period, from the primary orality of Ancient Greece through to contemporary, multi-way, instantaneous, electronic interchange can be characterized according to the ways in which the prevailing form of human interaction, "altered our relations to one another and to ourselves" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 8). In particular, the unique forms and

structures of interpersonal association – *organization* – are characteristic of the age in question. Those forms and structures shed light on the complex interconnections among the societal institutions that govern, educate, facilitate commerce, and foster artistic reflection on the culture of the day.

Thus arises the central question of this chapter: How has *organization* as a distinct entity[1] both shaped, and been shaped by, the dominant technology of human interaction throughout the history of Western civilization? Further, is there an overarching understanding of organization that can account for its dominant form in each of the four major cultural epochs identified by the Toronto School of Communication (de Kerckhove, 1989; Blondheim & Watson, 2007): primary orality of Ancient Greece; phonetic literacy leading to the manuscript culture of the Middle Ages; the "Gutenberg Galaxy" of mechanization peaking at the Industrial Age; and today's era of instantaneous, multi-way, "electric communication," as McLuhan called it?

The Toronto School represents a line of reasoning that amalgamates the thinking of the classicist, Eric Havelock, political economist, Harold Adam Innis, and

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[1] I suggest that it might be useful to consider "organization" not in the generic sense of a collective undertaking or enterprise, but as an autonomous entity, agent, or actor. This conception is consistent, for example, with business corporations being considered as legal "persons" whose members must owe their first duty of care to the corporation. In many cases, organization members are asked to sublimate, compromise, or even sacrifice, their personal values in favour of organizational objectives (e.g., Fayol, 1949; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear, 1996). In this sense, *organization* (denoted by the use of italicized text) can be thought of as having behaviours, characteristics, and externally perceived intent distinct from those of some, or many, of its members. In a later chapter, I will discuss the idea of how individual roles, and hence, behaviours, are often situationally imposed; again, this can be perceived as *organization* imposing its (pseudo-)independent will, so to speak, on the individuals in question. Organization (without italicization) denotes a generic or, in some cases, specific grouping of people.

McLuhan. Blondheim and Watson (2007), and other authors in their edited volume, focus particularly on Innis's works and those of media observer and philosopher, Marshall McLuhan. Innis and McLuhan demonstrate how it is the nature of technological media – from the spoken, written, and printed word, through various modes of transportation and trade, to contemporary information and communication technologies – to create change in both human cognitive processes and social institutions. Some authors (de Kerckhove, 1989; Gibson, 2000) include Havelock as a key member of the Toronto School for his contribution on the societal effects of phonetic literacy that Plato describes (Havelock, 1963). Using somewhat more contemporary language, I frame the primary thesis of the Toronto School as follows:

> The Toronto School holds that the dominant mode of communication employed in a society or culture creates an environment from which the defining structures of that society emerge. These structures might include those institutions that define the way commerce and economics are conducted, the ways in which the people govern themselves, the forms and expressions of religion, how the populace is educated, and … what is accepted as knowledge. (Federman, 2007)

If the Toronto School's distinctive interpretation of history is indeed valid, then the ways in which people come together, and have come together for collective endeavours throughout the ages, should closely correspond to the nature and effects of the dominant mode of communications at the time. For example, one would expect that in pre-literate, Ancient Greece the democratic organization that saw its zenith in Periclean Athens would emerge from an environment shaped by direct, participatory and collective authority, corresponding to the lack of an authoritative "author," or controlling central figure in the narrative culture of primary orality. Similarly, cultures in the early stages of phonetic literacy would likely develop organizational structures

that reflect separation, decomposition, and central authority – all characteristic effects of literacy. One would therefore expect to see development of delegation via proxy authority, emerging over time into a large central bureaucracy among the literate, with those who are illiterate subject to the control of those who held the power of the written word. Subsequently, a mechanized-print culture would be expected to develop organization structures that fragment integral processes into various stations or offices, linked functionally with an externally imposed, objective purpose. Finally, in an age of massive, instantaneous, multi-way electronic communications, more participatory and collaborative organizational forms might emerge that hearken back to aspects of Athenian democracy. These new forms would challenge the underlying assumptions of industrial efficiency that are predicated on functional decomposition and sequential assembly—two concepts that could equally characterize print literacy and modern organization theory.

But, we are getting ahead of ourselves. Let us first go back in time approximately 3,000 years to revisit an ancient culture that, as will later be shown, might well be considered as remarkably contemporary in nature.

Primary Orality and the Organization of Athenian Democracy

It is close to the turn of the fifth century, before the Common Era. Cleisthenes, with the support of his politically powerful clan, has just successfully overthrown the tyrant Hippias, and established a new system of governance for Ancient Athens. This system was specifically designed to minimize the possibility of one individual accumulating sufficient power and influence to enable a return to tyrannical rule

(Whitehead, 1986). Rather than the traditional tribes based on strong family ties, Cleisthenes established fundamental sovereign power in the local village or town, called a *deme*. Ten new tribes, or *phylei*, were defined, each organizing between six and twenty-one demes, creating phylei of approximately similar population. To minimize intertribal inequity with respect to resources or access to transportation, each phyle included demes from city, coastal, and inland agricultural regions.

Cleisthenes also instituted citizenship reforms that enabled more direct participation in governance. Although far from modern democratic conceptions of universal suffrage, equality, and fundamental freedoms, Cleisthenes's reforms nonetheless enabled all freeborn males over the age of 18 to automatically become citizens, so long as they had fathers who were citizens, irrespective of property ownership or lack of noble lineage. A general assembly – *ecclesia* – comprising nearly 30,000 eligible citizens (of which approximately 8,000 were required for a quorum) governed the approximately quarter-million people of Athens. The agenda and day-to-day governance responsibilities of the ecclesia fell to the *boule*, a steering committee of sorts comprised of 500 members, selected by lot from among the phylei. Each phyle appointed 50 men to serve on the boule for one year; no person could serve as a member of the boule more than twice in his lifetime, thereby limiting the potential for an individual to accumulate excessive administrative power (Cummings & Brocklesby, 1993; Ober, 2006; Whitehead, 1986).

Individual responsibilities rotated among the people who were amateurs at their respective jobs. Ober (2006) observes that, "in the Athenian model there was very little in the way of executive-level command and control, and nothing like a

formal hierarchy" (n.p.). Rather, political power was collectively shared among non-professional citizens who were convened in physical proximity in the ecclesia. Their collective powers of reward and sanction could only be enacted via an annual "performance review" of responsible individuals' respective contributions to, or potential for undermining, the political and cultural norms of society. Any individual who was deemed to have accumulated too much personal power could be ostracized – in effect, banished for ten years by vote of the ecclesia general assembly, although this was considered to be an extreme action, rarely undertaken.

Since boule councillors sat for only a year, there was little opportunity for a self-serving institutional culture to develop. Further, because of the high degree of participation, there was tremendous transparency into the boule's operation. The general population developed a common knowledge, and sense of the intricacies and complexities of decision-making. Ober, for example, focuses extensively on the concentration of knowledge among a relatively local populace as the key reason for the structural success of Athenian democracy:

> Both specialized technical knowledge and generalized tacit knowledge necessary to making good decisions are increasingly accessible to the deliberations of the group as a whole. As councillors learn more about who was good at what and who to go to for what sort of information, they become more discriminating about their recommendations and as a result the whole council is increasingly capable of doing its difficult job well. Moreover, because each councillor has a local network of contacts outside the council, each councillor is a bridge between the council and some subset of the larger population. … Athens as an organization comes to know a lot of what the Athenians know as individuals. (Ober, 2006, n.p.)

Concentration of power or influence was explicitly discouraged by design, not to mention the threat of ostracism. More than knowledge, however, the strong sense

of identity, and the economic and affective ties with both the greater organization of Athens and the councillors' local deme or home village, coalesced to ensure optimal decision-making. Individuals in positions of influence maintained their strong connections to their respective social contexts – their demes and resource-balanced phylei – thereby grounding their decision-making equally in both local and more widely applicable considerations.

From an organizational systems perspective, Cummings and Brocklesby (1993) summarize some of the key characteristics of Athenian democracy during what is often called the Golden Age. First, the governance structure was recursive, meaning that the smaller organization of the deme appears similar in structure to the phyle (tribe) which itself appears similar to the organization of the *polis* (city-state) as a whole. Next, the overall organization was organic, emerging from the bottom-up, as opposed to being an externally conceived structure being imposed on the social environment. Manville and Ober describe it as a "system [that] was not imposed on the Athenian people, but rather it grew organically from their own needs, beliefs, and actions – it was as much a spirit of governance as a set of rules or laws. … [T]he system was holistic – it was successful because it informed all aspects of the society" (Manville & Ober, 2003, p. 50).

Perhaps more important, individual jobs were rotated among the boule members so that there was both a continual growth in overall opportunity, expertise and experience, as well as a safeguard against concentrating knowledge (and therefore power and influence) in any one individual or small group. The organization design specifically mitigated against the formation of bureaucracy. Accordingly,

accountability was to the whole of the citizenry, administered via either the general

assembly or law courts. The latter were comprised of limited-term, appointed citizens,

"many of whom, due to the 'multiskilled' nature of the system, had been in positions

similar to those being evaluated. This may have alleviated the animosity often

directed toward specialist internal auditing units within many, particularly modern,

organizations" (Cummings & Brocklesby, 1993, p. 348).

Decision-making processes in ancient Athenian democracy were both

centralized and decentralized according to what made sense in the circumstance, as

opposed to having been procedurally imposed. Whitehead (1986) notes that the site

of pertinent knowledge determined the "common sense" site of decision-making

rather than any constitutionally or procedurally predetermined office. Territorial

behaviour that is often associated with bureaucratic control appears to have been

absent from this system, likely because the transient nature of any individual's

responsibility decouples their personal status and identity from the responsibility (i.e.,

bureaucratic office) they held at any given time. Simply put, no individual had a

vested interest in accumulating power via control, since the system was specifically

designed to protect against such a concentration of power. Rather, influence could

only be generated through garnering public support.

In short, the organization of Athenian democracy reflected its culture.

Cummings and Brocklesby (1993) describe that culture as "unified and cohesive at all

levels of the system" (p. 349). Individual subcultures among the phylei and demes

were respected: Local, traditional beliefs were maintained so as not to be "abrasive"

towards the organization as a whole. It was not that Ancient Athens was particularly

homogeneous. In fact, Ober describes that "Athens was a vast city, a Mediterranean crossroads with an ethnically diverse population, including naturalized citizens with prominent political careers" (2000, n.p.). Nonetheless, Cummings and Brocklesby report that,

> the citizenry shared a common bond and identity when viewing themselves in relation to outsiders. They were a breed apart. This 'identity' was often rallied around in times of adversity and celebration. A perception of shared adversity, and a common cause, helped enhance unity among the citizenry. (Cummings & Brocklesby, 1993, p. 350).

Ancient Greece in the fifth century B.C. was also a primary-oral society, that is, phonetic literacy had not yet been introduced. Understanding the characteristics of primary orality offers an insight into the underlying cultural context of the Athenian organizational structure.

Walter Ong (1982) describes the primary attributes of orality. Orality is evanescent, existing only at, and for, the time that it is created. Its structure is formulaic, additive and recursive, rather than hierarchically organized with complex subordinate constructions. Orality exists "close to the human lifeworld" (p. 42). In other words, events and circumstances expressed in a primary-oral society are concrete and subjective, rather than abstract and expressed from an objective standpoint. Ong further characterizes oral engagement as "agonistically toned" (p. 43), leading to active, direct engagement, argument, and verbal combat. This is distinct from written literacy whose tone is more detached, even when arguing or refuting another author's writing. With respect to the nature of learning, orality is "empathetic and participatory rather than objectively distanced" (p. 45). Oral learning is based in communal, actively participatory experience in which the participants help to create

the experiential learning environment, rather than being at a cognitive, temporal, and physical distance from the source of knowledge. Finally, orality creates community and is necessarily homeostatic, requiring constant repetition and continual engagement for its continuity and survival.

How the organizational structure of the Athenian polis emerged from the effects of primary orality can be easily seen. The three principal administrative bodies – the ecclesia, the boule, and the law courts – were, in a sense, evanescent: constituted into existence at, and for, the time that they sat, namely, four times a month for the larger body, annually for the boule, and as needed for jurors. Rather than being fixed, the governance structures were homeostatic, requiring a continual flow of participants in order to sustain. Whitehead (1986) notes that the polis, phylei, and their component elements replicated the natural structure of the local deme—what could be considered a higher level of organization replicated the lowest level.

Decision-making among the members of the ecclesia was, more often than not, a noisy affair, with robust confrontations among diverse opinions being relatively common. Although those with specific knowledge offered their expertise on matters ranging from military to religious, that expert advice did not always carry the day. Ober (2006), for example, recounts Herodotus's story of Themistocles proposing an expansion of the Athenian navy in the 5th century B.C. When Persia invaded Greece, the citizens were forced to make a decision: whether to flee their homes, attempt to defend their city-state on land, the result of which would likely end in defeat, or meet the invaders in battle at sea. Elders sought the advice of the Oracle at Delphi who, in

characteristic fashion, provided an ambiguous, but apparently pessimistic, response. Ober notes:

> In a hierarchical political order, there would never have been a public debate on the oracles. In a traditional republican Greek regime (e.g. Sparta), in which such issues were discussed in public, the authoritative opinion of elders, backed by religious experts, would prevail. But in democratic Athens the premise was that all citizens had the right to publicly express their views and that each knew something that might be important in deciding on the best policy. No plan could be adopted if it contradicted the knowledge and will of the majority of the Assembly. (Ober, 2006, n.p.)

Among these citizens were those who were intimately involved in provisioning the naval fleet, and in its operation, who could offer particular knowledge that recontextualized the Oracle's prediction. The eventual plan – to engage the Persians in a naval battle – "rested on the conviction that even the poorest Athenians, the ones who would be rowing the warships, knew something important about how to defend the community" (Ober, 2006, n.p.). The ecclesia, that forum and process of participatory engagement, settled on the correct tactical decision in a manner consistent with being a primary-oral society. Hierarchical religious authority can be legitimately challenged by those who are physically present and directly engaged, based on how each individual constructs meaning from both personal and shared contexts—a communal, actively participatory experience.

The political decline of post-Periclean Athens is largely attributed to broadening the scope of Athenian political influence to incorporate poleis that did not share Athenian cultural grounds and traditions. More important, perhaps, was the fact that administration was being spread farther and wider over larger geographic areas, counter to the primary-oral tradition that grounded the Athenian system:

It was Alexander, and then the Romans, who would display more adequate procedures for the development and maintenance of large and diverse empires… Demagogy would have been disastrous for a system such as that of Athens, with its properties of individual participation in return for collective government. (Cummings & Brocklesby, 1993, p. 355)

The argument that Cummings and Brocklesby suggest to explain the decline of post-Periclean Athens, and the concomitant rise of Alexander and the Romans, exactly corresponds to that of the Toronto School. The environmental influences of phonetic literacy enable not only long-distance communication, but true delegation of authority by proxy and the creation of an efficient bureaucracy. McLuhan points out that,

an increase of power or speed in any kind of grouping of any components whatever is itself a disruption that causes a change of organization. … Such speed-up means much more control at much greater distances. Historically, it meant the formation of the Roman Empire and the disruption of the previous city-states of the Greek world. Before the use of papyrus and alphabet created the incentives for building fast, hard-surface roads, the walled town and the city-state were natural forms that could endure. (McLuhan, 1964, p. 90)

He goes on to observe that "the Greek city-states eventually disintegrated by the usual action of specialist trading and the separation of functions… The Roman cities began that way – as specialist operations of the central power. The Greek cities ended that way" (p. 97).

Phonetic Literacy, the Romans, and the Catholic Church

As I have described elsewhere,

…phonetic literacy is a very ingenious invention and proved to be an excellent choice for expanding empires, spheres of influence, and spans of control across vast geographies. The written word travels well, alleviating the necessity for transporting the person along with his ideas or pronouncements. Instrumentally, phonetic literacy takes what is

integral – the words coming from someone's mouth – and fractures them, separating sound from meaning. That sound is then encoded into what are otherwise semantically meaningless symbols that we call letters. Those letters are then built up hierarchically, from letters into words, from words into sentences, from sentences into paragraphs, and from paragraphs into scrolls and later, books. (Federman, 2007, p. 4)

More important, the phonetic alphabet, when introduced into an extant primary-oral culture, produces a cognitive shift in that culture concerning not only what is known, but what *can* be known. Instead of knowledge being a direct experience that passes from person to person, in a sense of a bard or story-singer[2] reliving the experience for his audience, literacy means that what is to be known is only a written representation of the actual, visceral experience that comprises knowledge. Literacy separates the knower from that which is to be known. It inserts a proxy representation – words – of the experiences to be known, as well as an author who asserts his *authority* with respect to that representation.

In my examinations of the ancient historical roots of knowledge construction (Federman 2005; 2007), I argue how separation of the source of knowledge from an ultimate knower and the insertion of proxy representation create the enabling conditions for action at a distance. The ability to literally effect remote control is significantly different from the circumstances of societal interactions within a primary-oral culture. In a primary-oral culture action is a result of direct, face-to-face contact with individual or societal authority. For a society in which phonetic literacy has become the dominant means of communication, written language conveys both the

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[2] The term "story-singer" is a reference to the discoveries of Milman Parry and Albert Lord in the primary-oral society of South Serbia in the early 20th century. See Adam Parry's (1971) *The Making of Homeric Verse*, and Albert Lord's (2000) *The Singer of Tales*.

proxy *representation* of an authoritative author's words, as well as the proxy *authority* of the author's station or office. The remotely located, literate recipient of an authored document not only ascribes attributes of reality to *words*—themselves proxy representations that are, in actuality, merely ink marks on linen or papyrus or sheepskin. A literate person is also able to call into existence the power and authority of an unseen, and often unknown, author by uttering the sounds represented by those ink marks. In a society in which relatively few people have command of the word, that literate person inevitably inherits aspects of that author's authority by the proxy vested in those written words. He[3] becomes, in effect, the personification of proxy authority. For example, in the case of the growing dominance of the Church in the early Middle Ages, he who had command of the Word became the proxy of God, himself[4]. It is perhaps not surprising that the New Testament Book of John begins with the invocation, "in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and *the word was God*" (John 1:1; emphasis added).

Hierarchical structure – the basic construct of phonetic literacy – and proxy delegation of authority are key characteristics of a bureaucratic organization. Hence, it is little surprise that, by the Middle Ages, the Church began to emerge as a remarkably functional administrative agency, taking on characteristics of coordination and control that, in retrospect, have become known as bureaucracy. As the Roman Empire declined, so too did secular administrative authority. The Church administration filled

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[3] Among European societies that had recently become literate in that historical epoch, literacy was exclusively a male prerogative.

[4] Arguably, this situation remains true in contemporary evangelical Christian communities. See Elisha (2008) and Lindsay (2008).

the power void, assuming many of the responsibilities of local municipal and regional administration (Miller, 1983).

Prior to the ninth century, local churches were privately founded and maintained by a local patron. Local clergy – bishops and priests – were primarily subjects of the patron, with little control exerted by Rome. In most instances, the lay patron appointed the local clergy who owed primary allegiance not only to the local patron, feudal lord, or king, but as well to the local diocese cathedral chapter of clerics that advised the bishop. As Maureen Miller describes,

> …all in all, the Church in the ninth century was local, decentralized and intertwined with the secular power. The bishop or abbot answered to his king more than the pope, many proprietary churches were just beginning to answer to the bishop rather than their lay proprietor and the pope can hardly be said to have exerted universal authority. This local and feudalized organization of the Church matched the local, feudalized, "tribalized" nature of society during the ninth century. (Miller, 1983, p. 280)

This description corresponds well to a society fractured by the effects of literacy: the literate elites creating an administrative bureaucracy that oversees the illiterate masses who still live within a "tribal" – that is, primary-oral – subculture. Still, the early Church did not yet possess a truly effective, universal means of wielding and enforcing its administrative control through the proxy exercise of power at a distance. It was only in the ninth century that the practice of excommunication began to establish what Miller (1993) terms a "corporate identity" for the Church, thereby enabling it to assert more centralized power through delegated control.

Although it had been previously available as a disciplinary measure, excommunication served only as an ecclesiastical sanction in the early Middle Ages.

By the ninth century, however, those who were excommunicated could hold neither military nor public office, and civil magistrates enforced excommunication dictates of the local bishop. Excommunication evolved into a powerful force for corporate discipline, not only removing an individual from participation in the spiritual realm, but from the realm of civic engagement, as well.

In practical terms, the extension of excommunication from its strictly ecclesiastical context to one that affects all of one's community life – in this case, effectively separating an individual from active participation in the society in which they lived – is consistent with the environmental influences of phonetic literacy. As I mentioned earlier, phonetic literacy separates that which is integral into individual, functional components, constructing distance between an individual and what they once possessed as intrinsic to their being—be it creating distance in knowledge via an author's authority, in governance via proxy delegation, in craft skill via functional decomposition, or even in one's place in society through excommunication.

Although similar to the relatively rarer practice of ostracism in Athenian democracy, there is a key distinction – a reversal (McLuhan & McLuhan, 1988), in fact – that, again, is indicative of the environmental differences between primary-oral, and phonetically literate, societies. Ostracism (lasting ten years) required a consensus vote of thousands of fellow citizens in the ecclesia—an expression of a common societal mind that the ostracized citizen had accumulated too much individual power. Excommunication permanently banished a non-compliant individual on the say-so of one man who possessed the delegated proxy of what was becoming supreme authority in the Church and through much of Western European society.

Through the codification of canon law, and its universalizing throughout Western Europe, papal legal authority was effectively established by the eleventh century. Pope Gregory VII, in the late-eleventh century, implemented a more formal, bureaucratic system of Church offices and functions. He eliminated both the influence of local, lay patrons to install clerical officials, and the earlier practice of nepotistic and hereditary influence, the latter corrected by instituting clerical celibacy. Church power and operations were grounded in legal authority, ultimately arbitrated by the central authority of the pope and officials in Rome. Those in relatively superior positions appointed officials in subordinate positions, with the rule of (canonical) law holding supreme. Even for the pope himself, the office was distinct from the individual holding it (Miller, 1983). The effect of literacy in enabling the solidification of bureaucracy as a governing principle is demonstrably evident:

> Although Church government from the earliest times depended upon written records, the increased dependence upon law and central authority in the governance of the Church made written documents even more essential to Church administration. Whereas the Chancery under Gregory VII consisted of seven notaries, soon thereafter it grew to one hundred scribes and a corresponding number of higher officials to carry out the responsible duties. (Miller, 1983, p. 285)

The emerging bureaucracy of the Church influenced secular organizations throughout European society as well. From the twelfth century, bureaucratic and administrative practices common in the papal chancery began to be introduced into royal chanceries. Primarily because of their literacy – but equally, because of the opportunity for Church control to infiltrate secular institutions – bishops, cardinals, and other churchmen populated, and were highly influential in, royal administration throughout the Middle Ages. Note, for instance, the derivation of the word "clerk"

from "cleric" (Tierney, 1992). Miller sums up the significance of organizational

change through the Middle Ages and, consistent with literacy, its slow, but pervasive,

replication:

> The High Medieval reorganization of Church government created a
> streamlined, hierarchical organization and increased papal power so
> vastly… These papal claims aided the growth of civil government … by
> sharpening ideas about secular authority. And, on a practical level, the
> Church aided secular rulers in developing their own administrations by
> supplying a model of administration and trained personnel. Most
> important for the development of modern organization was the
> Church's borrowing of Roman law which, incorporated into the canon
> law, was most influential in developing public law in the emerging
> nation states. (Miller, 1983, p. 289)

None of this organizational evolution could have occurred without the

presence of phonetic literacy both to enable the instrumental skill of those who

possessed it, and to create an appropriate cognitive environment that could conceive

of, and create, bureaucracy.

Gutenberg's Influence: Mechanization, and the Rise of Modern Organization

> Printing from movable types was the first mechanization of a complex
> handicraft, and became the archetype of all subsequent mechanization.
> … Like any other extension of man, typography had psychic and social
> consequences that suddenly shifted previous boundaries and patterns of
> culture. (McLuhan, 1964, p. 171-172)

Notably, the era ushered in by Gutenberg's iconic printing of the Bible on a

movable type press has, as its hallmark, uniformity of production, and economical

repeatability from an original specimen. Eisenstein (1979) points out that, prior to

mechanized print, scribed manuscripts could well be duplicated if they were

sufficiently important—items like royal edicts and papal bulls. It was the *mass

production* of both the mundane and the masterful, the triumphant and the trivial, that

the mechanized printing press enabled. Perhaps more influential, the advances in structural elements that overlaid the actual text made the eventual book more attractive to readers. Eisenstein elaborates:

> Well before 1500, printers had begun to experiment with the use of graduate types, running heads ... footnotes ... tables of contents ... superior figures, cross references ... and other devices available to the compositor—all registering the victory of the punch cutter over the scribe. Title pages became increasingly common, facilitating the production of book lists and catalogues, while acting as advertisements in themselves. Hand-drawn illustrations were replaced by more easily duplicated woodcuts and engravings—an innovation which eventually helped to revolutionize technical literature by introducing exactly repeatable pictorial statements into all kinds of reference works. (Eisenstein, 1992, p. 52-53)

Uniformity, repeatability, and structuring elements that are distinct from, but support, the content are indeed the hallmarks of both books and the societal culture that arose from the environment of mechanized print, not to mention mechanization and industrialization in general. The general availability and economy of printed materials fostered an explosion of literacy in the various vernacular languages of Europe, and wrested control of education from the Church. Setting the stage for the Enlightenment and the Age of Reason, print literacy created yet another cognitive shift in the psycho-social environment that gave dominance to the practices of objectivity, separation, and distance, and functional decomposition in almost every aspect of human endeavour: from literature (with an all-seeing, all-knowing author with his own distinct narrative voice) and art (perspective), to philosophy (Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*), architecture (Italian piazzas) and science (with the supposedly neutral, objective observer), including the emergence of engineering, anatomy (at the time, a sort of "engineering" study of the human body), and modern manufacturing.

As one might expect, that psycho-social shift also set the stage for the multi-layered, bureaucratic, administratively controlled, hierarchical organization (Eisenstein, 1992; Federman, 2007; McLuhan, 1962) that helped usher in modernity.

In the context of modern *organization*, the three dominant effects of what McLuhan calls "The Gutenberg Galaxy" – uniformity, repeatability, and supportive, structuring elements – are best documented by the three chroniclers of post-Industrial Age management: Frederick Winslow Taylor, Max Weber and Henri Fayol.

Taylor's landmark, 1911 work, *Principles of Scientific Management*, outlines his recommended methods to achieve uniform, repeatable, and efficient management of labour: (a) decompose work into tasks or "elements," and develop "a science" for each one; (b) select and train workers according to a scientific approach; (c) create cooperation between workers and managers to ensure the work is being done according to the developed science; and (d) divide the work between managers and workers so that each performs the tasks to which they are respectively suited—workers are suited to "do" and not think, while managers are suited to think and not do. Indeed, Warner and Witzel point out that Taylor's scientific management principles were a result of the need created for "professional managers" when ownership separated from management control in the late nineteenth century. Its apparent effectiveness became legendary worldwide: For the first half of the twentieth century, Taylor's "American 'way' of doing business was seen as superior to all others" (Warner & Witzel, 1997, p. 264).

If Frederick Taylor's application of rational science was seen as a superior way of *doing* work, Max Weber's "ideal type" of rational control was – and in many circles, still is – seen as a superior way of *organizing* work for maximum efficiency. It is commonly accepted that Weber's bureaucracy describes an administrative structure in which there is a clear division of labour defined along the lines of hierarchical class. Managers occupy functional offices with a clear distinction being made between the permanence and functional necessity of the office, and the person who contingently holds that office or position. Administrative operations are governed by well-articulated, explicit, and codified rules that apply not only to the labourers, but to the professional administrators themselves. For example, among those rules are the specifications for administrator compensation: administrators do not earn their income directly from the production under their purview, nor from the privilege of administration, but rather from a rule-based salary.

Although bureaucracy seems to provide an efficient and apparently fair means of control through equally applied rules and well-documented processes, there is a danger that the rules themselves become paramount, without consideration for the ensuing effects on people's lives. "We become so enmeshed in creating and following a legalistic, rule-based hierarchy that the bureaucracy becomes a subtle but powerful form of domination" (Barker, 1993, p. 410). In fact, Weiss (1983) maintains that Weber's expression of the concept of *Herrschaft* refers specifically to domination, rather than the softer, more "managerial" notion of leadership, an interpretation that is more commonly put forward. According to Roth and Wittich's interpretation of *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft – Economy and Society* (Weber, 1921/1978) – those so

dominated by bureaucratic rules do so more or less willingly, requiring only a "minimum of voluntary compliance" (p. 212) and conformity to rules reflexively legitimated by the bureaucratic system itself.

Weber's use of the term "ideal type" is not necessarily to be interpreted as the most desirable form, or most efficient. Rather, Weiss (1983) suggests that Weber's then-contemporary usage more closely relates to an archetype—an objective model that is, in practical circumstances, unattainable. Similarly, in maintaining that bureaucracy represents *rational* control, Weber is not referring to that control necessarily being reasonable, merely logical: "Bureaucratic authority is specifically rational in the sense of being bound to discursively analyzable rules" (1922/1964, p. 361). As well, such authority is not meant to suggest culturally normative behaviour, administrative direction consistent with the underlying values, mission, vision, or intentions of the organization, or even efficient operations: "Weber was concerned with domination rather than efficient coordination" (Weiss, p. 246).

Weber himself called this rational but oppressive form of social control an "iron cage" that dominates not just people's behaviours, but other, potentially alternative, means of control:

> Once fully established, bureaucracy is among those social structures which are the hardest to destroy. Bureaucracy is the means of transforming social action into rationally organized action. … [an individual] cannot squirm out of the apparatus into which he has been harnessed. (Weber, 1921/1978, p. 987-988)

With earlier forms of hierarchical control, such as those exhibited in the medieval Church, a human presented the face of control to those controlled even in

the presence of written rules. Modern bureaucracy as documented (but not necessarily prescribed) by Weber, introduced a form of *mechanized separation* by creating an abstract system of processes that nominally implements and enforces the rules, removing human discretion, emotion, and ultimately, direct human responsibility for action and consequences. In effect, early-modern *organization* subsumes and subjugates itself to a mechanized, administrative automaton. Bureaucracy becomes an administrative machine of which people are merely components, replicating the mechanizing and dehumanizing effects of industrial, factory apparatus.

Taylor and Weber clearly contribute ideas and principles that encompass two of the three aforementioned hallmarks of mechanized, industrial, modern, *organization*, namely, uniformity and repeatability. By "scientifically" measuring the best worker's performance and seeking to replicate that performance in other workers under the direction of managers, Taylor sought to create uniformity and efficiency in production. Weber's ideals of rational bureaucracy in which human judgement is removed from operational decisions in favour of systematic, rule-based processes ensured repeatability throughout an organization, especially when direct supervision was impractical, if not impossible. Henri Fayol's contribution to modern management provides the third component, namely, the elements that structure professional management practice itself.

Fayol's classic chapter on General Principles of Management first appears in a 1916 bulletin of the French mining industry association, and is later incorporated in his 1949 book, *General and Industrial Management*. Given the pervasiveness of Fayol's Principles throughout the contemporary business world, it could be considered as the

wellspring of modern management practice. In it, he describes his fourteen principles

through which managers "operate" on the workers:

> Whilst the other functions bring into play material and machines the
> managerial function operates only on the personnel. The soundness and
> good working order of the body corporate depend on a certain number
> of conditions termed indiscriminately principles, laws, rules. (Fayol,
> 1949, p. 19)

However, unlike his American and German counterparts in the modern

managerial triumvirate, Fayol eschews rigidity and absolutism in management

practice:

> It is all a question of proportion. Seldom do we have to apply the same
> principle twice in identical conditions; allowance must be made for
> different changing circumstances, for men just as different and changing
> and for many other variable elements. (Fayol, 1949, p. 19)[5]

Still, by his own description, Fayol's fourteen principles provide the structuring

elements that are distinct from, but support, the content of management decisions.

These principles include:

1. **Division of work**, "not merely applicable to technical work, but without

exception to all work … result[ing] in specialization of functions and separation of

powers" (p. 21).

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[5] Despite Fayol's arguably more enlightened contribution to management theory, Taylor and Weber seem to have "won" in influencing both management education and practice throughout the 20th century. For example, Jones (2000) chronicles contemporary implementation of Taylor's methods on the factory floor, while Barrett (2004) describes Taylor and Weber's influence in an online software development environment. Wilson (1995) demonstrates how information technology recreates Taylor and Weber's principles in the guise of what has been commonly known as knowledge management and organizational reengineering – the latter made (in)famous by Hammer and Champy (1993) – "to obviate the need for the more traditional organizational structures … [that] has resulted in a relentless drive towards organizational (workforce) conformity in response to the demands of greater technological efficiency" (Wilson, p. 59).

2. **Authority and responsibility**, "the right to give orders and the power to exact obedience" (p. 21). Bound up with this principle is the "need for sanction," both positive and negative, corresponding to assuming responsibility for acting with legitimate authority.

3. **Discipline**, based on agreements between the organization and its workers, irrespective, according to Fayol, of whether those agreements are explicit, tacit, written, commonly understood, "derive from the wish of the parties or from rules and customs" (p. 23).

4. **Unity of command**, so that any individual has only one direct superior exercising legitimate authority.

5. **Unity of direction**, expressing one plan and one ultimate leader for the organization.

6. **Subordination of individual interest to general interest**, "the fact that in a business the interest of one employee or group of employees should not prevail over that of the [business] concern" (p. 26).

7. **Remuneration of personnel**, assuring "fair remuneration" for services rendered, encouraging "keenness," and "not lead to over-payment going beyond reasonable limits" (p. 28). Fayol encourages bonuses to "arouse the worker's interest in the smooth running of the business" (p. 29), which means not only providing a motivation to work efficiently as recommended by Taylor (1911), but to enact control and ensure compliant behaviour as described by Weber (1921/1978).

8. **Centralization**, that Fayol claims "like division of work … belongs to the natural order; … the fact that in every organism, animal or social, sensations converge towards the brain or directive part, and from the brain or directive part orders are sent out which set all parts of the organism in movement" (p. 34).

9. **Scalar chain**, the linear hierarchy of authority along which information passes, with the proviso that, for the sake of efficiency a direct "gang plank" of communication is permitted between employees at equivalent levels of responsibility in two, distinct reporting chains, with the permission of their respective managers.

10. **Order**, referring to both "material order … a place for everything and everything in its place" (p. 37) for supplies, and "social order … the right man in the right place" (p. 38) for the job, echoing both Taylor and Weber.

11. **Equity**, or equality of treatment, best accomplished, it seems, under well-defined rules with sound managerial judgement.

12. **Stability of tenure of personnel**, that expresses in other words the concepts of professionalism and specialization.

13. **Initiative**, "thinking out a plan and ensuring its success" (p. 40), notably "within the limits imposed, by respect for authority and for discipline" (p. 41).

14. **Esprit de corps**, through which Fayol warns against a manager dividing his[6] team, "sowing dissention among subordinates" (p. 41), and, misusing written

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[6] Gender specific, since managers were exclusively male in Fayol's context.

communication: "It is well known that differences and misunderstandings which a conversation could clear up, grow more bitter in writing" (p. 42).

It seems that in this last principle, Fayol's experience agrees with McLuhan's observation and the prediction of the Toronto School. Separation, isolation, and creation of division among people are recognized consequences – and according to Taylor and Weber, perhaps even the tacit objectives – of the industrialized environment enabled by mechanized print literacy.

Structural Determinism Versus UCaPP Ontology: Parallel 20th Century Discourses, and the Context for the Future of *Organization*

As I have outlined throughout this chapter, during each of the major nexus periods at which the speed and geographical scope of human communications accelerate significantly, the socio-structural underpinnings of the society of the day – and specifically the nature of *organization* – correspondingly change. In composing a history of the future of *organization* from today's standpoint, the acceleration in communications and resulting period of extraordinary transformation unavoidably contextualizes the ensuing composition. The contemporary nexus through which we are now living is first heralded by Morse's demonstration of the telegraph in 1844, inaugurating an era of instantaneous, electrically-enabled telecommunications that contracts both physical and temporal separation on a global scale.

In his book, *The Rise of the Network Society*, Manuel Castells echoes the primary thesis of the Toronto School of Communication. He captures the extent of, and essential reason for pervasive, epochal change when he writes, "because culture is

mediated and enacted through communication, cultures themselves – that is, our historically produced systems of beliefs and codes – become fundamentally transformed, and will be more so over time, by the new technological system" (Castells, 1996, p. 357).

As has been demonstrated throughout history, such fundamental transformation from one cultural epoch to the next – the latter being enabled by "the new technological system" of the day – takes a considerable length of time. As of this writing in 2010, 166 years after the new era was telegraphed into being, Western society remains bound to its Gutenbergian roots among many fundamentally important institutions, like its education system, governance models, and most models of commerce. Yet, the elements of transformation are also becoming increasingly evident. Now, within the first decade of the twenty-first century, many people are experiencing the effects of always being connected to some multi-way communications mechanism for the first time in their lives, and are slowly adapting to it. Yet concurrently, a large and growing demographic have *never not known* such connectivity:

> Unlike we who were socialized and acculturated in a primarily literate societal ground, in which our experience with technology and media is primarily within a linear, hierarchical context – all artefacts of literacy – today's youth and tomorrow's adults live in a world of *ubiquitous connectivity and pervasive proximity*. Everyone is, or soon will be, connected to everyone else, and all available information, through instantaneous, multi-way communication. This is ubiquitous connectivity. They will therefore have the experience of being immediately proximate to everyone else and to all available information. This is pervasive proximity. Their direct experience of the world is fundamentally different from yours or from mine, as we have had to adopt and adapt to these technologies that create the effects of ubiquitous connectivity and pervasive proximity [abbreviated to "UCaPP"]. (Federman, 2005, p. 11; emphasis added)

In other words, in the context of a Toronto School reading of history, the 20th century can be understood as a time of transformation from the separation and isolation of a mechanized environment, to connection and relationship that is more in concert with a UCaPP world. Therefore, it is not unreasonable to expect two distinct but parallel histories of organizational discourse to emerge over course of the century: one whose primary focus is instrumentality, consistent with the prior epoch, and another demonstrating more of a dominant concern for humanistic and relational issues that is consistent with effects of UCaPP.

The story of organization theories through the 20th century is often recited chronologically (Sashkin, 1981; Lewin & Minton, 1986; Shafritz & Ott, 1992; Parker, 2000), despite the inherent dualism in the supposed debate between a more-functionalist or "rational" emphasis, and a more-humanist or what is often called a natural systems focus. Parker observes that "both 'sides' needed the other, and … the former was generally dominant (in the guise of managerial functionalism)" (p. 29). The prominence of one school of thought through a particular decade seems to encourage a response by researchers, theorists, and practitioners from the other. Nonetheless, there seems to be a direct lineage in the respective discourses leading back to Taylor, Weber, and Fayol as the fathers of the "rational" camp, and Mary Parker Follett as the mother of the "humanist" camp, respectively.

The Instrumental, Institutional, and Managerialist 20th Century

As modern, industrial *organization* was tested under the extreme conditions of war production in the early-to-mid 20th century, management theorists were able to

contextualize, contest, and confront the pure instrumental rationality and "ideal types" suggested by Taylor and Weber, and Fayol's administrative management approaches. Herbert Simon (1946/1992, 1947) examines administration and the challenge of empirically analyzing its operations. Later, Simon and James March confront the issue of why bureaucracies – "the machine model of human behavior" (1958, p. 36) – result in as many unintended results as they do intended outcomes. To a contemporary reader, their findings of that time are not surprising:

> …the elaboration of evoking connections [i.e., organizational complexity], the presence of unintended cues, and organizationally dysfunctional learning appear to account for most of the unanticipated consequences with which these theories deal. Many of the central problems for the analysis of human behavior in large-scale organizations stem from the operation of subsystems within the total organizational structure. (March & Simon, 1958, p. 47)

In the post-war period, characterized by massive industrial growth, high employment, and growing affluence (especially in North America), researchers realized the importance of connecting the human components of the industrial machinery to the technological components in order to achieve greater productivity and effective deployment of resources. Through their examination of work teams in coal mines, Eric Trist and Ken Bamford (1951) discover that the most effective teams adapt their work methods in response to the technological and situational circumstances of the moment. Such action represents a major deviation from the "one best way" (Taylor, 1911) to perform a job recommended by the prescripts of Scientific Management.

Emery and Trist later generalize this finding as *socio-technical systems design* (1960). They suggest that group and large-organization structure and operation should be minimally pre-designed, with the work group able to respond to specific

contingencies as they occur. Contingent responses would be based on well-defined domains of responsibility that correspond to group and organizational boundaries, appropriate information flow, and fundamental compatibility between the organization's processes and its objectives (Cherns, 1976).

Burns and Stalker (1961/1992) and Alfred Chandler (1962), seemingly influenced by the work of Bamford, Trist, and Emery, began to outline ways in which optimal organization structure conforms to both an organization's strategy, and the external conditions to which it is required to respond. Chandler's extensive and influential study of the evolution of corporate structures at DuPont, General Motors, Standard Oil, and Sears, Roebuck and Company justifies the instrumental logic used to build industrial conglomerates through the third quarter of the 20th century. Burns and Stalker, recognizing the structural changes that were becoming visible throughout society, describe what they observed as a contingent duality, namely "mechanistic and organic" management systems:

> …the two polar extremities of the forms which such systems can take when they are adapted to a specific rate of technical and commercial change … explicitly and deliberately created and maintained to exploit the human resources of a concern in the most efficient manner feasible in the circumstances of the concern. (Burns & Stalker, 1961/1992, p. 207)

So-called mechanistic management corresponds to relatively stable and static conditions, and reiterates the fundamental principles of bureaucratic, administrative, and hierarchical organization management originally described and codified by Taylor, Weber, and Fayol. However, as the reality of quickly changing conditions and unforeseen interactions and outcomes became apparent – in other words, general

instability in the midst of overall social change that characterized the 1950s and '60s – so too did the need for another way of thinking about organization structure. Burns and Stalker's description of organic management systems recognizes certain precepts that differ significantly from the well-ordered management principles prescribed by Fayol. In some circumstances:

- specific knowledge trumps legitimation and seniority with respect to task responsibility and control authority;

- communication follows a natural network of connected interests rather than hierarchical control paths;

- the content of communications is informative and advisory rather than instructive and authoritative; and

- one's concern for specific tasks and the overall objectives of the organization must take precedence over personal loyalties and obedience to one's superior.

Although the description of such organic approaches to management strategy and structure (the latter remaining stratified by knowledge, expertise, and experience if not by traditional class and social hierarchy) may appear to be consistent with the effects of what is now known to be the beginnings of massive connectivity, it remained exclusively functional and instrumental in its intent. Organic systems were seen to require an even greater commitment of an individual employee as a "resource to be used by the working organization" (Burns & Stalker, 1961/1992, p. 208) than in the case of mechanistic systems. In fact, the authors explicitly describe the

importance of individuals assimilating the "institutionalized values, beliefs, and conduct in the form of commitments, ideology, and manners" (p. 208) of the organization to reinforce relatively more tacit control in the wake of the expected loss of formal, hierarchical, control structures.

The need for socio-technical systems design to perceive, recognize, and structurally respond to environmental factors – be they market, regulatory, or resource-constraint in nature – led to a scaffolding of sorts in functionalist, instrumental management thinking that continues to influence many contemporary organizations. Lawrence and Lorsch (1969) write that an organization's internal structure, processes, and group make-up would have to match characteristics present in its external environment for it to be able to effectively perceive and process relevant information, and conduct business transactions. Moreover, organizations must be responsive to environmental change. "As the relevant environment changes, however, organizations not only need suitable matched units, but on occasion also need to establish new units to address emerging environmental facts and to regroup old units" (p. 28). A year later, they are quite specific about the modern organization's functional and structural responsiveness to changing external factors:

> Rather than searching for the panacea of the one best way to organize under all conditions, investigators have more and more tended to examine the functioning of organizations in relation to the needs of their particular members and the external pressures facing them. Basically, this approach seems to be leading to the development of a 'contingency' theory of organization with the appropriate internal states and processes of the organization contingent upon external requirements and member needs. (Lorsch & Lawrence, 1970, p. 1)

Kast and Rosenzweig provide a "more precise" definition that emphasizes the functional and instrumental view of organizations framed in terms of structural contingency:

> The contingency view of organizations and their management suggests that an organization is a system composed of subsystems and delineated by identifiable boundaries from its environmental suprasystem. The contingency view seeks to understand the interrelationships within and among subsystems as well as between the organization and its environment and to define patterns of relationships or configurations of variables. It emphasizes the multivariate nature of organizations and attempts to understand how organizations operate under varying conditions and in specific circumstances. Contingency views are ultimately directed toward suggesting organizational designs and managerial systems most appropriate for specific situations. (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972/1992, p. 304)

Henry Mintzberg (1979, 1983), in what is among the most widely cited models of structural contingency theory, describes various coordinating configurations among five basic organizational components. The description of these components offers a detailed and usefully descriptive analysis of the structural "machinery" of modern organizations. In the second chapter of his 1979, *The Structuring of Organizations*, Mintzberg describes "the five basic parts of the organization," that include the strategic apex, the "middle line" of functional management, the "technostructure" of analysts, the support staff, and the operating core of people who do the actual production work of the enterprise. These generalized structural components overlay three distinct models of workflow that account for varying relative amounts of interdependence among workers. Mintzberg's account is a logical, modernist extension of the factory model of organization that yield five ideal types that correspond to distinct contingent environments: the simple structure, the

machine bureaucracy, the divisionalized form, the professional bureaucracy, and the "adhocracy," subsequently called the innovative organization[7].

Recognizing the permeability of organizational boundaries, together with the specific application of general system theory (von Bertalanffy, 1950/2008) to social systems, enabled Daniel Katz and Robert Kahn to describe how the "system concept" applied to organizations as open systems (1966/1992). Despite their eponymous treatment of the *Social Psychology of Organizations*, the actual emphasis of Katz and Kahn's work remained solidly functionalist and socio-technical, as opposed to, say, *relational* or humanistic. For example, the purpose of an organization considered as a system "should begin with the input, output, and functioning of the organization as a system and not with the rational purposes of its leaders" (p. 271). They go on to describe the open-systems approach as one that "begins by identifying and mapping the repeated cycles of input, transformation, output, and renewed input which comprise the organizational pattern" (p. 279).

The apparent dichotomy of open versus closed systems models for organizations in the paradigmatic context of functional, contingent determinism led to an equally dichotomous conclusion. A closed system perspective could be appropriate to model organizations in relatively stable, predictable environments, while open systems might prove to be more useful when there was an "expectation of uncertainty." James Thompson (1967/1992) suggests a reconciliation of sorts that

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[7] Mintzberg later (1989) added "ideology" as a sixth basic component that encompasses norms, beliefs and culture, and yields a sixth organization type, namely "missionary" or idealistic organization.

proposes a rational response to contingent and constrained conditions for what he termed, "complex organizations … [that is,] open systems, hence indeterminate and faced with uncertainty, but at the same time as subject to criteria of rationality and hence needing determinateness and certainty" (p. 285). By proposing approaches whereby an organization could navigate amidst an interdependent environment while retaining some measure of self-determinism, Thompson contributed to establishing contingency thinking as a foundation for the (late-)modern, functionalist organization.

There have been numerous refinements of structural contingency theory – and considerable defences mounted against its critics (Donaldson, 1985, 1995) – through the end of the 20th century. Eric Trist expands on Thompson in proposing organizational ecology that redirects analytic attention from specific organizations to:

> …the organizational field created by a number of organizations whose interrelations compose a system at the level of the whole field. The character of this overall field, as a system, now becomes the object of inquiry, not the single organization as related to its organization-set. (Trist, 1977, p. 162).

Continuing to draw on biological metaphors, and almost as a logical extension to Trist's work, Hannan and Freeman (1977), apply biological population analysis, with a particular focus on theories of organic populations in particular environmental "niches" amidst natural competition. Adding considerations of an organization's adaptability in response to resource availability (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) helped to explain the diversity of organization types as they adapt to specific environments, in a manner not unlike Darwinian natural selection. These ideas were further expanded into the concepts of institutional isomorphism (Meyer & Brown, 1977; DiMaggio &

Powell, 1983) and economic sociology (Morgan, Whitley, & Moen, 2005) to explain

why many organizations evolve to look alike. Westwood and Clegg explain:

> Legitimacy concerns translate into practices of isomorphism on the part
> of organizations unsure what their structure should be: sometimes the
> isomorphism is coercively mandated, by external actors; other times it is
> normatively mandated, but of particular interest are the many cases
> where it is mimetic. In these, organizations consciously choose to mimic
> what appears as a highly valued form of social capital associated with
> structural design. Choosing something associated with prestigious social
> capital factors, such as designs operated by very visible, successful, or
> influential organizations would be the basis for these structure choices
> (Westwood & Clegg, 2003, p. 274)

Ironically, all of these theories position *organization* as a relatively passive

responder to environmental change (Hernes, 2008), contrary to the image of

innovator and shaper of economic landscapes that many organizational leaders might

prefer to hold. Nonetheless, among those theorists with a functionalist and

instrumental orientation, the various permutations of structural contingency theories

remain the *ne plus ultra* of strategic organizational analysis for efficiency and

effectiveness. In a relatively recent debate on organizational structure published in the

Westwood and Clegg volume (2003), Bob Hinings claims that organizations are

"rightly" understood by way of their structure. He explains that such an

understanding is the way that their members consider organization and their

individual roles within it, and the way in which processes and systems are

"structurally enshrined" and legitimated through those with authority and their

ensuing relationships. Accordingly, structural contingency theory is the primary

vehicle through which structure informs organization theory by,

> …establishing the relationships between structural aspects of
> organization and such factors as size, technology, task uncertainty,

strategy, and ideology. Organization efficiency and effectiveness are a function of the fit between structure and these contingencies. Organizations adapt to these contingent conditions in order to remain effective. Contingency theory continues to be an important, parsimonious, and empirically tested approach to understanding organization. (Hinings, 2003, p. 275-276)

Hinings argues that even when analytical research and managerial concerns are centred on processes, strategy, quality improvement, and other operational positioning, the processes and activities under examination are "actually embedded in new roles, relationships, and authority, the stuff of structure" (2003, p. 280). On the other hand, this observation may well be explained as an issue of managerial socialization through reproduced experience and training in management schools (Huczynski, 1994). If one is taught to think in structures, if organizational structures are what are manifestly evident when one reifies the concept of *organization*, then organizations look like structures by definition.

For example, the immediate reaction of one of this research project's participants[8] to a description that characterizes the investigation as considering the nature of "the organization of the future" is to respond specifically in structural terms, critiquing various non-hierarchical, and generalist versus specialist, organization structures. It is seemingly difficult for some to conceive of organization in terms other than structure-to-fulfil-a-purpose. Thus, it is possible that Hinings's contention – "structure also needs to be a prime analytical construct for organizational theorists because it is central to the thinking of managers" (p. 280) – is more a matter of

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[8] This participant is notable in this context as he has had formal managerial training that emphasizes a structural approach to organizational conception, an example of Huczynski's contention.

managerial training and socialization, rather than an endorsement of universal empirical validity[9] or claim to truth. Another alternative is to consider a different analytical construct, derived from a parallel organizational history of the 20th century, that may be able to facilitate a change in dominant managerial thinking, one that may be more consistent with contemporary circumstances.

The Humanist, Relational, and Collaborative 20th Century

If one considers Frederick Taylor as the grandfather of the functionalist line of managerial thinking through the 20th century, Mary Parker Follett is the grandmother of the humanist and relational line of thinking. In her classic, 1926 article, *The Giving of Orders*, Follett identifies the need to reconcile the inherent conflict in an individual between resisting taking orders, arising from the natural animosity felt towards "the boss," and the requirement to follow orders necessitated by a desire to retain one's employment. Follett claims that if both the boss and the employee "discover the law of the situation and obey that … orders are simply part of the situation, [and] the question of someone giving and someone receiving does not come up. Both accept the orders given by the situation" (1926/1992, p. 153). In that case, the order becomes "depersonalized," according to the language of scientific management. That is, the requirement to act or perform in a certain way is removed from the arbitrary exercise of power that derives from the legitimated hierarchical power dynamic and instead,

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[9] For instance, a rigorous empirical test of Mintzberg's (1983, 1989) typology by Doty, Glick, & Huber (1993) found very few organizations whose ideal type matched their context, and no difference in effectiveness between those whose structural design matched the context and those that did not. In fact Doty, et al. were unable to prove any of the testable hypotheses predicted by Mintzberg's model.

becomes contingently based. In effect, the situation and not one's superior office is giving the order. As well, both superior and subordinate receive the order equally and simultaneously.

This reasoning might appear to be an early argument in favour of structural contingency theory (and other, related contingency theories in general). However, Follett's emphasis is less focused on *organizational* contingent response, and more on *human* responses – "the essence of the human being" (p. 155) – that fundamentally reorganizes the impetus of the conventional superior-subordinate relationship, and explicitly acknowledges the effects of organizational actions on organizational actors:

> We, persons, have relations with each other, but we should find them in and through the whole situation. We cannot have any sound relations with each other as long as we take them out of that setting which gives them their meaning and value… (Follett, 1926/1992, p. 154)

> …if taking a *responsible* attitude toward experience involves recognizing the evolving situation, a *conscious* attitude toward experience means that we note the change which the developing situation makes in ourselves; the situation does not change without changing us. (Follett, 1926/1992, p. 156; emphasis in original)

The iconic exemplar of a changing situation changing those involved is the famous Hawthorne Experiments (Mayo, 1933/1945; Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1940/1964), conducted at the Hawthorne Works of Western Electric Company in Chicago between 1924 and 1932. In the summary introduction to their chapter on classic writings of Human Resource theory and Human Relations movement, Shafritz and Ott observe:

> The Mayo team … redefined the Hawthorne problems as social psychological problems—problems conceptualized in such terms as

> interpersonal relations in groups, group norms, control over one's own environment, and personal recognition. … The Hawthorne studies showed that complex, interactional variables make the difference in motivating people—things like attention paid to workers as individual, workers' control over their own work, differences between individuals' needs, management's willingness to listen, group norms, and direct feedback. (Shafritz & Ott, 1992, p. 144)

Martin Parker (2000) credits Mayo and his team for being first to apply learning from the social sciences in order to motivate workers to achieve organizational goals and objectives without feeling oppressed or alienated. Parker goes on to identify the contributions of researchers and practitioners such as Douglas McGregor, Rensis Likert, and Chris Argyris, among others, as "prescriptions for satisfying workers and managers simultaneously but they reframe elements of the early human relations studies by moving the focus of attention from the social structure of the workgroup to *more interactive formulations of the relationship between social identities*" (p. 38; emphasis added). Clearly, by the 1960s – when these authors were active – the bifurcation between the functionalist-instrumentalist and humanist-relational schools of thought was well established.

Douglas McGregor (1957/1992, 1960) outlines his Theory X and Theory Y approaches to understanding employee motivation. Theory X posits that employees are reluctant and "indolent" workers; management, therefore, must intervene and maintain firm control to accomplish the necessities of organizational productivity. Theory Y, on the other hand, maintains that such disagreeable employees are created by the treatment they receive from management. By understanding that basic needs (e.g., Maslow, 1943), once fulfilled, are no longer motivational, employees' higher level "ego needs" can provide adequate motivation so long as management arranges

"organizational conditions and methods of operation so that people can achieve their own goals *best* by directing *their own* efforts toward organizational objectives" (McGregor, 1957/1992, p. 178; emphasis in original). He goes on to describe how more self-management, self-direction, and job enhancement through encouraging individual initiative can transform a Theory X style of organizational management to Theory Y.

In articulating the dichotomy of perceived employee behaviour from his vantage point of post-war industrial growth, one can interpret McGregor as reporting on his observations of the dual – and duelling – discourses approaching the midpoint of the epochal transformation. That he cannot entirely distinguish the managerial consequences of fully implementing Theory Y – namely, the full extent to which relationships that beget mutual trust and respect regardless of position are necessary – is likely a sign of his own social conditioning. Both Theories X and Y begin with the same premise of a privileged position for management: "Management is responsible for organizing the elements of productive enterprise – money, materials, equipment, people – in the interest of economic ends" (1957/1992, p. 174, 178). Challenging that basic premise via "management that has confidence in human capacities and is itself directed toward organizational objectives rather than towards the preservation of personal power" (p. 180) opens Theory Y to its full transformational potential: "not only enhance substantially these materialistic achievements, but will bring us one step closer to 'the good society'" (p. 180).

Similarly, Rensis Likert (1961, 1967) describes four "systems" that provide finer granularity to McGregor's two theories. System I and System II organizations are

more and less extreme versions of McGregor's Theory X. In contrast, Likert's first gradation of McGregor's Theory Y, namely System III, prescribes a "consultative" approach to management in which decision control remains with a manager despite consultations with workers. System IV describes a fuller realization of Theory Y in which mutual relationships support a fully participative form of decision-making and group management. Likert emphasizes that such a degree of participation necessitates a significant change in what was the prevailing management practice and philosophy at the time:

> The leadership and other processes of the organization must be such as to ensure a maximum probability that in all interactions and in all relationships within the organization, each member, in the light of his background, values, desires, and expectations, will view the experience as supportive and one which builds and maintains his sense of personal worth and importance. (Likert, 1967, p. 47)

In the mid-1970s, Chris Argyris and Donald Schön introduce an organizational behaviour frame through which the dynamics of interpersonal relations in group environments become explicit. Their theories of action (1974) examine the organizational implications of what a person or group *espouses* in response to particular circumstances as compared to their actual actions—what Argyris and Schön term *theories-in-use*. They argue that individuals' understanding of the specific organizations of which they are members continually evolves based on an ever-changing perception of theory-in-use. Irrespective of formal structures, or explicitly enumerated visions, missions, goals, or other espoused attributes, "individual members are continually engaged in attempting to know the organization, and to know themselves in the context of the organization. … Organization is an artifact of individual ways of

representing organization" (1978, p. 16). In other words, *organization* may be contingent (as was becoming the popular and prevailing view in the functionalist discourse), but its contingency in this respect has more to do with individuals' interactions and interrelationships than with any determinism imposed by external factors.

Around the same time as Argyris and Schön, Karl Weick extends the idea that, essentially, organization is a state of mind, a social construction based on the collective experience of actors who mediate their enactment of reality through language, "the interaction between sensemaking and actions" (Hernes, 2008, p. 118). The sense that individuals make of their organizational environment is inextricably tied to the processes contained therein, a "concern with flows, with flux, and momentary appearances. The raw materials from which processes are formed usually consist of the interests and activities of individuals that become meshed" (Weick, 1979, p. 444). Sensemaking, in the context of organizing, involves the negotiation of meaning between interpersonal – or what Weick calls "intersubjective" – interactions, and individual responses to structural directives, constraints, and normative behaviours that Weick terms "generic subjectivity." He writes:

> I would argue that organizing lies atop that movement between the intersubjective and the generically subjective. By that I mean that organizing is a mixture of vivid, unique intersubjective understandings and understandings that can be picked up, perpetuated, and enlarged by people who did not participate in the original intersubjective construction. (Weick, 1995, p. 72)

In Weick's conception, *organization* has no existence aside from that enacted by its members through the collective meaning they make. Further, as Hernes explains,

those enactments are intentional, as are the outcomes: "what takes place is a direct consequence of what we enacted" (2008, p. 126), principles of complexity notwithstanding, apparently. Nonetheless, Weick centring organizational enactment on both the conceptual abstractions and concrete interactions of its members sets the stage for radically different organizational metaphors – ways of conceiving *organization* – and therefore, for radically different organizations.

As the 20th century settles into its role as the so-called information age, the metaphor of computer and communication networks begin to infiltrate organizational thinking. Not surprisingly, information networking technologies are initially considered primarily from an instrumental standpoint. For example, Manuel Castells astutely notes, "in the 1980s, in America, more often than not, new technology was viewed as a labor-saving device and as an opportunity to take control of labor, not as an instrument of organizational change" (1996, p. 169). Podolny and Page, however, view the emerging notion of a network organization as an alternative to the primarily economic (instrumental) conceptions of organizations and organizational control as either hierarchies or markets. Instead they see this new form "as any collection of actors that pursue repeated, enduring exchange relations with one another and, at the same time, lack a legitimate organizational authority to arbitrate and resolve disputes that may arise during the exchange" (1998, p. 59). They describe how a more loosely connected organization may lead to better learning, a reconception of status and legitimation in organizational contexts, and potentially even economic benefits from lower transaction costs and greater adaptability.

Some authors see the emergence of non-hierarchical, loosely-coupled networks – often enabled through Internet technologies and often without legitimated loci of authority and control – as an archetype for emergent organizational design (Powell, 1990; Beekun & Glick, 2001; Nardi, Whittaker, & Schwartz, 2000, 2002). Others generalize the form and operating principles of the "organization of the future" from the success of the open-source movement (Ljungberg, 2000; Markus, Manville, & Agres, 2000; Federman, 2006). Even some of the most hierarchical and bureaucratic organizations in the world, the U.S. military (Alberts & Hayes, 1999) and the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (Ward, Wamsley, Schroeder, & Robins, 2000), sought out network models of organization to counter the problems and inefficiencies associated with more traditional organizations being rooted in "Industrial Age mindsets, cultures, and norms of behavior. It has to do with the reward and incentive structures, loyalties, and the nature of the interactions among the individuals and organizational entities" (Alberts & Hayes, 1999, p. 58).

The metaphor – or actual reification – of a non-hierarchical network implemented via computer and communication technology, as appealing as it may seem as an antidote to centuries-old hierarchical and bureaucratic socialization is, by itself, no panacea. Ahuja and Carley (1999) investigate a so-called virtual organization in which computer-mediated communications connect members of a geographically-distributed enterprise, in a way that enables direct contact among people, regardless of formal organization structure. The authors argue that such a virtual organization would tend to display an emergent structure driven primarily by information flow that would distinguish between centralization – tasks mediated through a supervisor – and

hierarchy – the creation of organizational levels, especially with respect to control, authority and decision making. Their findings suggest that traditional organizational forms are difficult to overcome, whether they are based on class-creating legitimation or on similarly class-creating possession of specialized information:

> Once certain people had been identified as possessing specific types of information or knowledge, the group members had a tendency to direct suitable inquiries to those individuals directly … [the] consequences of this communication and interaction pattern … [means] the informal structure of the virtual organization becomes stabilized with respect to roles, thus stratified and centralized. (Ahuja & Carley, 1999, p. 752)

Almost as a reinforcement of hierarchical socialization, traditional levels of authority also permeate the virtual organization with respect to authority and decision making. In the Ahuja and Carley study, people who are more senior in their respective "real" organizations assume greater authority compared to those who are more junior. Two distinct hierarchies emerge: one formal, and one informal. The authors are moved to consider,

> …to what extent do virtual organizations resemble traditional organizations? Previous researchers have argued that the difference is largely one of decentralization versus centralization, non-hierarchical versus hierarchical. We find that this distinction is misleading. We found evidence of both centralization and hierarchy in a virtual organization. However, this structural form emerged in the communication structure and was not equivalent to an authority structure based on status or tenure differences. In many traditional organizations the centralization or hierarchy is in the authority structure and is related to status and tenure differences. In other words, we found no evidence that the formal and informal structures in the virtual organization were indistinguishable. (Ahuja & Carley, 1999, p. 754)

Or, stated another way, technology alone is not sufficient to overcome workers' socialization in traditional hierarchies and control mechanisms, particularly when power is involved (Wilson, 1995)—Taylor and Weber live on, online.

The expected radical change in organizations seems not to be driven as much by the structural metaphors of network technologies – the Internet being among the more obvious examples – but rather by some of the experienced effects enabled by massive interconnectivity. More than a decade before the invention of the world wide web, William Kraus observed that hierarchical control in organizations imposes a self-perpetuating value system that tends to reinforce the mechanisms of the bureaucratic hierarchy[10]. In response, he describes twelve characteristics of a "collaborative organization structure" (1980) that can be loosely categorized into four themes, each addressing one major aspect of a hierarchically-dominated corporate value systems: (a) decoupling status from both task and formal organization structure; (b) decoupling compensation from status; (c) creating an organic and contingent organization structure; and (d) designing tasks that are integrated and interdependent to promote mutual success.

Kraus's proposal directly challenges the ingrained notion that status is a scarce resource. In the collaborative organization, status and prestige – conventionally signified and legitimated by one's position on the organization chart – necessitate attributes that engender trust and encourage cooperation that transcends departmental boundaries and strict functional demarcations. As identity, status, and

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[10] This is consistent with Castells description of a bureaucracy: "organizations for which the reproduction of their system of means becomes their main organizational goal" (1996, p. 171).

power do not inhere in the organization chart, typical organizationally dysfunctional behaviours such as defending territory become unimportant in the collaborative environment. Natural leaders emerging in such an environment represent an interesting retrieval of the role of "elder" in a tribal society. Changing what is culturally valued permits departmental boundaries to be breached, especially via interconnected, diverse social networks, to accomplish tasks more effectively based on trust, without potentially losing status or power.

Sally Helgesen (1995) draws from both her earlier study of women-led organizations, and the then-emerging metaphor of the world wide web to characterize the type of organization Kraus describes as a "web of inclusion." She describes such organizations as being "especially apt to be driven by clearly articulated values" (p. 286), and emergent from the processes and relationships that integrate thinking and doing, especially among front-line workers. Thus, traditional power relations are decentralized and diffused through integrated networks of individuals that form and re-form based on specific, situational expertise, prior experiences working together, and open communications throughout the organization, irrespective of traditional rank or hierarchical position. In Helgesen's web of inclusion, "information flows freely across levels, teams make their own decisions, work on specific projects evolves in response to needs as they arise, and task is more important than position" (p. 280).

Christian Maravelias (2003) provides an example of such an organization in action. Skandia Assurance Financial Services self-organizes amorphous teams around specific projects, comprised of people who operate in a high-trust environment.

> What drove individuals to work harder and smarter were [sic] not a pressure to subordinate to a distinct culture, but the lack of any clear system to subordinate to… a form of reflective attitude among participants, making them aware of the value of acting in a manner that made them trustees… (Maravelias, 2003, p. 557)

> The high trust culture enabled a distributed form of control, a form of peer control, which did not restrict individual freedom, but used it as its primary means of operation. … [I]t was not an organization made of aggregates of people, but of a subtle system of professional roles… In fact, to a certain extent the distinction between professional and private concerns had not become less, but more important. … It was the individual's, not the organization's, responsibility of drawing this line [between professional and private concerns]. (Maravelias, 2003, p. 559)

At Skandia AFS, individuals' mutual control based on creating and valuing shared and distributed power among all members of the organization means that control shifts from an impersonal bureaucratic hierarchy to an environment of mutuality among the individual members. In addition to Kraus's suggested attributes, such a profound transformation of the locus of control may be a determinant of an organization that has evolved according to the humanistic, relational discourse of the 20th century.

Approaching the discourse from a sociological theoretic frame, Paul Adler and Charles Heckscher (2006) posit "that a new and possibly higher form of community might emerge, offering a framework for trust in dynamic and diverse relationships, and reconciling greater degrees of both solidarity and autonomy" (p. 12). They describe *collaborative community* as a "dialectical synthesis of the traditional opposites *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*" (p. 15), where the former denotes traditional, mostly patriarchal community with strong, common socialization, and the latter denotes business association and relations in which people will essentially act as so-called *homo*

economicus[11]. Adler and Heckscher explain that social organization has traditionally

been divided among hierarchy (divisions of labour with legitimated authority);

markets (price-determined value exchanges among competing actors, all of whom

presumably act rationally); and community (in which actions are mediated through

shared values and commonly agreed behavioural norms).

> When the dominant principle of social organization is hierarchy, community takes the form of *Gemeinschaft*. When the dominant principle shifts to market, community mutates from *Gemeinschaft* into *Gesellschaft*. We postulate that when community itself becomes the dominant organizing principle, it will take a form quite different from either *Gemeinschaft* or *Gesellschaft*. (Adler & Heckscher, 2006, p. 16).

This third, "quite different," form is fundamentally based on three principles:

(a) shared values among all members of the group—"value-rationality [in which]

participants coordinate their activity through their commitment to common ultimate

goals [whose] highest value is interdependent contribution, as distinct from loyalty or

individual integrity" (p. 16); (b) an organization that stresses "interdependent process

management through formal and informal social structures" (p. 17); and (c) a

construction of identity that is interdependent and reconciled from among conflicting

aspects into a whole that is negotiated from among competing interests.

Values in a collaborative community are jointly constructed among all the

members of the group; trust in this environment is based on the degree to which all

members believe that everyone can make a worthwhile contribution to the shared

values which are,

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[11] From John Stuart Mill's and Adam Smith's work, this term refers to self-interested "economic man," concerned solely with building material wealth, and therefore acting in an entirely rational, instrumental, and efficacious fashion.

> …timeless statements of what the group *is*. Purpose is a relatively pragmatic view of what the group is trying to achieve, given the environmental challenges, in the foreseeable future. … A collaborative community emerges when a collectivity engages cooperative, interdependent activity towards a common object. (Adler & Heckscher, 2006, p. 21)

The purpose must both be determined and shared by the group as a whole; it is not the preserve of a small elite group, nor can it be imposed on the larger group in a manner that would be characteristic of *Gemeinschaft* (and most conventional organizations, as well). However, the authors note that achieving shared purpose in this collaborative sense is extremely difficult, especially when shared values and purpose are contested among the members based on individual needs and perspectives. As well, in larger organizations, like traditional corporations and even modern public institutions for example, relationships of power and the goal of production to create profit (or profit-equivalent) in a competitive environment tends to oppose collective, values-based purpose. Indeed, Weber characterizes the "iron cage" of control (1921/1978) that bureaucracies create in which individuals succumb to "unshatterable" power relations that, some might argue, transcend human judgement and any sense of compassion. Adler and Heckscher observe that Weber does speak of a type of organization that governs itself through value-rationality ("*Wertrationalität*") in which common purpose and values determine the group's direction. They note, however, that Weber was skeptical as to whether value-rationality has sufficient strength to sustain a large, *formal* organization. One example of such a value-rational group – although not usually thought of as an organization *per se* – is the so-called Community of Practice that is described and characterized by Jean

Lave and Etienne Wenger (1991; Wenger, 1998; Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002).

In Adler and Heckscher's description, two primary elements characterize collaboration: "contribution to the collective purpose, and contribution to the success of others" (2006, p 39). The former presumes assuming responsibility greater than one's own nominal mandate while remaining within the bounds of building agreement among other team members. It also presumes active engagement among all members rather than deference to a (legitimated) superior. The latter aspect serves to strengthen collaborative relationships and to build mutual trust. As the research findings will later demonstrate, there is a marked difference between collaboration as both Adler and Heckscher describe and some participants experience in their respective organizations, and the commonly expressed "teamwork" that is more consistent with the functionalist discourse characteristic of what I would term the *primary-purposeful organization*.

A collaborative community faces numerous issues that challenge the conventional socialization of its members. Its boundaries are amorphous and often in flux with more dynamic connections and reconfigurations. Among its members, highly diverse levels of skill and expertise are continually being brought together in a variety of configurations in which relative authority becomes highly contingent: authority becomes based on value-rationality, rather than on assigned or attributed status, or one's nominal position in a legitimated hierarchy. The requisite shared understanding and commitment necessitates ongoing public discussions and vigorous negotiation

among potentially conflicting individual values. In a "traditional" organization defined

primarily by its purpose,

> …the 'mission' was eternal and defining; in collaborative ones the
> generation of shared purpose becomes, as it were, an ongoing task
> rather than a fixed origin. It is evolving and fluid, and organized
> systems are needed to renew shared understanding and commitment.
> (Adler & Heckscher, 2006, p. 45)

Although Adler and Heckscher do not explicitly mention it, this sort of lively

values dialogue becomes a widely-held value in itself, as will be seen later among some

of this project's participant organizations. Resolving the aforementioned challenges in

collaborative communities requires interdependent process management practices that

accomplish the organization's shared purpose(s) among people with highly diverse

knowledge, skills, experiences, and worldviews.

Entering the 21ˢᵗ Century

The 21ˢᵗ century begins with the challenge of making sense of two, parallel

discourses that take up diametric polarities. On one hand, the functionalist,

instrumental, managerially oriented recitation of 20ᵗʰ century organizational history

tends to reinforce the bureaucratic, administratively controlled, hierarchical (BAH)

organization as the optimal means to respond to the myriad challenges of the

contemporary world. Elliot Jaques (1990) praises hierarchy, and lauds managerial

capacity, knowledge, and stamina as natural justification for subordinates to accept

the boss's authority. Concurrently, the critical management literature (Barker, 1993;

Barrett, 2004; Gee, Hull & Lankshear, 1996; Jones, 2003; Ogbor, 2001; Wilson,

1995) decry the ways in which the managerialist discourse manipulates, subjugates,

oppresses, and alienates those who occupy (particularly the lower strata within) that hierarchy.

On the other hand, the humanist, relational, collaborative story that begins with Mary Parker Follett and leads to writers such as William Kraus, and Paul Adler and Charles Heckscher, describes a very different history, and very different framing of organizational outcome. In the Adler and Heckscher volume (2006), there are a number of examples from various contributing authors that describe specific organizational behaviours (mostly of groups within larger organizations) that correspond to aspects of their ideal-type, collaborative organization. There is even a description of what is referred to as a "Strategic Fitness Process" (Heckscher & Foote, 2006) that claims to engender the collective leap of faith required to begin the transition from traditional, BAH, behavioural and attitudinal norms to unifying strategies based on knowledge, trust, and trans-boundary initiatives[12].

Relative to the entire 3,000-year history of *organization* and its epochal transitions, it is not surprising that one can construct two distinct, but necessarily related and entwined, organizational histories of the 20th century. The first tells a story that is the very logical, linear, and sequentially causal extrapolation of what began in the Middle Ages and evolved primarily through the Enlightenment period to modernity. The second story is emergent from the complexity that characterizes

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[12] The SFP as described by Heckscher and Foote is a semi-proprietary consulting methodology that is a facilitated amalgam of action research and David Bohm's process of dialogue (Bohm, Factor, & Garrett, 1991), with a smattering of polarity management (Johnson, 1992). It is an example of what I refer to later as a *culture change venue* within an organization. These methods are also addressed throughout the literature on organizational learning (Argyris & Schön, 1978; Laiken, 2002b; Senge, 1990; Webb, Lettice & Lemon, 2006).

conditions of ubiquitous connectivity and pervasive proximity—UCaPP. These conditions are not only prevalent in the contemporary world but, as I contend at the beginning of this chapter, dominate the structuring forces of human interaction among those societal institutions that govern, educate, facilitate commerce, and foster artistic reflection on complex, interacting cultures today.

If history provides any guidance whatsoever, it is likely that, in retrospect, these two stories will be cast in the context of yet a third, integrative story in a manner consistent with what Roger Martin calls "the opposable mind" (Martin, 2007). As Martin suggests, that third story would imagine a new way to frame those parallel and opposing narratives, speaking to *organization* in a way that is consistent with the UCaPP world into which the 21st century is transforming, while simultaneously making sense of the parallel discourses. This thesis aspires to be at least among the first telling of that third story, and seeks to discover two things. First, the 20th century literature outlined throughout this chapter describes various external attributes, individuals' behaviours and interactions, and general managerial characteristics of two organization types: those that can be characterized as predominantly BAH; and those that Kraus (1980), and Heckscher and Adler (2006) call collaborative (that may well possess many more distinguishing characteristics, of which collaboration is but one), which I call UCaPP organizations. This thesis will describe some of the key differentiating aspects of the internal dynamics between these two organizational types by exploring the question, *what are the key characteristics that distinguish BAH and UCaPP organizations in their respective attitudes, behaviours, characteristics, cultures, practices, and processes?*

Second, as an early version of that third story, this thesis will address a more foundational question: *is there an over-arching model that can account for both BAH and UCaPP organizations and distinguish among them?* I intend to propose a theory that unifies both forms of organizational behaviour, BAH and UCaPP. It will additionally offer a model of praxis that will help those in either type of organization to create a better understanding of contemporary organizational dynamics for more *effective* decision making and organizational transformation that is consistent with the dynamics and complexities of the UCaPP world.