MANUFACTURING IDENTITY: SYNCHRONICITY AND CORRESPONDENCES IN KRONOS CAPITALISM

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ABSTRACT

A sense of loss of identity exists in modern Kronos capitalism with its constant need to devour its own reproductions in order to survive. Discovery of identity comes through deconstruction and techniques of mysticism which are seen as similar processes. Identity is defined in terms of awareness of multiple levels of being. Understanding of identity lies in the successive abandonment of all kinds of schema or conditioning processes which we summarize by the term organizational grammar.

INTRODUCTION.

Let imagine a scenario. Dorian Gray faces a wall. On the left hand side is the portrait of Dorian Gray himself, disfigured by the ravages of life and time and on the right hand side, a mirror reflecting his beautiful pristine face. Dorian Gray slashes the portrait in self disgust with the same weapon he used to murder its creator, the artist. At that point the position is reversed. The corpse takes on the visage of the portrait and the portrait returns to the original unblemished image. *Where does identity lie? In the observing Dorian Gray? In the portrait? In the mirror image? In the corpse? In the mind of the artist? The reader?* The scene raises many the common questions about the nature of identity . *What does it take to persist from one time to another? What is necessary and sufficient for some past or future being to be you or I? What does it take or mean to be you or I? When did we begin? What will happen when we die?*

Most of the major figures in philosophy have discussed these issues related to time, change and impermanence; to uniqueness or separateness (*Can we sensibly speak of a single observing being?*); to authenticity, when identity, is represented and reproduced as in the Dorian Gray scenario; to the extent to which it is manufactured, altered or manipulated in society by an endless stream of signs and symbols. Such a list of issues is immensely intimidating: so much so that to attempt to tackle them in an essay such as this, invites parody; attempting a thumbnail sketch of the meaning of life.

The essay is not concerned with problems of being *identified with* but with the identity in relation to *being* itself. Identity in the sense of gender, class, nationality or race is being *identified with* something else. Nor is it concerned with collective identity and its construction: but with identity in the sense of *being.* Identity in the sense of *being,* that is, the existence of an observing consciousness, is taken for granted. Yet as Heidegger points out, the history of philosophy is the history of *the forgetfulness of being* (Heidegger, 1996). Being is like nothing, an empty category, the copula *is*. Identity in the sense of being *identified with* (with something else), is in contradiction to identity as *being*. Iago interprets identity through a conundrum, *I am what I am*: an affirmation. Iago the trickster could equally have said *I am not what I am*.

The paper continues, in section 2, by developing the relationship between two streams of thought, postmodernism (or poststructuralism) and mysticism through the respective processes of deconstruction and unveiling, or to use the sufi term, tajalli . Their two approaches to the problem of identity in the sense of *being* (rather than

being identified with)*,* are surprisingly similar. Both are related to the concept of multiple planes (or levels) of being. In deconstruction, as in mysticism, planes of being can be described as planes of understanding. Section 3 follows the idea of multiple levels of being through to the concept of synchronicity in Jung and Swedenborg's notion of correspondences: understanding of both hangs on the existence representations of one level of being, in another. Deconstruction and tajalli are concerned with uncovering implicit hierarchies, or organizing principles rooted in representations on one plane of being, that condition and distort understanding of correspondences with other planes and hide the existence of synchronistic relationships between them. In section 4 we outline the context of the essay, Kronos capitalism . Facing the dilemma of its own dynamism and success capitalism, as a self adaptive system, has evolved a system of manufacturing identity in the form of signs and symbols designed to ensure that endless stream production and reproduction is consumed or devoured: hence Kronos capitalism. Kronos capitalism is itself a correspondence. Manufacturing identity confronts us with the problem of loss of identity: a sense that Havel (1996) describes as going through a transitional period, *when it seems that something is on the way out and something is on the way in,* a cusp or critical point which he describes a postmodernism. Section 5 concludes the paper.

The conundrum, the affirmation/negation of identity is approached in the context of evolutionary capitalism. The evolution of societies, organizations and science has progressed further than evolution within the person and this has become an urgent issue. Mystical disciplines have developed methodologies that address personal evolution directly, deconstructing or unveiling identity in the sense of being: processes summarised by the maxim, *know yourself.* Given the sense of loss of identity and the contribution of capitalism to this sense of loss, it is appropriate to introduce these methodologies into the study of organizations and business.

One of the objectives of this paper is to point to the contribution of mystical sciences to understanding identity in modern capitalism. Capitalism suffers from the dilemma of its own success. Driven by and driving science and technological change in a self adaptive or self reinforcing mechanism, it is constantly challenged by the threat of over production . To the sense of loss of identity, capitalism has responded in the manner we might expect from a self adaptive system, by the manufacture of identity, for its own purposes: conspicuous consumption and demonstration effects; being identified with status and position in society (Veblen, 1899). Capitalism has evolved from production of use and exchange value, to mechanical reproduction and later to the substitution of cognitive tasks by information technology and eventually to the manufacture of signs and symbols which to forge an unbreakable link between consumption and production. A new version of Says law of markets emerges in which demand is identified with supply. Symbols and signs are jointly produced with objects, symbols which signify a mix of anxiety and eroticism, supplying need which is satiated by devouring the objects: satiated, that is temporarily, until a new set of objects and symbols emerge. Identity is manufactured in the marriage of consumption and production; *a modern conjunctio* in which birth (production and reproduction), and death (consumption) are united in marriage (between production and consumption). Thus we have the phenomenon of Kronos capitalism; emerging from the need of capitalism, like Kronos, to devour its own reproductions in order to survive.

The Dorian Gray scenario or text is an illustration of the lack of a single identity; across space, time and planes of being. The existence of many representations of identity disguises identity which exists at some other level of being. Postmodernity or

perhaps we should say poststructuralism and the process of deconstruction, in the denial of meta narratives, uncovers the lack of a single identity. The foundations of mystical traditions are based on the notion that what we habitually perceive as reality, including the reality of a unique and separate identity, are mere illusion and that knowledge of reality is brought about by abandoning the structures and hierarchies of thought that condition perception. There are many different techniques for achieving this. In Sufism the technique is known as tajalli, or unveiling: structures and hierarchies of thought in fact veil reality. Tajalli or unveiling is a process in mysticism closely corresponding to deconstruction.

2. DECONSTRUCTION AS A MYSTICAL TECHNIQUE

Deconstruction is a method of close reading of a text that reveals disguised incompatibilities. On one interpretation, the deconstruction process focuses on binary oppositions, pointing out that such oppositions are structured according to some hidden hierarchy: then the process overturns the text so as to make it say the opposite of what it apparently said: finally the process reassert both, so that they appear as a non hierarchical relationship in a pastiche, in a relationship of difference or irreconcilability.

On this description, deconstruction is as a process in time and space that has a number of steps. The first is to recognise *sense making apparatus*; the schema or frameworks adopted to comprehend, *to make sense of the world by imposing a pattern*. The second step is that of dismantling the apparatus and in so doing exposing deeper hierarchies or structures and in turn dismantling these. The second step is exactly captured by Kafka's parable of the Doorman. The third step in deconstruction is closure, equivalent to *a stop procedure* to a search for a complex algorithm; necessary because unless search has an inbuilt stop mechanism:

further search along these lines will go nowhere because everywhere a new doorway and a new Doorman appears, each more intimidating than the last. That is the third step is to recognise deconstruction itself risks being an apparatus a methodology. The fourth step corresponds to mysticism; throwing away the apparatus of deconstruction itself, which is I guess the reason why Derrida, for example, refused to define deconstruction and why Lyotard (1974) evaded a definition of the postmodern. Such definitions would defeat deconstruction and deny postmodernism by institutionalising them as processes or structures.

This takes us to a second variant of deconstruction: deconstruction of different planes of being. Here the parallel with mysticism is clear. Deconstruction can be seen as a *tajalli*, or unveiling; lifting the veils that are the frameworks or schema for understanding the different (infinite) planes of being. This is expressed mystically by the observation *'Man is asleep, and wakes up only at death'* and the injunction *'die before you die'*: both of which are summarized by the Sufic term *fana,* which is the necessity (in the process of understanding in the sense of direct perception or knowledge by presence), to die to one plane of understanding, before you can move to the next and in succession, you must die to the next . In Kafka's parable of the Doorkeeper, the seeker of the Law is faced with an unending series of keepers, each guarding the entry to a particular level of being. The seeker waits, literally until he dies, a stop mechanism, or *fana*, in that he is told that the door exists especially for him as it is slammed shut (on him as a living, alive to his own conditioning seeker).

Ontology describes the study of different planes of being. Let the symbol for all possible planes of being be *(_)*. The Unconscious in Freud, or more clearly in Jung, represents a different plane of being from that of the material, the experiential or what we term here the realised world *(R)*,

the domain of time and space. Whereas in Freud it is rooted in early experience, in Jung it is part of collective being and transcendental knowledge. The mystic view of different levels of being can be illustrated by the notion of an imaginal. Although, in the mystical view there are uncountable planes of being, we distinguish only three: all contained within *(_)*. Let us liken *(_)* to a gallery.

The material or realised plane we denote *(R)*. It consists of the contents of the gallery that, as Heidegger puts it, that are *there to hand:* tangible or at least sensible things that are occupy time and space. Similarly visitors to the gallery have knowledge of the potential domain *(P),* from guidebooks, memories, previous experience; from knowledge embedded in their traditions, routines and cultures, of what exists in rooms they have passed through or been told about: But the hidden treasures in the gallery *(†)*) only emerge to consciousness as visitors move into newly discovered rooms. They are aware of *(P)* though it may not be realized at the moment in time and space: it is feasible (there to be realized) in *(R).* Heidegger's concept of Dasein corresponds to *(R)* and *(P)*, they are in a sense *ready to hand*.

In mystical literature techniques of creative imagination are means of accessing *(_)*; that is they are a means of creating a bridge between *(_),* on the one hand and *(R)* and *(P)* on the other. In management literature, search of *(†)* is described as exploration and use of what is already known in *(P)*) is described as exploration .

This discussion leads to the notion that *(_),* the container of multiple planes of being is itself an imagination, in much the same way as the earlier scenario of Dorian Gray was an imagination. Currently the notion of imagination has been degraded into mere fantasy, so we will use the phrase creative imagination to capture the process we are describing: in the Sufi tradition being itself is an act of imagination. Creative imagination is

capable of spanning the entire gallery. A span that includes (a) duality and co-existence, irreconcilability and division in *(R),* the plane of representations in time and space, and (b) the discovered, but not realised, *(P)* and (c) the undiscovered *(_)*. In the process of unveiling or *tajalli*, *(R)* and *(P)* are states created by imagination. It is as if *(_)* is essentially beyond all duality, at once *is and not is,* empty and yet filled by states of being, by creative imagination.

The precondition for *tajalli* is *fana*, which I liken to in postmodern terms to deconstruction that of successively abandoning identity in the sense of a unique and separate, self aware, interpreting *I,* in favour of the concept of an infinitely rich gallery *(_).* Acknowledging the diversity and irreconcilability of the pastiche in *(R)* and the *purely temporal and functional nature of structures and interpretations* is the fundamental insight of postmodernity .

3. CORRESPONDENCES AND SYNCHRONICITY

Jung's concept of synchronicity and Swedenborg's concept of correspondences have much in common. Both hinge on the existence of multiple levels of being. In terms of the previous section, *(_)* and particularly *(_)* consist of many distinct planes each with its own geography .

Post renaissance science with its faith in objectivity and rationally knowable laws has led to modern technological civilisation and to evolutionary capitalism. The notion of existence of different levels of being has become questionable, unfashionable despite widespread recognition of the Unconscious. The Freudian notion of the Unconscious (unlike that of Jung) is rooted in time rather than in levels of being; related to memory and experiences of childhood. In cognitive science, identity as a conscious *I* is considered to be nested in a network of interacting neurons. Despite its successes, the scientific view seems to have lost its potential. The concern of science is

restricted to the material dimension, the domain of events in space and time, to *(R)* and *(P)*. **This results in sense of alienation or loss of identity precisely because identity is felt to be multi dimensional. A plethora of books on the subject are a testimony to the perception that evolution at a personal level has lagged behind the evolution of science, technology and organizational structures.**

In Swedenborg's hermeneutics, correspondences exist between celestial or divine things and objects or events in the material world. Ancient humanity, he thought, understood that one level of being was signified in another: this understanding was lost by later humanity who began to reason about spiritual things in the same manner that they reasoned about sensory things. A description of the essence of Swedenborg's correspondences is described by Borges (1999): "..............*each country on earth has a double in heaven, exactly above it. There is a celestial England, a celestial Afghanistan, and a celestial Belgian Congo. (The Arabs believed that a rose falling from paradise would land precisely on the Mosque in Jerusalem.)"*

The Jungian notion synchronicity approaches the issue from a different angle. Connection between different levels of being is seen in psychological terms as between an inner (psychic) and an outer state (event) that is not to be causal, but has the same archetypal root. Synchronicity occurs when an archetype is activated, which Jung considered as the transgressive aspect of the archetype: the aspect that extends into the world of matter and into the world of the psyche: a mapping from *(_)* into *(P)* or into *(R)*.

Jung saw synchronicity is *an acausal connecting principle,* linking internal events, dreams, intuitions and aspirations to external events, in a meaningful, rather than a causal, way. He applied the principle to the anticipation of events (Swedenborg's dream of the fire of London), the connection

between external events through meaning: (the appearance of a scarab in his consulting room at the same time as a woman was relating her dream about a scarab) and the coincidence of events (independent discoveries, such as the calculus by Newton and Leibnitz).

Synchronicity is an evolving concept in Jung's work (for example, Jung 1951b, 1952). In a resume (1955), he defined a number of aspects of synchronicity in relation to the domain of time and space. Essentially this type of definition focuses on the coincidence of events in *(R)*; first, at the same time and the same place; second at the same time but at a different place; and third with an event in future *(R)*. In spite of his understanding of synchronicity, Jung attempted to measure its statistical significance through astrological relationships with events in time and space, thus committing the error, that Swedenborg pointed out; that of reasoning about spiritual things in the same way as sensory things.

The most significant aspect of synchronicity and its link with correspondences is through the recognition of different levels of being. Both point to relationships within *(_),* which in Jungian terms becomes a *unus mundus,* or in our terms, an imaginal gallery, or as mapping from *(_),* into *(_)*, *(P)* or *(R)*: a creation of a self within itself. Put another way *(_)*, *(P)* and *(R)* represent a pastiche of perhaps consonant and dissonant elements, their identity lying in their common source *(_)*. Understanding correspondences and synchronicity requires recognition of many planes of being: recognition that might come from deconstruction or tajalli (corresponding processes).

A postmodern to the problem of identity coincides quite profoundly with the mystical. All the images are representations of Dorian Gray, forming a pastiche, in this case a scenario or text made up of consonant and dissonant elements. Pastiche, derived from the Italian *pasticcio* via the French describes something made up of incongruous often irreconcilable parts. It also has the nuance of an imitation or reproduction of some previous

work, a medley, even a *hodgepodge*. Because there are many images explicit in the scenario or text and implicitly more (we could line the opposing wall with variously distorting mirrors, photographs, cartoons of Dorian Gray, then introduce the reader with his or her interpretations and so on), there is no single observer and no meta-narrative. That is, there is no single *I* separate from the whole. There is only *(_)* which is both empty and full.

4. KRONOS CAPITALISM

The processes that make capitalism work so productively are Darwinian or Schumpeterian in nature. They are unconscious in the sense that they are built into the evolutionary, self adaptive nature of capitalism itself rather than signifying evolution at the personal level; identity as being. Capitalism is in a critical phase. One of the implications of the current period is that an increasing inter-disciplinary approach should be adopted, especially in the study of management and business. Business and organizational studies, for example, are concerned with tackling NP hard problems and much can be learned from physical and natural sciences which study these problems in a different context. Mysticism is normally considered to be outside the academic domain. A proposition underlying this essay is that an important part of the interdisciplinary aspect at this stage is the introduction of mysticism into the mainstream since it contains techniques (that vary from one tradition to another) that are directed at deconstructing the conditioning processes that veil identity in the sense of being.

Doubt, if it is insistence on verification is creative. Means of verification of at different levels of being differ. Technological society was founded upon unconditional faith in objective reality and on general and rationally knowable laws. This kind of knowledge of the world is the domain of science. Mystical knowledge is founded upon direct perception of reality and the concern of mystical techniques is to sensitize perception through processes of deconstruction, *tajalli* or de-conditioning: they differ in detail from one mystical tradition to another but have this same intent.

It is emphasized that knowledge derived from direct perceptions should be no less subject to verification than scientific laws. Scientific methodology may be described as a process of *knowledge by correspondence,* a relationship between the observer and the observed. In the most extreme versions of knowledge by correspondence (positivism, for example), a metaphor for it is the scientist is a mere observer, protected by a plate glass window that facilitates observation in such a way that events or phenomena seen completely objectively and un-coloured by his or her thoughts, feelings, prejudices or moods: the plate glass is impermeable to everything but observation itself: an absurdity. Mystical knowledge or knowledge by direct perception is *knowledge by presence* (Mehdi, 1991) in which there is no separation is posited between the observer and the observed: *knowledge by presence* implies that they are part of the same unity. Mehdi, (1991) a number of philosophers have concluded that the orderliness and uniformity of the nature of mystical experiences seems to exclude the possibility of their being mere hallucinations; an observation close to Jung's justification of the reality of the collective unconscious.

Kronos is a mythical Greek God who consumes his own children for fear of being displaced. Capitalism is in a sense a prisoner of its own dynamism and must consume its own offspring to survive. Darwin pictured nature in continual flux brought about by competition in a scarce environment. Schumpeter's (1948a, 1948b) economic picture of flux was creative destruction: a process driven by technology leading to birth and death of industries and firms. The picture is reproduced in modern business discourse: firms seek competitive advantage; success attracts rivals to

emulate and replace them; failure leads to their elimination. The system is dynamic, but overproduction continually threatens. To preserve the system goods and services must be devoured. Consumption must not be left behind if capitalism is not to overproduce itself into deficient demand and depression.

Consumption becomes not so much the satisfaction of needs, as the continuous creation of needs, a libidinous relation with steam of new products though time. A constant stream of debt, itself a source of anxiety, is needed by to furnish production and consumption. Many products, automobiles, homes, vacations, cups of coffee, dentistry, insurance, laptops, lipsticks, loans, mobiles, grocery stores, face creams, are presented as climactic experiences. Climax is ephemeral, and birth of the new model, reproduction of the climax is only made possible by satiation, consumption and death: death of the earlier offspring, the original model. Globalisation is a temporary solution to the problem of deficient demand, but this in turn leads to increased productive potential and anxiety as jobs are switched to low wage areas.

Earlier versions of capitalism were concerned with producing things *use values* or things that could be exchanged for other things (*exchange values*). But the very dynamism of capitalism, the tendency that supply, driven by technological change and competition, will outrun demand, has led firms to focus on the need to market products through relate them to processes in the mind, emotions and instincts, that are unconscious (*symbolic values*). Veblen wrote of *conspicuous consumption.* Later theorists wrote of *demonstration effects* the need to impress and signify social status. Images, signs, symbols thrown up by marketing no longer bear a relation to material reality For Baudrillard, they stand for nothing but themselves, and refer only to other signs; a series of simulacra.

In a previous I describe capitalism in Jungian terms as a representation or image of the archetype of competition . That is a mapping from the imaginal domain *(_)*, into the realised domain *(R)* in time and space. Archetypes and synchronicity are connected (Main, 1997). According to Jung, archetypes are numinous, and when activated, they relax conditioning, the impact of the Unconscious is heightened. Unconscious elements flow into the conscious more readily, bringing about synchronous events, in our terms as between the archetype and its representations (a mapping) from *(_)*, into *(R)* and between in *(R).* In Swedenborg's terms, synchronicity consists of a correspondence exists between two domains of being, (a) the archetype on a spiritual domain, and (b) its representation an event in time and space.

The description of capitalism as flux is a representation of the realised domain *(R)*. Organizations (as it were) hang on a possibility frontier on which change on all scales is possible, but where large changes (much in the same way as earthquakes high on the Richter scale) are less likely than small changes. Change takes place continuously at the microscopic level, but change at the permeating the entire macroscopic level is less likely.

We now introduce the notion of the conditioning process that limits change in every organizational form: we term this conditioning process organizational grammar. Flux and uncertainty is moderated by organizational grammar. It is a necessary phenomenon that makes life tolerable. It operates on at least three axes; formal informal, external internal and social individual. These axes constitute the morphology of organizational grammar. Formal mechanisms include rules, laws, regulations, treaties, hierarchies, agreements, contracts; informal mechanisms include customs, cultures, habits, norms, missions, visions and values. Formal and informal mechanisms are constructed both internally and externally: firms have their own rules, cultures and so on. In addition there are individual and social values, norms and most important, for the understanding of

identity as being, habits and thought condition individual and social behavior. Syntax in organizational grammar conditions the kind of linkages that are legitimate or possible at a point in time between the various components of the grammar. Together with its morphology and syntax, organizational grammar veils identity.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Organizational grammar is a form of programming, a complex structure with emergent properties. It makes search for solutions manageable. The term grammar is adopted because it captures all the structures (the morphology) that condition behavior and focuses our attention on the importance of linkages (syntax) between structures. Organizational grammar, as I have described it, is essentially what is deconstructed in deconstruction; what is unveiled in tajalli; it is what is *died to* in *fana*. Without organizational grammar, the fate of societies, organizations and individuals would be randomly determined.

At a social, formal or informal level, external or internal to organizations grammar dictates the nature of being *identified with*: the social construction of identity. It is grammar that manufactures identity. Our concern is with identity as being, and hence the conditioning role of grammar at the individual level. The appropriate mode of understanding the role of grammar is to deconstruct it, a process of successively abandoning its morphology, and its syntax: the rules, the schema that condition understanding.

Kronos capitalism describes the kind of grammar that has emerged out of the need for capitalism to solve the dilemmas arising from its very success; that of potential overproduction and the need to manufacture its own Says Law, and install it, through the creation of signs and symbols into its own grammar. In so doing Kronos capitalism represents a correspondence with other levels of being, and its events or representations are synchronicities between what Jung calls the psychic level and the physical or experiential level; that is activations of the competition archetype.

The endless production, reproduction and consumption in Kronos capitalism resemble the endless projections and reflections in the Picture of Dorian Gray. Multiple identities appear to be created and destroyed and unity lost in multiplicity. The sense of loss is enormous. *But loss of what?* What we have called organizational grammar persuades us to mistake the apparent for the real.

Identity in terms of being is associated with an observing consciousness or awareness, existing in the mystical view, at other levels of being. Identity here is associated here with consciousness, and the notion of what constitutes consciousness is consistent with David Chalmers' views (1996). A materialist or functionalist position, loosely described as the cognitive science approach, is accepted up to a point. Decisions are programmed, identity is constructed or manufactured and to that extent they can be simulated by strong AI (Searle, 1998). In modern capitalism the counterpart of AI is contained in its grammar, an important part of which is Kronos, which has emerged beyond use and exchange values.

Management tasks that were formerly thought of as intrinsically cognitive and defining of the identity of the human being, are in fact programmed by organizational grammar. The argument here is that identity, in the sense of being, lies elsewhere: outside organizational grammar. Heidegger saw the problem in terms of authenticity; living in the world, but conscious of the fact of death and the kind of impermanence, mitigated, softened, perhaps sanitized, but not avoided by organizational grammar.

The view here is that the most important issue thrown up by Kronos capitalism lies in its endless production, reproduction and consumption of identity, and consequently as the sense of loss and despair that this generates, the need to widen our approach to the search for identity as being through; mysticism; knowledge by presence. Paradoxically, the search for identity leads

through deconstruction or tajalli to the abandonment of the idea of a separate identity: in the metaphor we adopted it lies in *( )*, the imaginal gallery, which probably means that *fana* is connected with compassion, compassion for the loss of the thing we thought we were seeking in the portrait of Dorian Gray.

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