

Guest Editors' Introduction: Management and Goodness

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Every art and every investigation, and similarly every action and pursuit, is considered to aim at some good. Hence the Good has been rightly defined as 'that at which all things aim' (Aristotle).

Aristotle begins his Ethics with these words and thus provides us with a possible starting point from which to consider the nature of *the Good*. Aristotle had been a student of Plato for over twenty years but when Plato died, Aristotle found that he could no longer see eye-to-eye with the new leaders of the academy and, after many disagreements, he moved away and set up the Lyceum. Here, he taught Platonic philosophy but he also encouraged his students to criticise Platonic thought.

It is with these two thoughts in mind, goodness and critique, that we would like to start this introduction to this Special Issue. First, by giving emphasis to the various ways in which the Good is constructed in organisations and, second and with equal emphasis, by giving attention to the importance of critique in management theorising. Whether we are considering the average text book approach to the notion of the Good or the pursuit of the good in management training and development, we are confronted by implicit and frequently explicit assumptions about the nature of goodness and about whose good is being defined. The rhetoric of strategic management, of trajectory and teleology, is also implicitly concerned with the pursuit of some notion of "goodness". In so-called quality management and in service management this "good" becomes quite specific and, indeed, is frequently highly specified and taxonomic. Goodness, excellence and perfection meet in some future place and/or state which is the object of the striving. Management is about the construction of future states of desire, of the construction of the sublime, of sterile notions of perfectionism, of

gendered realities and the definition of such endpoints is fundamental to the construction of the "good" which is the goal of management striving. Kenneth Burke (Burke, 1961:180) has talked about the definition of the good as establishing a counter covenant which defines what is bad. Gordon Lawrence has talked about management development as being concerned with "the correction of faults" (Lawrence, 1985: 235).

This Special Issue of Tamara had its origins in a stream which we convened for the 2nd International Conference on Critical Management Studies held at UMIST in 2001. The Critical Management Conference has now established itself as one of the major arenas for new work in critical management and we used the opportunity to expose and explore a subject which interested us both: Management and Goodness. We were looking for papers which discussed the status, meaning, purpose, deployment, mobilisation, praxis, and development of the notion of the "good" in management. At the same time, we recognised that even this broad definition did not do justice to the complexity of the idea we had in mind. Even to speak of management and goodness in the same terms implies, in Aristotelian thinking, that there is a good management and, of course, this is precisely the idea which we wanted to critique. What is clear is that management has a rhetoric of goodness, hence the notion of the good employer, the good manager, the pursuit of excellence, the pursuit of desired future states and so on. Since "ethics" as a good has become the property of this rhetoric and the pursuit of this management good, goodness itself seemed a good place from which to start.

In our call for papers for the CMS II stream

we had asked potential contributors to give attention to the relationship between management, conceptions of goodness and critique in order to render problematic the implicit notion of "the good" within management discourse. We were gratified to receive a broad range of papers which were both of a high standard and which we thought made an important contribution to the development of this area of work. Contributors to the Stream considered a variety of management contexts - including management training initiatives, organisation change programmes, health and safety policies and the conduct of management research – and in each of these challenged the implicit construction of management as "good".

In selecting papers for this Special Issue, we were looking for contributions which adopted a critical perspective and which used this to examine the way in which "the good" is constructed both within the rhetoric of management and in its practice. Consequently, the work presented is animated by the ongoing need to re-evaluate the construction of meaning in management. Contrary to most conventional management literature which attempts to deal with notions of "goodness" via a relatively superficial and discrete concern for business ethics, our position is that whether management is understood as an activity, an entity or as an ideology, it always carries an implied notion of the good. The heterogeneity of the contributions to this Special Issue demonstrates the breadth of this emergent concern. We are, therefore, grateful to David Boje for setting up Tamara and for his commitment to critical work which has enabled us to publish this collection of papers. We hope the papers in this issue give a flavour of the range and eclecticism of the Management and Goodness stream at the conference.

SOME PRELIMINARY THEORISATIONS

In compiling this text we have sought to develop both a preliminary theorisation and a range of illustrations of interest within the field. For the purposes of initiating such an analysis a number of themes can be isolated.

The first is the polemical rendering of the relationship between management and goodness, that management belongs to a realm of activity

from which considerations of goodness are excluded. This text challenges that view. To take one illustration management training can always be seen as an attempt to fulfil some good purpose or to overcome some perceived deficiency. The ideological mask is normally woven so tightly around this activity that those subject to it cannot see that the goods to which their training aspires – improved customer responsiveness, enhanced listening skills, health and safety awareness and so on represent at the same time particular definitions of goodness. Landen's wide-ranging literature review demonstrates the manifold ways in which Human Resource Management constructs goods as objectives, modes of behaviour and more subtly as ideology. Similarly Haunschild seeks to expose the normative constructions within employee health programmes. Höpfl distinguishes between the patriarchal and the maternal notions of goodness.

A second theme contrasts Aristotelian notions of the good and what (though at the risk of huge over-simplification) may be termed a Platonic notion of 'the good'. If the Aristotelian seeks to understand the good at which things aim, the Platonist seeks to judge whether these things are truly good. In this context the Platonic question becomes: 'Is management good' or perhaps more accurately 'How do we determine whether management is good?' Beadle's paper uses a text from a particular organisational environment (circus) to uncover what is meant by goodness in this context and can be seen as adopting an Aristotelian approach which searches for, rather than assumes an understanding of the good. Similarly Dugal and his colleagues' in their ethnomethodological study invite us into a particular experience of goodness and badness. On the other hand, Wray-Bliss subjects the research methods of avowedly critical management scholars to their own notions of goodness, an approach which may be more clearly seen as Platonic and Haunschild can be seen as starting from the Platonic position in subjecting a particular managerial activity (Health Management programmes) to a critical gaze and judging them against a prior notion of the good, in this case drawn from Foucault.

It is possible to explore this theme only if it is recognised that subtle differences are revealed in the way in which 'good' and its cognates are to

be understood. In this text the term goodness is privileged, a term which typically indicates a criterion of measurement by which judgement is made. Goodness can be seen as a quality which an entity, activity or ideology can be said to contain to greater or lesser extents according to some standard. It is this standard that might be called 'the good' and the provenance and ontology of that standard – whether it is understood as arising out of social practice or as being prior to and separate from practice - is the pivot on which the contrast between an Aristotelian and a Platonic premise may be said to rest. In addition to this, the plurality 'goods' is typically understood as both describing discrete items of value and understandings of particular outcomes.

A third theme running through the text is the relationship between the implicit and the explicit. It has been the experience of the editors that the title 'management and goodness' has met with a mixture of intrigue and bewilderment as if these two terms should never share the same sentence. The inability of managers to discuss their work in ethical terms has long been noted in conventional business ethics research (Bird and Waters, 1994) but if conventional management discourse is a discourse of goodness, we must explain why managers neither act nor speak as if it is. All the papers in this Special Issue demonstrate this relationship to the extent that by giving specific emphasis to the notion of the good, they draw attention to the nature of goodness.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PAPERS

Given the comments above, it is not surprising to find that the papers comprising this Special Issue are deliberately and engagingly eclectic. They have few similarities in style or subject and their authors write from notably differing perspectives. However, despite this, what the papers do share is a common concern to challenge the conventional understanding of "the good" and or "goodness" in organisations. As such, taken together the papers offer a range of insights into this fascinating area and, despite their differences, as has been indicated above, the papers have a number of common themes.

Wray-Bliss's 'Ethical discrimination? Rep-

resenting the Reprehensible' reflects upon the 'goodness' or 'ethics' of Critical Management/ Critical Organisation Studies (COS) research practices and argues that academic representations of others entail an ethical responsibility to the researched, a responsibility to which COS has so far given inadequate attention. Reflecting upon his own research with those who have colluded in discrimination and Stanley and Wise's (1979) research on obscene telephone callers, he explores the nature and limits of responsibility when researching those who have acted reprehensibly. He concludes by arguing that Critical Management/ Critical Organisation Studies "owe(s) some responsibility to 'the researched' of all kinds, whether we morally approve of them or not" (Stanley and Wise 1993:177). There are no easy answers here but Wray Bliss is to be admired for his willingness to open up this sensitive and undertheorised area of work.

Mary Landen's 'Citizenship or Careerism – Perceptions and Impressions of Goodness' focuses on the way in which various trends in organisation and in organisational activity have resulted in increasing dependence on the discretionary efforts, initiatives and judgements of employees and how this has left management with the problem of how to ensure that such discretion is exercised *appropriately* in the service of the organisation. Landen takes the view that the Human Resource Management approach, relying as it does on strategic integration and underpinned by a value-driven approach appeared to many organisations and functionalist theorists to be an ideal mechanism, particularly when designed as encouragement to commitment via social identification and a shared sense of meaning. Landen argues that if culture is the enacted manifestation of organisational identity, management aspiration is that the 'good' employee is one who will learn the cultural reality and enact it appropriately. Expectations of 'good' employees are that they will exhibit not only the appropriate competence, but will also possess the necessary commitment, via identification and emotional engagement, so that they can be trusted to regulate themselves, take decisions that are in the best interests of the organisation and even go that extra mile for the company and the customer. This article gives attention to such expectations and explores their implications. It seeks to expose implicit notions of goodness within

the rhetoric of HRM but finds that these constructions encourage not the uncritical acceptance of managerial goodness at which they aim but rather 'image work and impression management tactics ... with their consequent effect on relationships and performance.' In producing this provocative piece, Mary Landen, has not only raised important issues about the nature and status of HRM in practice but also provided an excellent literature review for anyone interested in exploring her ideas further.

Heather Höpfl's paper argues that conventional patriarchal representations of the organisation reduce the notion of "organisation" to abstract relationships, rational actions and purposive behaviour which always and relentlessly presents itself as a quest for the good and that, in this context, regulation and control is achieved primarily via definition and location. Administration then functions in a very specific sense to establish a notion of "good" order, to establish what is "ordinary" in administrative and managerial practice: "Consequently, care, creativity, quality, ethics, emotions and so forth become the abstract products of the sterile matrix: acknowledged to be good but divorced from goodness". In contrast, this paper seeks to explore ways in which it is possible to restore the (m)other to the text of organisation, to restore the body. Consequently, the paper considers the possibility of a discourse of maternity and moves from this position to examine conceptions of matrix reproduction and conditions of exile. The paper concludes with a challenge to conventional notions of "good" management and a consideration of the implications of this for the political in organisational life. Finally, it looks to the idea of a compassionate community and to embodied goodness, to a goodness based on practice rather than representations. As such, this paper provides a useful platform for Dugal et al's paper which follows since Dugal et al do precisely what this paper advocates and perturbs the text with compelling personal accounts of embodied experience.

Sanjiv Dugal and his colleagues offer a powerful and personal insight into the ways in which definitions serve to regulate and define within organisations. In the introduction to their paper they say, "Campus Bitch and White Trash are the kind of appellations that can draw one into the dark heart

of a world where words wound, images enrage, and speech is haunted by hate. One need look only as far as the latest outbreak of violence in the workplace or on the schoolyard to find examples of how name-calling and bullying can erupt in rage". Quite so and what Dugal et al do with this paper is extraordinary and evocative. In constructing this piece, the authors present a theoretical account of the use of labelling and its consequences and intersperse this with the embodied feelings and evident pain of those subjected to such labelling and abuse. This is done with sensitivity and regard to the research subjects (and this word is used deliberately to refer to those subjected) and in a way which creates a haunting insinuation of the body into the text. But there is more. They have created an appendix to the paper which provides two very rich and personal accounts of labelling and regulation via construction. The authors say, "Our vulnerability to words is a consequence of our being constituted by them. As linguistic beings we have to use words to form reason. We cannot create meaning without structuring our thoughts and feelings with words ... When an ideology hails us, it alters who we are, and, so the argument goes, we recognize who or what we have become". The two stories in the appendices are compelling and distressing. It seems *appropriate* to the text that they are exiled from it: appendages. These are stories of individuals and of their pain - insights into experiences which rarely enter into the world of the management text. Yet they offer an insight into an American way of life and thought which those from outside the US might not suspect or imagine. This paper might best be seen as an attempt to generate goodness in an organisational context through a critical analysis of self and other and, in common with Höpfl's paper, it is concerned with doing 'goodness' rather than discussing goodness.

In his article, 'Humanization through Discipline? Foucault and the Goodness of Employee Health Programmes', Axel Haunschild argues that whereas health management can improve employee well-being and can have positive outcomes for the organization the *mere* goodness of such programmes has to be questioned. First, he shows how health management activities fit in processes of discipline in our society, as extensively analysed by Foucault, and, second, he dis-

cusses the possible normative implications of such a Foucauldian analysis. Thus he poses the question of what is the alternative to taking care of employee health in organizations. In order to attempt to answer this question he subjects the common and seemingly benign activity of Employee Health programmes to Foucauldian scrutiny and asks 'whether a Foucauldian analysis can give us concrete help in talking about the good and bad of company health programmes'. Focussing on the relationship between organisation, health and discipline, Haunschild argues that health management can best be seen as one example of the wider historic process of discipline. To judge the 'goodness' of these programmes requires resources which may not be provided by Foucault and also on the wider debate as to the normative premises of critique. There are similarities here between the issues which Haunschild raises and those raised by Landen and Wray-Bliss, they are concerned with the standpoint from which any critical position can be adopted.

Finally, Ron Beadle uses personal experiences as a member of a circus family to give attention to a neglected area of research. The paper draws on a range of readings and published accounts of circus life and in particular it examines Nell Stroud's book, *Josser: Days and Nights in the Circus* and weaves them together with personal experiences and reminiscences. In doing so, Beadle seeks to develop an understanding of the localised meaning of goodness. Much as in Dugal et al's paper, Beadle is drawing together life experiences and definitions in order to look at practice and, moreover, within what may be regarded as a practice-based community. Indeed, a community in which internal goods – the lived experience of performance and the maintenance of the tradition that upholds it – dominate external goods (money and status rewards accruing to performance). In the light of the paper by Dugal, Eriksen, Mallon and Roy, it is interesting to comment the Ron Beadle grew up both knowing and using the term 'josser'. Though being brought up outside of circus he inhabited a kind of circus nether world: as a non-performer he is a josser but as a member of a circus family he is not. Beadle comments that even today circus people to whom he is known will speak to him of people, shows, acts, props, tricks and so on in a distinctive language – much

of which he claims he fails to understand. Nevertheless, the point is the same, like Dugal et al, Beadle is talking about the language and practices of a performance based community. The comparison is an interesting and instructive one.

In conclusion, the Special Issue offers a diverse group of papers which address a number of issues which throw light on ways in which (the) good can be constructed, theorised and researched from a variety of different standpoints. We having enjoyed working on the collection and we are grateful to the contributors for their hard work and enthusiasm.

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