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This issue is dedicated to the memory of Prof. Lester Levine of Empire State College, the State University of New York.

Editorial

Public Voices: Encouraging Creative Voices

As the public sector journal of humanistic, artistic and reflective expression, *Public Voices* will publish original creative writing, essays, commentaries and reviews of fiction, films and other media. Contributors will include public servants, scholars from many disciplines, and students of public administration and public affairs. *Public Voices* will examine the commitments and sacrifices of public servants; their tenacity in overcoming bureaucratic obstacles; ethical dilemmas with which they grapple; the unintended, but corrupting, consequences of large organizational structures; and the ways in which clients are enmeshed in large systems. In particular, this journal will provide a venue for creative commentary and observations by public servants about public service.

Unorthodox organizational diagnosis is not new, and can be found in the Bible, Greek theater, and Shakespeare. In *The Novelist on Organization and Administration* (Berkeley, 1968) Dwight Waldo found scores of novels which offer valuable insights on leadership, motivation, decision making and other mainstream concepts related to public organizations. In the nineteen-seventies fiction- and science fiction-based collections of readings were used to teach world history, American history, political science and politics. Articles, such as Howard McCurdy's "Fiction, Phenomenology, and Public Administration" which appeared in the *Public Administration Review* in 1973, began to build momentum for an artistic-humanistic approach. *Literature in Bureaucracy* (Avery Press, 1979) utilized a conceptual framework developed by Marc Holzer for exploring key issues in public administration, ranging from power conflicts to corruption to human factors, and a 1987 Conference on "Public Administration, the Arts and the Humanities" addressed issues related to building the capacity of governments to be sensitive and humane.

In the nineteen-nineties artistic and humanistic perspectives have been further developed, but primarily for the management (i.e. business school) market. The "Classic Leadership Cases" project at Hartwick College, for example, utilizes writings as diverse as Homer's *Iliad*, Shakespeare's *Henriad*, and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Sheila Puffer's *Managerial Insights from Literature* (PWS-Kent, 1991) draws on such sources as O. Henry, Franz Kafka, George Orwell, James Thurber, Mark Twain, Joan Didion and Donald Barthelme.

Public Voices may speed the evolution of this approach for public administration, but with a sharper focus on ethics than may be apparent in the parallel management publications. To this point the dominant direction of the commentary has been one-way, indirect and passive: from creative artists and writers producing commentary for public consumption, with little thought as to how to direct that commentary to the presumably uncreative, listless bureaucrats it pillories. Practitioners and students of public service are, however, surprisingly creative in solving problems. They can be equally as creative in producing thoughtful and original fiction or art or essays, as well as perceptive commentaries on books, theater or the visual arts. In part they would be critiquing their critics, sometimes refuting stereotypes, at other times diagnosing organizational ills in greater depth. In part they would be offering provocative alternatives to conventional, "dry" social science. Serving as "foils," or non-threatening surrogate situations, fantasies and reflections may help stimulate serious reflection within the public sector. After all, artists and writers, and public servants in those same roles, have the capacity to outline important issues for the public service. Contributions to this first issue of *Public Voices* are a tantalizing sampler of possibilities:

Freedom of Speech, the cover art by Norman Rockwell, is a confirmation of the efficacy of open government. The citizen who holds the floor at a public meeting has the attention of his peers, and by implication their elected or appointed officials. Not only is his statement demanding of attention, but the process of giving the public a voice in decision making is considered an essential freedom. Decades before freedom of information laws mandated open meetings, Rockwell's message to public servants was that the public's trust in them required that they consider the public's input as both legitimate and valuable.

Creative Insights into Public Service, by Marc Holzer of Rutgers University, contrasts the commitments and sacrifices of career public servants with the disparaging, negative images so evident in the news and creative media. Although negative images are overwhelming, the arts and humanities often contain thoughtful critiques about relationships between bureaucracies and bureaucrats, and between bureaucrats and their clients. Both entertaining and disturbing, they suggest creative possibilities for stimulating ethical dialogues among public servants, and with their critics.

Shakespeare The Organization Theorist, by Jay M. Shafritz of the University of Pittsburgh, is a brief summary of The Bard's advice on organizational life, illustrating how Shakespeare anticipated so much of twentieth century administrative thinking. While William Shakespeare's contributions to literature and the development of the English language have long been acknowledged and thoroughly documented, his insights into modern management and administration have all but been ignored. This is a surprising oversight when you consider that many of his plays deal with issues of personnel management and organizational behavior.

How Will You Explain Your "Other Creative Activity" for Promotion and Tenure? is an interdisciplinary analysis by two tenured professors, Jay S. Mendell and Savina Schoenhofer of Florida Atlantic University, and graduate student Mary Beth Ferrando. They argue for the academic legitimacy of creative writing in applied fields. The authors hold that criteria for promotion and tenure are so hard to pin down that decision-makers (department heads, deans, provosts) and members of departmental, college, and university promotion and tenure (P&T) committees encounter twilight zone cases every year. In the context of a decision process based on rewarding empirical research, the authors explore the risks assumed by a professor in one of the practice disciplines when he or she submits creative artistic or literary work as an addition to or substitute for research. They suggest ways to minimize the risks by clarifying the contribution of such "other creative activity."

Ethical Decision Making: Lessons to Be Learned From Temptation is by Dalton S. Lee of San Diego State University. Ethical reasoning and moral education are two methods currently advocated in the public administration ethics literature. Based on a real-life experience, the author examines these approaches and argues for

including a third approach to ethics based upon a behaviorist perspective.

The Iron Man Challenge of Public Service: Motives, Ethics and Responsibility, by Tennessee high school student Alex Rogers, was selected as a Public Service Essay award winner by the Nashville Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration. Rogers emphasizes the ethical obligations of public servants to act in the public interest, even if such actions are detrimental to their own career interests.

Decision Making and Melville's "Billy Budd, Sailor," by Elsie B. Adams and Darrell L. Pugh of San Diego State University, focuses on the methods used in arriving at a decision, the characters involved in making it, and the consequences of the decision. Their analysis focuses on the elusive human motives, as well as the complexity and ambiguity, that lie at the heart of decision making.

Summing Up is a one act play in three scenes by Seymour Z. Mann, a retired professor at City University of New York and former public sector union executive. Mann portrays the dilemma of an ostensibly successful public administrator who, as he achieves retiree status, is wracked by terrible self-doubts about the true nature of his career reputation. There is a revealing and implicit elucidation of the "impostor syndrome" theme, which gives rise to the concern about one's true performance in pressured management environments. It is a phenomenon not uncommonly experienced among successful careerists. The play ends on a problematic note with respect to the reality of the protagonist's reputation.

Entertaining, dramatic, memorable--fiction, art and reflection can capture our attention. The construction and criticism of unorthodox commentary may provide great returns: more energies directed to solving on-the-job rather than personal problems; more resources focused on legitimate activities; more civil servants who view themselves as public servants; more services which are responsive to clients' needs. And, ultimately, perhaps public administrators will be able to laugh at themselves within bureaucracies they trust and which carry out the public trust.

Marc Holzer
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Creative Insights into Public Service: Building an Ethical Dialogue

Marc Holzer

Public Service as Committed Service

Many people choose public service as a career. Typically they are dedicated to their clients, they put in long hours, and they work under difficult conditions. They are responding to values, abstractions, or callings to serve others, to solve challenging problems, to improve the public welfare. In ancient Athens that commitment by citizens was taken as an oath (Chandler, 1973):

We will strive unceasingly to quicken
the public sense of public duty;
That thus...we will transmit this city
not only not less, but greater, better and more beautiful
than it was transmitted to us.

Contemporary Americans continue that commitment, and graduates of the City College of New York at one time recited that oath upon receipt of their degrees. In his first State of the Union address, in 1961, John F. Kennedy underscored the worth of public service:

Let the public service be a proud and lively career.
And let every man and women who works in any
area of our national government, in any branch, at
any level, be able to say with pride and honor in
future years: "I served the United States Government
in that hour of our nation's need."

In that spirit, the Clinton Administration set forth, and the Congress adopted, a program of national service in 1993.

Complementing such uplifting rhetoric, powerful and positive visual images of the dedicated public servant have always been before us. Depression-era W.P.A. murals, which enliven many post offices and government buildings, portray public servants delivering the mail, building dams, providing health care and protecting citizens--under often adverse circumstances (DeNoon, 1987; Meltzer, 1976; O'Connor, 1973). Television news and entertainment programs frequently portray police, fire and emergency medical workers as heroes.

Of course, most public employees are not involved in dramatic situations, and positive accomplishments by public servants are usually considered neither newsworthy nor entertaining. Rather, most work quietly and directly to improve the quality of our lives. They teach our children, assure our safety, distribute social benefits, rehabilitate the disabled, drive our buses and trains, fix our roads, and monitor the quality of our water and buildings. And they often do so for intangible, rather than just financial, rewards. According to the Public Employees Roundtable (1990), they place "a high value on commitment to public service and the rewards of seeing the consequences of one's efforts." Social worker Mary Virginia Douglass underscores that commitment: "We don't have plush office space like corporate America. For many years we weren't treated like professionals, but this office is very professional....We have to take everybody who comes here. Unlike private agencies, we cannot pick and choose our clientele. You've got to love it to stay....I've been here 25 years." (Reeves, 1989). Teacher Lynn Borg is typical of former corporate executives who are willing to make less in the public sector: "It occurred to me one day that whether I saved the company several thousand dollars or hired 10 people tomorrow it wouldn't make a difference. Some people feel they were put here for a reason, and I guess I feel like that...This was the best thing I ever did. I wake up in the morning, and I can't wait to get there." (Smetanka, 1990). Thomas Downs, who has headed several large public organizations, makes the argument for public service particularly compelling (Downs, 1988):

Only in public service can you find the sense of completion that comes from working on a successful program--to reduce infant mortality, for example,

and then realizing that 35 more children are alive this year as a result of that effort. Only in public service can you participate in a process that helps move individuals from mental hospitals back in to the community. The opportunity to help solve a community problem and then to witness the changes that occur is the cement that binds us to public service...Public service is about babies living, fires extinguished, garbage collected, crimes solved, people moved.

The services, the accomplishments, the problems solved which Downs cites are only some of those which society demands from its public servants. Government is often the necessary, productive sector: it provides services which meet society's needs but which the private sector has abandoned as unprofitable, such as transit and rail systems, or which require collective action, such as public health and criminal justice.

Bureaucrats as Targets

Unfortunately, according to Eileen Siedman, "the American public's love-hate relationship with its government produces demands for services, assistance, and protection while denigrating the people, processes, and costs necessary to meet those demands." (Siedman, 1984) As Siedman suggests, positive images are overwhelmed by their negative counterparts. A cynical public lacks confidence in the public service despite often positive rhetoric, positive images and positive accomplishments.

It is ironic, then, that no group is more maligned by the public than those who serve the public. Unfortunately our society, which has an insatiable appetite for public services, tolerates the news and creative media's ceaseless slander of citizens who comprise the public service. Public servants are stereotyped as "bumbling bureaucrats." They are perceived as underworked and overpaid for jobs "anyone can do." And they are supposedly lacking in ambition, business sense and common sense.

Citizens are just as frustrated by corporate bureaucrats--or "businesscrats"--in their daily dealings with banks, department stores and credit card companies. All large organizations harbor

some officials, i.e. bureaucrats, with pathological tendencies to dysfunctional behaviors. The public's anger vis a vis bureaucracy and bureaucrats, however, is typically and disproportionately directed against public servants. That bias against government's bureaucrats is reinforced daily by reporters, artists, and writers, who almost always accentuate the negative, reworking stereotypes to excess. The net result, as Herbert Kaufman (1981) concludes, is that "more and more people are apparently convinced that bureaucracy is whirling out of control and are both infuriated and terrified by the prospect...[but] the epidemic is more rhetoric than substance."

If such problems are not epidemic, they are still indicative of some important illnesses. Many critiques contain some truths. Public organizations, like all organizations, are sometimes troubled or corrupt, out of date or out of touch. Fortunately, the arts and the humanities are a rich source of critiques as to bureaucracy's impacts upon its servants and its clients.

Bureaucracy vs. Individuality

Unflattering images often bear on the unintended, pathological consequences of the bureaucratic structure upon its own employees. Critics--from social scientists to artists to humanists--argue that bureaucracy is epitomized by the sufficiency of mediocrity, by the adage "don't rock the boat," by a stifling loss of independence. Artists and writers possess especially powerful means to reinforce the contrast between the new employee's eagerness to serve and the incumbent's typical overemphasis on formality, on rules and regulations, on security. They sketch an organizational locale in which individuals lose all sense of independence, pride and initiative. They seem to no longer care, only to go through the motions. Robert Frost's poem "Departmental," for example, is a commentary on compartmentalized efficiency of hierarchical organizations, public or private. Frost warns us that effectiveness may be achieved at the expense of individual discretion and concern. Even the death of a coworker gives no cause to deviate from routine, suggesting that our humanity may become suppressed as our efficiency is enhanced:

No one stands round to stare.
It is nobody else's affair.

It couldn't be called ungentle.
But how thoroughly departmental.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's nineteenth century description of "The Custom House" forces the reader, through the author's role of detached insider, to recognize the encroaching listlessness of spirit, the sapping of intellectual vigor and individual initiative (Holzer, Morris and Ludwin, 1979). Hawthorne clearly suggests that the loss of "capability for self-support" affects every individual who comes to depend on the public payroll for financial security. To Hawthorne, government organizations have debilitating effects upon employees' physical or mental vigor.

The visual arts also underscore that theme of debilitation. In the nineteen-thirties Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* projected one of cinema's earliest notions of the mechanistic organization--worker as machine--in which Charlie is an assembly line worker enmeshed in the machinery, trapped in huge gears with virtually no concern for his individuality. Although the setting for *Modern Times* was industrial, the man-as-machine motif applies to the service and public sectors as well. Although few contemporary American artists seem to comment directly on bureaucracy, the work of George Tooker is especially relevant and powerful. His "Government Bureau" portrays clerks with distorted faces serving anonymous clients from behind frosted glass partitions.

For millenia, government's creative critics have also been concerned that the energies of workers and managers may be corrupted, rather than merely suppressed. Without the possibility of solving problems of performance, they may direct energies to solving problems of personal promotion. They may devolve to playing office politics, to abusing and discrediting fellow employees, to diverting resources. The weaknesses of leadership, for example, endure as images in the Greek tragedies, such as *Oedipus*, and in Shakespeare, such as *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*. (Shafritz, 1992). In Gilbert and Sullivan's *H.M.S. Pinafore*, musical lyrics underscore Sir Joseph Porter's boast that he rose through a hierarchy from office boy to the post of First Lord of the Admiralty by "going along," by identifying so entirely and predictably with the Navy's interests--regardless of whether truth or logic contradicted such interests--that he could safely be placed in command:

Stick close to your desks and never go to sea,
And you all may be Rulers of the Queen's Navee!

The pathologies of bureaucracy were also underscored humorously by the British *Yes, Minister* television series. It is, according to Milton Friedman, a "highly realistic exposure of how an arrogant and self-righteous bureaucracy pulls the wool over the eyes of elected officials." Similarly, Elliott Richardson praises the manner in which it "skewers the pettiness and pomposity to which all bureaucracies are prone." For example, Cabinet Minister Hacker must learn the bureaucratic language in which "under consideration" translates as "we've lost the file," and "under active consideration" indicates "we're trying to find it." When Hacker accuses his Permanent Secretary Appleby of not answering his questions, the perfect bureaucratic answer is "Yes and No."

Bureaucracy vs. Clients

The arts and humanities also argue that bureaucratic behavior is not harmless. Artists and authors hold that the unproductive forces of bureaucracy ultimately impact upon the client, that in many cases bureaucracy has degenerated into a vehicle which is too impersonal and too insensitive for effective response to public demands. The clerk who interprets a rule with unnecessary narrowness, and the official who mindlessly defers to the computer, are repeatedly portrayed as examples of the unproductive nature of bureaucratic thinking. They are the symptoms of a mindset which often enlarges, rather than reduces, problems.

Bureaucracy is one of the cartoonist's favorite foils. Newspaper comic strips and editorial cartoons pound away at the public service, in which bureaucrats are portrayed as simple-minded buffoons. Although such officials attempt to dehumanize their clients, they are themselves often outwitted by citizens fighting back against onerous paperwork. Cartoons which appeal to the public's sympathies are typically labeled "Bureau of Bureaucracy," "Red Tape," "The Runaround" or unintelligible "Government Speak." (NCPD)

That visual message is evident throughout the world. Russian art, for example, has a long tradition of arguing that the problems of bureaucracy have to be overcome if public services are to be delivered as expected. Cartoon parodies of bureaucracy have

appeared in Russia for well over a century. In the nineteen-sixties and seventies ad hoc groups, such as "The Fighting Pencil" in Leningrad, produced posters with the support of local officials "to open the boils on the body of Soviet society." (NCPP) In the nineteen-eighties anti-bureaucratic posters were widely available throughout the Soviet Union, arguing that bureaucracy was an obstacle to the success of Glasnost and Perestroika. These posters were warning that political and bureaucratic changes must go hand-in-hand.

In some instances government's clients are not merely inconvenienced or discouraged. Dickens, in *Containing the Whole Science of Government*, warns us that insensitivity easily shades into injustice. In *The Novelist on Organization and Administration*, Dwight Waldo finds a pessimistic view by scores of authors as to administration's impact on individual values. Franz Kafka's stories, for example, are some of the most depressing anti-client tales. Perhaps the most recognized critic of bureaucracy, even to the extent of the generally-accepted adjective "Kafkaesque," Kafka suggests that impersonal rules may reduce individuals to objects, that bureaucrats may become inured to the public's pain. In *The Trial*, the character K. is the victim of a seemingly irrational, faceless organization. Camus' *The Plague* is a macabre, bureaucratic novel. Orwell's *1984* or Zamiatin's *We* portray oppressive governments. Kosinski's *Cockpit* relates an incessant shuffling between offices to gain official recognition or authorization, and the special privileges of top level bureaucrats; Kosinski portrays a government which, instead of serving its citizens, serves instead to victimize or even to destroy them.

In the contemporary press we continue to find the same message: official indifference can obstruct or deny life's essentials ranging from medical care and decent housing to retirement benefits and vocational training. In Los Angeles, under the headline "Slain Woman's Son Faults Bureaucracy," a newspaper reported that "the tearful son of a woman allegedly killed by her mentally ill daughter told a joint legislative committee Tuesday that he repeatedly tried to obtain treatment for his sister, but failed because the state's bureaucratic system would not provide it...I tried everything. I called every agency. There was nothing--zero." (NCPP)

Movies, reaching an especially broad audience, may be the most powerful vehicle for commentary on bureaucratic injustice. For

example, in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Nurse Ratched and other staff serve the controlling needs of the "system," with the horrible consequences of transforming a sane patient into a compliant vegetable. *Ghostbusters* places an incompetent bureaucrat at the crux of disaster. In a "by-the-book" scenario, a functionary of the Environmental Protection Administration precipitates an unnatural disaster by ordering the shutdown of a ghost containment facility. Despite warnings, he opts for rules over restraint and power over prudence. By optimizing very narrow concerns he is missing the larger picture. Fortunately, the Mayor's common sense and political instincts ultimately triumph over such bureaucratic nonsense, sending a message that, left to their own myopic devices, bureaucrats will often act counter to the public's interests.

Overall, then, public bureaucrats take a beating. Almost without exception artists and writers confirm a pessimistic view of bureaucracy's impact on its clients and even its own employees. Even when we find positive images, they may be overwhelmed, as in the one passage in Steinbeck's classic 1939 novel (and movie) *The Grapes of Wrath* which praises an effective federal bureaucracy for protecting its clients in a humane work camp; but his overarching theme condemns corrupt local bureaucrats--police in league with banks to evict sharecroppers, and with growers to exploit farm workers. Our society has been presented with, and has bought into, an image of public servants as uncaring and untrustworthy, entangled in red tape, failing to apply the common sense with which average citizens are endowed. The popular view of the public bureaucracy is that it barely produces intended results, but is profuse in its production of negative and unethical behaviors--stifling, demoralizing, corrupting, impersonal and unjust.

Ethical Behavior as Productive Behavior

The irony of this stereotype is that American public administration was implicitly founded on the twin concerns of efficient, "businesslike" management and ethical, apolitical management. Efficiency is still a priority. But the ethical (mis)behaviors which artists and writers emphasize are a decidedly secondary concern. Fortunately, bureaucracy's critics--reporters, artists and writers--persistently address the subtle range of ethical issues within public organizations. Those issues are not just outright theft and corruption, which the press attends to so well, but suppression of

initiative, misdirection of effort, and insensitivity toward the public. They portray the modern structures which house public organizations as some of our most unethical and dangerous environments.

Of course, elected and appointed officials have visibly and publicly expressed their ethical concerns. Codes of ethics have been drafted as uplifting statements and standards by governments and professional organizations, such as the American Society for Public Administration and the International City Management Association. But they are usually posted, filed and ignored. Ethical behavior cannot be accomplished just by the construction and publication of such codes or the verbalization of ethical oaths. Degree or training programs for public management may now contain one course on ethics (often not even required), but often as an insufficient overture to the problem. Anti-corruption legislation (such as ethics acts) and administrative measures (such as inspectors general) suppress some theft and blatant corruption, but do virtually nothing to change the dominant organizational culture. It is a culture in which too many problems are meekly overlooked by officials who have placed their career interests before their ethical interests, who have opted for safe, silent acquiescence rather than dangerous, vociferous objection.

Yet if public bureaucracies are to regain a measure of public trust and to counter pervasive negative stereotypes, then ethical behavior must be a part of the productive service delivery system. The organizational culture must acknowledge, rather than punish, acts of conscience. Mary Guy's adage is both succinct and powerful: the search for excellence must begin with ethics (Guy, 1990). And as Willa Bruce (1994) suggests, the operational relationship is straightforward: ethical people are productive people.

Beginning an Ethical Dialogue

Unfortunately, the ethical solutions implicit in art and fiction--untangle red tape, respect people as human beings, concentrate on the organization's intended outcomes--are still viewed by the public as eluding the public sector. The problems of bureaucracy, particularly the ethical problems, seem not to have diminished, and this apparent failure to respond is still puzzling government's critics. But perhaps one shortcoming of artistic and humanistic criticism is

that it is a passive, one-way relationship: bureaucrats are criticized for their problems, but rarely engaged in problem solving dialogues by their colleagues or their critics.

Fortunately, many bureaucrats seem eager to enter into a dialogue, as evidenced by the anti-bureaucratic messages which often adorn their offices and graphically convey their frustrations. Posters and plaques which are humorous vehicles for serious concerns are also silent arguments that the mindset of bureaucracy is slowly draining the public's servants. Typical office missives from such sources represent a healthy anti-bureaucratic attitude that often appears on office walls:

You have not converted a man because you have silenced him.

It's difficult to soar with eagles when you work with turkeys.

When there is fear of failure, there will be failure.
(Gen. George Patton)

Unhealthy organizations need not be tolerated, especially in a public sector which needs to rebuild public trust. In pursuit of a stronger ethical fabric, bureaucrats need to begin dialogues on ethical issues between themselves. They need to struggle with the enduring, but difficult, questions of ethics and performance which are emphasized by the unorthodox media. These may include, but are not limited to, such questions as:

Does bureaucracy suppress or misdirect creativity?

Can effective leaders be permitted to overlook ethics?

Is whistleblowing morally mandatory?

Does one's career self-destruct in the process?

Does a public employee have discretion (or degrees of freedom) in interpreting rules and regulations?

If an organization continues to act wrongfully, should we leave? And at what cost?

It is just as important for the public service to pose difficult questions to its critics. Forums might range over seminars or published symposia with authors, artists and directors. A constructive, rather than defensive, dialogue could acknowledge the relevance and power of many artistic-humanistic insights. It could also begin to counter stereotypical, simplistic images by posing difficult questions to bureaucracy's critics:

Are you aware of our quiet successes (which are often not reported in the press)?

Isn't some red tape necessary to prevent fraud and theft by clients as well as service providers?
Doesn't society demand such controls?

How can we assure fair, impartial treatment unless bureaucracies are designed with impersonal rules?

Why are the images of the public service in our most powerful media almost universally negative?

Shouldn't "good bureaucrats" also be praised and profiled?

Shouldn't public sector organizations allow their officials the greater degrees of freedom and trust found in the "model" private sector?

Conclusion

Neither set of questions will generate neat answers. And neither group should be permitted to avoid the questions posed by the other. The arts and humanities offer a provocative, relatively untapped source of organizational insights. They deserve our attention. They also offer creative models through which public servants might more widely and intensively consider ethical issues of personal and organizational efficacy.

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Shakespeare The Organization Theorist

Jay M. Shafritz

While William Shakespeare's contributions to literature and the development of the English language have long been acknowledged and thoroughly documented, his insights into modern management and administration have been all but ignored. This is a surprising oversight when you consider that many of his plays deal with issues of personnel management and organizational behavior.

Remember *Hamlet*, the poignant case study of a too sensitive young executive who fails to move up in the organizational hierarchy because of his inability to make decisions. What is *Julius Caesar* if not a very hostile takeover attempt by disgruntled stockholders? The tragedy of *Macbeth* was that the title character was a ruthless workaholic who allowed his overly ambitious wife to egg him on to the top only to find that he couldn't hack it in the end. Who has not felt compassion when seeing *Othello*, the tale of a minority manager who incurs resentment because of his personnel policies and then finds that jealousy at the office leads to murder? And is not *King Lear* a warning to all executives of family businesses on the perils of divestiture and early retirement?

Modern management has its gurus such as Peter Drucker and Tom Peters. William Shakespeare is certainly, if not chronologically, their peer. He just needs a bit of interpretation. Remember the character in Moliere's 1670 play, *The Would-Be Gentleman* who suddenly said to himself one day: "Good Heavens! For more than forty years I have been speaking prose without knowing it." It is the same with Shakespeare. Most managers have read or seen at least some of his plays, but have yet to realize that they have been reading organization lore. The interpretive commentary which

follows merely seeks to bring out the management concepts that were always there.

Shakespeare surely anticipated the bureaucracy of modern organizations. What else could Hamlet have meant when in *Hamlet* (Act III, scene i) he refers to "the insolence of office"? Obviously this is one of the earliest instances of "bureaucrat bashing."

In two longer passages from two other plays, Shakespeare provides portraits of bureaucratized societies using the metaphor of a bee hive. In *Troilus and Cressida* he has Ulysses (Act I, scene iii) use the image of the hive to describe the hierarchical structure of Greek military society:

When that the general [society] is not like the hive
To whom the foragers shall all repair,
What honey is expected? Degree being vizarded
[hidden],
The unworthiest shows as fairly in the mask.
The heavens themselves, the plants, and this centre
[earth]
Observe degree, priority, and place,
Insisture [regularity], course, proportion, season,
form,
Office, and custom, in all line of order.

Shakespeare, a political conservative, was greatly concerned that established government and organizational hierarchies be maintained. Thus he has Ulysses explain later in this same scene what happens when the elements of a system fall out of their "line of order":

But when the planets
In evil mixture to disorder wander,
What plagues, and what portents, what mutiny.

In *Henry V*, Shakespeare has the Archbishop of Canterbury explain (Act I, scene ii) how Heaven has ordained a hierarchically ordered universe wherein each person is assigned an occupational specialization, a social rank, and formal obligations:

Therefore doth heaven divide
The state of man in divers functions,
Setting endeavor in continual motion,
To which is fixed, as an aim or butt,
Obedience; for so work the honey-bees,
Creatures that by a rule in nature teach
The act of order to a peopled kingdom.
They have a king and officers of sorts,
Where some, like magistrates, correct at home,
Others, like merchants, venture trade abroad,
Others, like soldiers, armed in their stings,
Make boot upon the summer's velvet buds,
Which pillage they with merry march bring home
To the tent-royal of their emperor;. . .

Note how Shakespeare uses the concept of division of labor: "heaven divide . . . man in divers functions." Later in this same long speech, the Archbishop of Canterbury further develops this concept:

As many fresh streams meet in one salt sea;
As many lives close in the dial's centre;
So many a thousand actions, once afoot,
End in one purpose. . . .

While books on the history of organization theory generally credit Adam Smith in his *Wealth of Nations* (1776) with pioneering this concept, few seem to realize that Smith, the "father of economics," must have been a disciple of Shakespeare, the father of organization theory.

Virtually every student in every introductory course on management learns of the Hawthorne experiments made by the Harvard Business School at the Hawthorne Works of the Western Electric Company during the late 1920s and early 1930s. The researchers stumbled upon a finding that today seems so obvious--that factories and other work situations are, first of all, social situations. Thus managers, if they are to be optimally effective, have to be aware of both the formal as well as the informal organization. Of course, Shakespeare had already shown that those managers who must rely only upon formal authority are at a disadvantage when compared to those competitors who can also mobilize the informal strength of their organizations. Shakespeare demonstrated this when in *Macbeth* (Act

V, scene ii) he has Angus describe Macbeth's waning ability to command the loyalty of his troops:

Those he commands move only in command,
 Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
 Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
 Upon a dwarfish thief.

Any manager whose title hangs "loose about him" does not command the full potential of his organization; he or she cannot inspire motivation -- they can only order movement. The same loss of an organization's full potential occurs if managers allow discipline to become too lax. In *Measure for Measure*, the Duke (Act I, scene iii) offers this lamenting description of a society where the informal norms which developed over time made "biting laws" things to be "more mock'd than fear'd":

We have strict statutes and most biting laws,
 The needful bits and curbs to headstrong steeds,
 Which for this nineteen years we have let slip;
 Even like an o'ergrown lion in a cave,
 That goes not out to prey. Now, as fond fathers,
 Having bound up the threatening twigs of birch,
 Only to stick it in their children's sight
 For terror, not to use, in time the rod
 Becomes more mock'd than fear'd; so our decrees,
 Dead to infliction, to themselves are dead;
 And liberty [license] plucks justice by the nose;
 The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
 Goes all decorum.

Shakespeare's most famous acknowledgement of the importance of informal norms occurs in *Hamlet* (Act I, scene iv) when the Danish Royal Court noisily drinks toasts to the accompaniment of drums and trumpets. Horatio, startled by this unusually noisy practice, asks Hamlet if this is "a custom." Hamlet replies:

But to my mind, though I am native here
 And to the manner born, it is a custom
 More honour'd in the breach than the observance.

Thus Shakespeare has illustrated that while formal procedures are in place, the organization usually ignores them. Often this is for the

good. Western literature is full of examples of servants not obeying stupid or ill advised orders of their masters. As Posthumus asserts in *Cymbeline* (Act V, scene i):

Every good servant does not all commands;
No bond but to do just ones.

Shakespeare anticipated many of the findings about human behavior in organizations that were first brought to the formal attention of management in the twentieth century. For example, in the 1940s psychologist Abraham Maslow first put forth his "needs hierarchy" by which individuals progressively reach self-fulfillment and become "all that they are capable of becoming." This theory of human motivation holds that it is all right that many individuals may never reach their goals because it is the striving, the ambition, that is paramount. Yet Shakespeare sums this all up in a single line when he has Cressida in *Troilus and Cressida* (Act I, scene ii) say: "Men prize the thing ungained more than it is."

Then there is J. Sterling Livingston's 1969 *Harvard Business Review* study of "Pygmalion in Management" in which he reports that management expectations of employee performance tend to become self-fulfilling prophecies. Yet Shakespeare had summed the essence of this scholarly analysis in two lines from *The Merchant of Venice* (Act III, scene iii) when Shylock says to Antonio:

Thou call'dst me dog before thou hadst a cause,
But since I am a dog, beware my fangs.

Shakespeare even anticipated the work of Frederick Taylor, the "father of scientific management." Early in this century Taylor published his pioneering analyses of the best way to organize work. He wrote that jobs should be designed so that employees don't wear out too early in the day. Physical work should be structured so that it can be continued all day -- steady persistent effort was better than exhausting spurts. Yet John of Gaunt in *Richard II* (Act II, scene i) explained this very concept and thought himself "a prophet" for it:

Methinks I am a prophet new inspired
And thus expiring do foretell of him:
His rash fierce blaze of riot cannot last,
For violent fires soon burn out themselves;

Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short;
 He tires betimes [quickly] that spurs too fast betimes [early].

Many a management meeting offers a demonstration of Miles' Law (first formulated by Rufus E. Miles, Jr. in the late 1940s when he was an analyst in the Bureau of the Budget): "Where you stand depends on where you sit." Thus managers may be expected to argue for the policy position of the organizational unit which they represent. Yet the essence of Miles' Law is clearly anticipated by Philip the Bastard in *King John* (Act II, scene i):

Well, whiles I am a beggar, I will rail
 And say there is no sin but to be rich;
 And being rich, my virtue then shall be
 To say there is no vice but beggary.
 Since Kings break faith upon Commodity
 [expediency],
 Gain, be my Lord, for I will worship thee.

As for people who work only for "gain," the Fool has a song about them in *King Lear* (Act II, scene iv):

That sir which serves and seeks for gain,
 And follows but for form,
 Will pack when it begins to rain,
 And leave thee in the storm.

While he never used the term, Shakespeare understood the basics of systems analysis -- the methodologically vigorous collection, manipulation and evaluation of organizational data. He knew that any analysis had to start with the present situation. As Lady Macbeth says in *Macbeth* (Act III, scene ii): "Things without all remedy should be without regard: what's done is done."

Shakespeare would also have been quite comfortable with the scientific method of today. After all he has Fluellen in *Henry V* (Act V, scene i) exclaim: "There is occasions and causes why and wherefore in all things."

The main reason to examine systems, whether organizational or mechanical, is to solve actual problems. In *The Merchant of Venice*

(Act I, scene i) Shakespeare has Bassanio offer this basic troubleshooting technique:

In my schooldays, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way with more advised watch,
To find the other forth and by adventuring both,
I oft found both.

Sometimes a "more advised watch" is all it takes -- even today.

A transformational leader is one with the ability to change an imbedded organizational culture by creating a new vision for the organization and marshalling the appropriate support to make that vision the new reality. Perhaps the best known transformational leader is General George S. Patton, Jr., who during World War II took charge of a defeated and demoralized American army in North Africa and transformed it into a winning team. The task was different but arguably no less difficult for Lee Iacocca when he took charge of a Chrysler Corporation on the verge of bankruptcy and disintegration and brought it back into profit. Similar challenges faced the leadership of AT&T when it went from a monopoly public utility to a company that had to change its corporate culture to compete in the open market.

Shakespeare, in *Henry V* (Act V, scene ii), has King Henry, in courting his future wife, Katherine, explain how they will be transformational leaders: When Katherine, the daughter of the King of France, explains in response to King Henry's demand for a kiss to seal their engagement, that "it is not the fashion for the maids in France to kiss before they are married," King Henry assures her

O Kate, nice customs curtsy to great kings. Dear
Kate, you and I cannot be confined within the weak
list [boundary] of a country's fashion: we are the
makers of manners, Kate and the liberty that follows
our places stops the mouth of all find-faults.

The one thing that all transformational leaders have in common is that they, as Shakespeare said, "are the makers of manners" and because of "the liberty that follows" from the positions that they hold, they have the power to "stop the mouth(s)" of those who would find fault with their reforms. Thus Shakespeare uses a

request for a kiss as the basis for an analysis of why those who don't support organizational reforms can kiss off.

Since we're talking about Henry V and Katherine, note that she was the original "trophy wife" -- not the modern kind (the young second wife of a much older status conscious executive) but the literal kind; Henry conquered France and brought her back as a "trophy."

Only in the twentieth century did the long known concept of unity of command, that the entire organization should be responsible to only one person, become firmly established as one of the most basic principles of management. Yet Shakespeare wrote of it in *King Lear* (Act II, scene iv) when he had Regan (one of Lear's daughters) say:

How, in one house,
Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

Shakespeare knew that joint command, which was practiced in ancient Rome, all too often led to indecision and defeat. Thus unity of command became conventional wisdom long ago. Niccolo Machiavelli, the greatest political analyst of the Italian Renaissance, wrote in 1517 that "it is better to confide any expedition to a single man of ordinary ability rather than to two even though they are men of the highest merit." Military analysts from Napoleon to Eisenhower have agreed. When the modern corporation was created in the nineteenth century, it was structured on the military model of hierarchical command. While there are occasional deviations from this, they are the exception to the rule. Shakespeare, and all organizational analysts since, knew that it was "almost impossible" for "two commands" to "hold amity." Why? Because as Shakespeare explains in *Coriolanus* (Act III, scene i):

When two authorities are up,
Neither supreme, how soon confusion
May enter 'twixt the gap of both, and take
The one by th' other.

Shakespeare knew that it was best to place people in jobs they enjoyed once they were hired. Modern job design experts seek to create positions that employees find intrinsically self-fulfilling. It is as Antony said in *Antony and Cleopatra* (Act IV, scene iv):

To business that we love we rise betime,
And go to 't with delight.

Even Iago knew in *Othello* (Act II, scene iii) that: "Pleasure and action make the hours seem short." The essence of modern job design philosophy is perhaps best summed up by Tranio in *The Taming of the Shrew* (Act I, scene i):

No profit grows where is no pleasure ta'en.
In brief, sir, study what you most affect.

Very often the personnel policies of large organizations are dysfunctional -- their rigid rules often defeat their own purposes. Talented employees are often inadequately rewarded and quit as a result. Only then is it realized how valuable they were -- because it proves so difficult to replace them. In *Much Ado About Nothing* (Act IV, scene i) Shakespeare has Friar Francis observe this same problem:

It so falls out
That what we have we prize not to the worth
Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,
Why, then we rack the value, then we find
The virtue that possession would not show us
Whiles it was ours.

One of the most difficult aspects of personnel management is firing people. It's even worse if you are the one losing the job. Being fired in an organizational context may be compared to being killed in a battle. Similar considerations often apply. One takes risks to achieve gain. If you are defeated in battle, you lose your life; if you are defeated in an organizational war, you often lose your job. Those who constantly worry about such losses tend to be less effective in battle or business than those who are like Caesar in *Julius Caesar* (Act II, scene ii) and can philosophically accept their eventual death (or firing):

Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear:
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

Top executives often tend to make it as hard as possible for others to follow their paths to success -- perhaps this is because they fear possible rivals. Shakespeare knew that those who succeed in rising to the heights of their organization's pyramid often spend an inordinate amount of time worrying about being supplanted by those with more youthful ambitions. In *Julius Caesar* (Act II, scene i) Shakespeare has Brutus observe this all too common phenomenon:

But 'tis a common proof,
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost rung
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend.

Tom Peters, the best-selling author of *In Search of Excellence* (1982) and *Thriving on Chaos* (1987), is a strong advocate of "management by wandering around." This calls for an executive to test the accuracy of reporting systems of making random visits to employee work sites to gain information about what is really happening -- as opposed to what the various levels of middle management say is happening. As Peters puts it: "You must visit and chat with these knowledgeable people where and when the action is -- at 3 a. m. on the loading dock," for example. This is exactly what Shakespeare has King Henry do on the eve of the Battle of Agincourt in 1415. In *Henry V* (Act IV, scene i) the King, knowing that his outnumbered army must fight the French in the morning, borrows a cloak to disguise himself so that he may randomly roam about the campfires of his troops and take their measure. The Chorus (the narrator) calls this "A little touch of Harry in the night."

The information he gains by wandering around, mainly that the men are fearful that they are massively outnumbered, he uses in his famous "St. Crispin's Day" speech (Act IV, scene iii) to his troops on the morning of battle. He begins by addressing the fact that they are outnumbered three to one:

If we are mark'd to die, we are enow [enough]
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men, the greater share of honor.

Then turns their numerical inferiority to advantage with one of the best known motivational speeches in all of English literature -- made all the more memorable by the fact that it celebrates one of England's greatest victories.

This day is call'd the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian.
He that shall live this day, and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbours,
And say 'To-morrow is Saint Crispian:'
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say 'These wounds I had on Crispin's day.'
Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day: then shall our names,
Familiar in his mouth as household words,
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester,
Be in their flowing [brimming] cups freshly
remember'd.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
From this day to the ending of the world,
But we in it shall be remembered:
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother; be he ne'er so vile [lower
class],
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.

It is interesting to compare Henry's offer of perpetual glory to General George S. Patton's parallel statement to American troops just before D-Day in 1944:

There's one great thing you men can say when it's all over and you're home once more. You can thank

God that twenty years from now, when you're sitting around the fireside with your grandson on your knee and he asks you what you did in the war, you won't have to shift him to the other knee, cough, and say, "I shovelled shit in Louisiana."

Shakespeare, the managerial psychologist par excellence, knew that leaders had to offer the positive reinforcement of glory (or wealth) as opposed to the negative reinforcement of merely not having been a Louisiana shoveller; that the manager who wanders around has to discover what reinforcements are needed -- and provide them.

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How Will You Explain Your "Other Creative Activity" for Promotion and Tenure?

*Jay Mendell, Savina Schoenhofer
and Mary Beth Ferrando*

Other Creative Activity (OCA)--Is It Research? (Should It Be?)

Whether to call an activity research, instruction, or service can be a baffling decision. Reducing an academic career to parts and putting the parts in pigeonholes is artificial, wrong-headed, and contrary to modern holistic thinking. Yet, if the promotion and tenure process requires arbitrary distinctions, the candidate is put on a tough spot. The committees and decision makers who encounter P&T evaluation packages may not want to ponder broad philosophical arguments or may have dealt with similar arguments and decided that categories are indeed fair and convenient; and even if there is a discussion in the committee, the candidate will not be allowed to trail along after the committee advocate and the P&T documents to argue the case for holistic evaluation.

"Other creative activity" should be put where it will weigh heavily, in the research pigeonhole, probably; and then the candidate's advocate in the committee should be coached to tell the story with conviction in the P&T committee. The argument has to be explained in writing, too, so it can be echoed in recommendation letters from the department head and dean and outside evaluators.

Among the most difficult cases to assess are OCA contributions in the performing and fine arts and creative writing, when they are offered by someone attached to one of the practice disciplines, as substitutes for or additions to conventional research. It is hard enough for a P&T committee to evaluate OCA in the performing and fine arts in departments such as English where poets and critics are allowed to coexist: when a science, engineering, public administration, business, nursing, or education professor insists on claiming original art or literature as research, the job of the P&T committee becomes a nightmare.

Permit Us to Drop a Few Names

Many professors in empirically based disciplines have done creative work outside their fields. Chemists as poets, mathematicians as musicians, and nurses as artists--in all fields there are people who commit themselves to diversity of creative expression. The notion of pursuing intellectual challenges in many disciplines is embodied in the Renaissance Man. The gifted men of the Renaissance sought to develop skills in all areas of knowledge, in physical development, in social accomplishments, and in the arts. Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) was an accomplished architect, painter, classicist, poet, scientist, and mathematician. Leonardo da Vinci was an artist, a scientist, a musician, and writer. (Of course, Leonardo should be able to obtain tenure somewhere! Others should think carefully about how they are going to claim credit for OCA.)

Many recent scholars have combined the pursuit of empirically based disciplines and artistic, creative disciplines. C. P. Snow (1905-1980) was a physicist, novelist, and government administrator. He worked on molecular physics at the University of Cambridge, and later became a university administrator and scientific advisor to the British government. In the 1930's Snow began an 11-volume novel sequence, comprising an analysis of bureaucratic man and the corrupting influence of power. Snow wrote about science and literature in *The Two Cultures of the Scientific Revolution* (1959), which argued that practitioners of either of the two disciplines know little about the other and find it difficult to communicate with the other. Roald Hoffmann (b. 1937) of Cornell University was co-recipient of the 1981 Nobel Prize for Chemistry and subsequently published books of poetry. During the Eisenhower presidency, political scientist Eugene L. Burdick co-

wrote *The Ugly American*. The year in which *The Ugly American* reached best seller status, 1959, was a challenging year to write a best-seller, but William Lederer and Eugene Burdick achieved this with a novel about the administration of U. S. aid in southeast Asia. Other books on the best-seller list were *Doctor Zhivago*, *Lolita*, *Exodus*, and *Advise and Consent*, which all became motion pictures. Another novel by Burdick and Harvey Wheeler, *Fail-Safe*, also became first a best-seller and then a motion picture.

However, before you remind the P&T committee of the artistic contributions of these illustrious academics, consider striking out the names of those still living, lest the P&T committee wonder, *Why hasn't the candidate included letters of reference from these folks?*

OCA -- Can It Hurt You?

OCA can slow your academic progress and direct attention away from your accomplishments. One of us saw the following: an associate professor was frustrated in promotion partially because of "too much out of discipline publishing." What was the damning evidence? Several articles in respectable journals specializing in the economic implications of his own social science discipline and a letter of support from an economist. There were other factors, of course, but such "flagrant out of discipline publishing" seemed to be the most irregular aspect of an otherwise conventional career, and the resulting discussion provided time for several of the committee to thumb through his documents and raise additional issues.

Two of us have been members of our university's P&T committee, the one that reads each package of documents and makes recommendations to the provost. We noticed that, faced with a first-time tenure application (or any promotion recommendation), the committee tended toward finding fault, withholding a positive recommendation, and asking the candidate to remove perceived weakness and uncertainties and try again the next year.

In an environment where "learning more and more about less and less" is safe and P&T members see no need to take quick affirmative action, even a small involvement in "other creative activities" might be as perplexing as the "out of discipline" problem described above. Some academics believe in asking for evidence of 100% effort to master a single narrow field and are very suspicious of creative

work from unusual sources. *Does it reflect a lack of commitment to mastery? Is it frivolous? Is it possibly an attempt to escape to an area where peer review is weak?* In tenure, a \$1,000,000+ offer of lifetime employment is at stake, and it makes sense, maybe, to wait and see if conventional research can be added.

The issue is different if promotion from tenured associate professor to full professor is involved, since one often wonders if tenure has already extinguished the candidate's fire of scholarship. *Has this scholar deserted empirical research altogether? Am I supposed to take this stuff seriously? How much work can it possibly involve? Is this candidate loafing?* Such questions are probably damaging if left unspoken and unexamined, so they have to be raised and addressed explicitly in letters from department heads, deans, and outside referees.

OCA Is Hard to Evaluate Even in Disciplines Where It Is Expected

Each department at our university evaluates faculty in a) instruction, b) research and other creative activity, and c) service. Consider research and other creative activity. In some programs, such as theatre, music, and creative writing, artistic expression is put without question into research and other creative activities. Knowing where to pigeonhole an activity does not make it easy to evaluate, however, when it reaches the university-level P&T committee.

It is hard enough to evaluate articles in refereed journals, harder still to assess fiction and poetry, and hardest of all to evaluate public performance and exhibition, partially because cases come up so seldom that turnover of membership causes the committee to forget how to handle such cases with fairness and consistency, partially because the committee has difficulty evaluating the credentials of the non-academics who write outside letters of reference without answering the unspoken questions implied in the invitation to write support letters, partially because dramatic and musical performances are ephemeral, and partially because committee members are not used to making aesthetic judgments and don't trust themselves to do so, since a multi-million dollar offer of lifetime employment is at stake.

We are talking here about the difficulty the university-level P&T committee has in evaluating items submitted by writers, poets, musicians, and artists working in their chosen disciplines. The case of public administration scholars submitting creative work to *Public Voices* shares this difficulty of evaluation and maybe the stigma of out of discipline publishing.

The Indirect Payoffs of OCA

Should a candidate claim credit for indirect professional benefit from creative artistic and literary work? Robert Sternberg has written about the tradeoff that can develop between knowledge and flexibility and has suggested that increased expertise in knowledge of a given domain comes at the expense of flexibility in that domain. Creativity requires one to view things flexibly. Becoming entrenched in a field leads to the possibility that one might lose the ability to think flexibly about the domain in which one works (Sternberg and Frensch, 1989).

A professor who does quality empirical research plus OCA might be viewed as a more versatile colleague and more desirable to have around over the long run. This argument takes the curse off versatility: the multi-talented person might be more highly recommended by their department because of this "edge."

"Our human needs for creativity and innovation are equally compelling. Some of us have responded to a lack of creativity in our work with strong feelings of frustration and anger or with "burnout," said William C. Miller in *The Creative Edge*. We would add that academic departments burn out too and need to be renewed or allowed to develop a fresh sense of direction.

The problem with the argument that creative activity enriches a professor's research is that it sounds too much like something that senior tenured professors are supposed to do to fend off burnout, lest they start counting the years to retirement. It sounds like career development/retreading, which is maybe a reason to grant some release from teaching or even a nominal salary increase, but no reason for promotion or tenure.

Some Suggestions for Playing It Safe

Until you have a written rationale for your OCA, consider the following suggestions for playing it safe in P&T:

Make sure you have enough conventional research to justify the appointment without taking OCA into account. Then you can consider not mentioning your OCA, or listing it in the instruction or service category, so it will not be subtracted from your research through some perverse academic calculus.

Ask every department head or dean who writes a recommendation letter to describe your OCA in a positive light in words that you choose for them, and, if you can, get them to coordinate what they say with the words you use to describe your OCA in your P& T package. Try to brief your advocate in the P&T committee on how to answer objections, but don't insist he or she raise the issue if it can be quietly passed over.

Make sure at least one of your outside reference letters, the one from the most impressively qualified referee, argues in some cogent, credible way that your OCA is not only of high quality, but is somehow advancing your discipline. It is hard to know what argument he or she should offer to show that OCA promotes the discipline, but it would be a terrible mistake to let your OCA pass uncommented on in an important reference letter. You might suggest an argument developed along the following lines, if you have an especially prestigious person writing on your behalf:

Exclusive reliance on a single central way of knowing within a discipline leads to the "idiot savant" syndrome for which the disciplines of engineering and medicine have been so roundly criticized, but which tends to creep into any discipline. Development as an artist expands the capacity to recognize singularity as well as universality, a valued capacity in truly dedicated researchers.

One College That Formulated a Rationale for OCA

Perhaps it is time to rewrite promotion and tenure expectations so that professors are viewed as scholars and creative artists at work on

several fronts that are internally coherent. The Nursing college of our university has recognized the importance of creative expression as part of their discipline. Its *Faculty Handbook* says,

The goal of Nursing is the promotion of the process of being and becoming through caring. Caring in Nursing is a mutual human process in which the [practitioner] artistically responds with authentic presence to a call from the client.

Valid scholarship and practice...require creative integration of knowing and caring.

The definition this college addresses is not its discipline as a science but as a practice (the artistic, purposeful employment of scientific knowledge in the professional service). Here "discipline" means a community of scholars self-organized around a self-defined field of knowledge; and "practice" means a discipline whose knowledge is generated for a specific social purpose, in response to specific human need.

Scientific knowledge is that aspect of the discipline where knowledge is systematically studied, organized, tested in labs and in practice and in examination of secondary data; yet, scientific knowledge is not the only valid form of knowledge in a practice discipline.

Knowledge in the discipline also requires the use of personal, ethical and aesthetic ways of knowing. The aesthetic pattern of knowing is really the integrated, all-at-once expression of the other three patterns in relation to a specific or exemplar situation.

Following Carper (1978), who posited the four essential patterns of knowing for the discipline, Nursing college faculty believe practice requires an artistic sensibility and artistic expression. Many of them do research in the human science mode, using and developing methods that are qualitative: it permits artistic work within, rather than before or after, the "execution" of the method. For instance, they ask practitioners to write stories about critical incidents in practice (Boykin and Schoenhofer, 1991; Parker, 1992) and

understand and interpret the stories through their own artistic sensibilities.

There is no way to make aesthetic knowing follow the rules of scientific knowing, since it is different by definition. Yet there are analogies. Just as in the scientific mode one might study statistics to increase one's objectivity, in the aesthetic mode one may write poetry or stories or raise fine art to heighten one's receptiveness to others' attempts to express their inner experiences. For example, in one scholar's research with practitioner-artists, she drew phenomenologically on her own experience as potter and essayist as part of the "data." Crossing over from objectivity to subjectivity is perfectly acceptable in the aesthetic mode of knowing; in fact it may be necessary (Parker, 1992).

The Nursing college's promotion and tenure guidelines ask for "documentation of creative projects and their significance to the discipline," and although such projects cum documentation are not viewed as peer-reviewed publications, they are classed with conference presentations, sponsored research, and appointment as a peer reviewer.

The college holds that all practice takes place within practice situations, lived experiences in which the caring between the persons of practitioner and client promotes well being. Within the practice discipline, caring is the transformative process as well as the transformation wrought. Practice situations are brought into existence to promote the process of being and becoming through caring. Empirical research is too strongly focused on the objective experience of reality to allow a full appreciation of the experience.

Empirical knowing, which include the sciences which study living things, the physical world and man, is valued in the college. Yet empirical knowing calls for observing phenomena rather than experiencing them, looking on from an exterior, objective perspective. The knowledge gleaned from this area does provide factual descriptions, principles, theoretical formulations and explanations that are "based upon observations and experiments in the world of matter, life, mind, and society." (Phenix, 1969). The empirical knowledge provides the impersonal, non-normative, objective perspective of the phenomenon of concern. But it is not the only perspective. What is missing from empirical knowing? Practice of the discipline cannot occur from the exterior. It occurs through

entering the world of the person being cared for, understanding that world and the calls emerging from it, and responding to them.

Aesthetic knowing "involves the creation and/or appreciation of a singular, particular, subjective expression of imagined possibilities or equivalent realities which resist projection into the discursive form of language" (Carper, 1978, p. 16). It is through the aesthetic dimension that the art of the discipline is known and illuminated.

Personal knowing is essential to "being" in a practice situation. To know and appreciate the world of another, it is necessary to first know oneself. As persons involved in this discussion bring their own being to the situation, sharing views on the meaning of being sad, being lonely, being angry, being afraid, being young, and being a single parent with many responsibilities, greater knowing of self and appreciation for the uniqueness of other occurs.

Except for references to "caring," we might have been writing about public administration, not nursing; and a strong case might even be made that "caring" is or ought to be a component of public administration practice.

If every college sends a good scholar to the university-level P&T committee, and the members find the time to share their different views on subjectivity vs. objectivity; one-shot, one-subject case studies; and client-centered research, the rationale presented above can be seen to link with many current social science concerns.

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Ethical Decision Making: Lessons to Be Learned from Temptation

Dalton S. Lee

Let's be honest -- being ethical is hard work. The job of a public administrator is full of ethical pitfalls and quagmires. Sooner or later, we all come face-to-face with a very enticing temptation and weigh the possibility and the consequences of violating a public trust. For example, administrative and legal prohibitions to the contrary, who has not used the office phone for personal calls, or duplicated personal items on the office photocopier?

How one thinks through these issues and then acts is the focus of this essay. The current public administration literature on ethics attempts to explain and predict ethical behavior based on two prevalent models. One model believes that ethical behavior results from improved ethical reasoning. To this way of thinking, learning the proper process for ethical decision making is more important than the content (rules) that develop (c.f. Callahan and Bok, 1980, or Denhardt, 1988). The alternative model, moral education, argues that ethical conduct derives from immersion in the professional beliefs, values, and norms of public administration (c.f. Lee, 1990). That is, there are certain values that must be understood and possessed before ethical reasoning can take place.

While both of these models separately and collectively add to our knowledge about ethical decision making, each has its attendant problems. Using a personal experience, I will illustrate the

shortcomings of each (with apologies for taking some liberties with various authors' ideas) and then attempt to deduce a more functional model of ethical decision making -- one that has implications for public managers.

The Situation

I was walking down the hall to my room at a recent ASPA Regional Conference when I practically stumbled over a very expensive Nikon camera with about \$4000 worth of accessories -- 1000mm telephoto lens, ultra-fast titanium shutter, high speed motor drive, optional metering system, a tripod, and so on -- sitting in the hallway next to someone's door. It was a *very* nice camera.

My first thought was that the camera had been accidentally left outside the room as the occupant probably fumbled with luggage, keys, and door. Ever the noble public servant, I knocked on the door in hopes of seeing broad smiles as I gallantly returned the camera. No answer. I knocked again and listened. Silence. Panic. Uh oh, now what?!

A cold sweat began to cover my forehead as I realized that I could take this camera and no one would know the difference. On the pretext that (a) I was headed to my room anyway and (b) I could not leave the camera where it was because a more dishonest person might be tempted to steal it, I picked it up, proceeded down the hall to my room, unlocked the door with trembling hand, and brought the camera inside. I listened quietly for a moment. There were no footsteps coming down the hall, knocks on my door, nor muffled voices to be heard through the hotel's thin walls. The only sound was labored breathing as I took several deep breaths to quiet my pounding heart.

A perfect crime was in the making. I was more than half way there. I was scheduled to fly out the next day and had plenty of room in my luggage. The chances of being caught were slim to none. I did not look like a criminal and, more importantly as every television detective knows, constitutional law forbids illegal search and seizure without probable cause. I consider myself an ethical person -- so why was I giving in to this temptation? I began to reason ethically about my situation.

Ethical Reasoning

Following the ethical reasoning prescription, I began to use my "moral imagination" as some ethicists have argued (Callahan and Bok, 1980). That meant throwing out my conventional thinking about laws. After all, inflexible laws involve decision rules rather than problem analysis of the underlying principles. Further, laws address prohibitions -- what you should not do rather than what you should do. Thus, I discounted any forms of moral indoctrination such as "Thou shalt not steal" because it was a rigid and unsophisticated decision rule.

Applying a rational cognitive model to this situation was quite illuminating. First, according to the Kew Gardens argument (c.f. Stewart, 1984), I had done the right thing in taking the camera. There was an obvious need identified, I was in proximity, I had the capacity to act, and I was the last resort. It clearly would have been wrong to let someone else steal the camera.

Second, using the competing stakeholder approach (c.f. Stewart, 1984), I deduced that I could justify taking the camera because I was the only stakeholder. There were no other stakeholders that could be identified, save other thieves and a vague public that knew nothing about this camera. The camera's owner obviously was not present to make a claim and his lack of interest by leaving the camera was legion. In any case, how was I supposed to know who it belonged to? Imagine what kind of mess I might get myself into if I tried to find the owner but instead gave the camera to the wrong person? And what about the possibility that the supposed "owner" might have stolen the camera himself or gotten it through illegitimate means?

Third, from a strictly utilitarian view, there was good reason to take the camera. In the final analysis, the owner's insurance company would cover the loss and make many people happy. The owner would finally be able to collect on all of the outrageous premiums that he had been paying to his insurance company as well as buy a new camera. At the same time, the insurance company could further justify its claim that rate increases are needed to offset rising costs. And last but not least, since an insurance claim cannot be processed without a police report, the police could gloat that crime was running amok just as they are wont to complain. Additionally, since it was a crime against property which stood little chance of being solved,

no officers would be placed in danger. In sum, it takes no great mathematician to figure out that the greatest good was obtained for the greatest number by taking the camera.

What if the camera was not insured? Well, that leads us to another good reason for taking the camera: to teach the hapless owner a lesson. Since it would be paternalistic (that is, using the person for my own ends instead of treating him as an end unto himself) to lecture the owner about the error of his ways, one could simply let him discover the mistake himself. After all, is not self-discovery one of the best ways to learn? It is certainly consistent with our preference for neo-Rousseauian and post-Deweyian liberal education which underlies the ethical reasoning approach.

A Moral Education Approach

Having carefully examined the situation with the camera from a variety of ethical reasoning perspectives, it was clear that there were several "morally imaginative" arguments for keeping the camera. But why was I still feeling so uncomfortable? I guess deep-down inside I knew that my justifications were nothing more than flimsy rationalizations (c.f. Lilla, 1981). Wanting to do the right thing, I began to re-examine what had gone on from public administration's other model of ethics.

Taking the camera was consonant with public administration's preference for being value neutral. That is, while there is a certain prohibition in public administration against "doing good," taking the camera could easily be interpreted as meeting the more widely accepted criteria of "doing no harm" on two counts. In the first place, the camera was treated in no different manner than anyone else would likely have treated it. Secondly, the camera was already missing, so no further harm was done in taking it.

A moral education approach suggests that there are certain rules, principles, values, and beliefs that are ingrained within us from earlier education, training, socialization, and experience. At the same time that these social norms serve as standards of conduct and behavioral guides, they also serve an important function in facilitating social interactions, civility, and ultimately the survival of society. For example, rather than push and shove, we stand in long lines at the grocery store when we are in a hurry and have more

important things to do; we pay our taxes in spite of our misgivings about its misappropriation and the fact that we could find better uses for the money. In these and many other ways, we arrange our lives and actions to accommodate other people rather than to serve our immediate self-interest. As Wilber (1988) notes, "An orderly society cannot exist if individuals can choose to follow only those laws with which they agree."

No wonder I was feeling some discomfort. It was no accident that my parents, the neighborhood where I grew up, the church, and schools had all conspired to send the same messages about citizenship and the obligations of membership in the community. Was I following what I was taught? As I ran the tapes through my head, several principles came to mind. One important axiom was not to lie. Certainly, if I was questioned, I would tell the truth: *"Yes, I found the camera. Yes, I was going to return it. No, I did not steal it. 'Steal' is too strong a term to describe what happened -- I merely found it. I tried to return the camera, didn't I?"*

Axiom two: respect other people's property. In fact, I was respecting this property better than the owner, who carelessly left it lying around on the filthy floor. Do you know what dirt and the elements can do to an expensive camera? Okay, so maybe that is not the best argument possible. But is it not also true that there are certain circumstances under which the redistribution of property is considered not only acceptable but desirable? For example, government takes at least a third of our income for various forms of tax redistributions. By the same token, we would likely have difficulty punishing a woman who stole food for her children rather than let them starve to death. Indeed, there are exceptions to every rule. So what is the harm done if I hold on to the camera until a notice appears in the lost and found column of the newspaper? From a purely mechanical point of view, it is better that someone use the camera than to let it sit.

Finally, axiom three: the golden rule -- do unto others. Since the owner of the camera is unknown to me, it is difficult to know what he (or she) thinks or feels. If they are like me, they would understand that I would expect a camera left carelessly in any hallway to be missing too. Do unto others before they do unto you, right? On the other hand, if they are unlike me, there is a serious risk of paternalistic behavior that might violate a more important rule about respecting other people. I would not want to impose my

values on them any more than I would like their values imposed on me; therefore, what we should do unto each other is to give each other the widest possible latitude of freedom. That way they can feel free to leave the camera in the hallway and I can feel free to pick it up. Freedom, after all, is what makes our society and market economy great. Caveat emptor.

A Different Approach

As I sat on the edge of my hotel bed and looked at the beautiful and exquisite camera on the opposing dresser, my eyes would occasionally glance at the camera and the dresser mirror directly behind it. In the mirror's reflection was the camera, pristine and efficient in its design from any angle, and my own confused countenance staring at itself. The contrast could not have been more dramatic. Neither approach to public administration ethics was going in the right direction. I needed an answer -- a different framework for ethical decision making.

As I thought about it, there were many possible reasons for wrongdoing: economic hardship, greed, personal gain, ego powertrip, exploitation, ideology, "dirty hands," "many hands," insensitivity, and stupidity, to name a few (c.f. Richter, Burke, and Doig, 1990; Steinberg and Austern, 1990). However, knowing the reasons why people might go astray does not exactly explain why one should stay on the narrow path.

Indeed, as I contemplated the camera, it was becoming clear why temptations are so seductive. There seem to be three major characteristics of tempting situations that make them irresistible: (1) the possibility that the transgression might never be detected, (2) that any accusations made would be virtually impossible to substantiate, and (3) that the benefits would far exceed the potential costs.

Detection. Just like the classic question about whether a tree falling in the forest makes a noise, can a wrong be committed if there are no witnesses? After all, no one saw me take the camera. Even if I were to publicly display the camera at some later time and place, it was unlikely that anyone would question where the camera came from. If asked, I can lie ("I won the lottery") or tell half-truths ("It was a gift/inheritance from a good friend"). In fact, the only

people it would be difficult to deceive would be someone who knew me well -- like my spouse...whoops!

Let us analyze this for a moment. If we think of temptation as a violation of a social trust, then it follows that wrong-doing is a social act involving ourselves and an Other to serve as a representative of social norms. The Other might be a spouse, a co-worker, a supervisor, an oversight committee, the media, or even internalized within us as an alter-ego. Absent this Other, giving in to temptation is quite real.

And what, you might ask, if the Other is just as self-deceiving as me? Corruption is rampant, of course, when organization members do not assume the role of Other. Temptation, then, is inversely related to the certainty of detection. Would my spouse know I had taken the camera? Without question. Could I keep her from discovering I had the camera? Not for long.

Proof. Detection alone, however, is not sufficient in and of itself to prevent giving in to temptation. That is, our concept of justice places the burden of proof on the accuser and it allows for mitigating circumstances. To this way of thinking the fact that I have the camera in my possession does not mean that I stole it or, more importantly, that I intended to steal it. Perhaps someone else gave me the camera and neglected to tell me where it came from. Alternately, I can argue that my reasons for possessing the camera justify its taking. For example, I was preventing a crime.

Because social norms are not as clearly defined as criminal law, it seems to follow that we would not expect social proof to be as stringent as legal proof. Indeed, the appearance of impropriety may suffice since social relations are built on trust -- a much more complex concept than other forms of social contract. Thus, the possession of the camera may not lead to divorce, but I may lose several privileges taken for granted and spend many long and lonely nights on the living room couch until I can demonstrate a pattern of behavior that deserves trust.

Costs. Steinberg and Austern (1990) make the observation that temptations tend to be acted upon if the costs are low and the benefits high. In particular, persons of higher status and influence in society seem to be able to deviate from social norms with great frequency and with less severe punishment. Although they do not

mention it, it seems logical that people of low status also feel free to deviate from these norms. What these two groups share in common is the discounting of the costs of societal membership.

While it seems logical to increase the severity of punishment for transgressions, that probably is not the answer. Neither is having members of any group re-affirm allegiance to certain codes of conduct. One major factor why is that the ratio of benefits to costs for deviant behavior is quite disproportionately in favor of the benefits. That is what makes temptation so enticing. Given the problems of detection and proof, it seems that the real issue is certainty and consistency of punishment and not just its severity. For Agnew, Nixon, Dean, Meese, Deaver, North, and the like, it seems that the latter was the least of their worries.

In any case, despite the obvious benefits to be gained, I gave the camera to the hotel's lost and found section because there was no shadow of a doubt what my wife would do if I did not.

Conclusion

Although Jiminy Cricket's advice to Pinnochio was good counsel, letting one's conscience be the guide is fraught with difficulty. Hampered by bounded rationality and fragile intentions that do not always lead to the appropriate actions, public administrators cannot rely solely on ethical reasoning and/or moral education to remain ethical. While these internal processes are important to solving ethical problems in the work place, one must keep in mind that the goal is not to create morally autonomous individuals, but people of integrity who are responsive and responsible. To do this requires that public administration also consider a behaviorist model that focuses on external processes. As MacIntyre (1981) has pointed out, being virtuous is not a self-declaration but an attribute bestowed upon an individual by the community for clearly demonstrating a pattern of exceptional citizenship. Thus, detection devices (such as open government, financial disclosure, whistleblowers, inspectors general) and accountability systems (for example, adequate documentation, redundant information systems, routine audits, and investigations) with suitable reward systems are needed to reinforce the social contract underlying our social structure.

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The Iron Man Challenge of Public Service: Motives, Ethics and Responsibility

Alex Rogers

In 1990 this essay was awarded first prize in the Public Service Essay Contest sponsored by the Nashville Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration, the Institute of Government at Tennessee State University and "The Tennessean" newspaper.

Introduction

"Whenever you are to do a thing, though it can never be known but to yourself, ask yourself how you would act were all the world looking at your, and act accordingly."

Thomas Jefferson's comments about public servants from over 200 years ago are still germane to public service today. Even more now than in the Jeffersonian era, a person in the public service will bear intense public scrutiny. With this scrutiny calling attention to scandals like Watergate and Iran-Contra, untold public animosity is focused upon public servants.

The question arises as to why anyone would want to pursue a professional life in public service. Several answers immediately crystalize: a desire to perpetuate public well-being, a hunger for power, or simply for the challenge. Of the above three, the most compelling is the challenge. What would a person's motives be in taking up the challenge of attaining a position as a public servant; once the position is attained, what ethics should drive a good administrator and finally, why is it a challenge to preserve these ethics?

Motives

As John Rehfuss states in his book, *The Job of the Public Manager*, "The most important belief of public managers is in the value of the program they manage...This value is the driving force in their commitment to public service." One can now easily see that the quintessential motive is that of a desire to further the public good.

Or is it? In the world today, there are rarely clearly defined motives or actions. The motive of public well-being is "often a slogan for covering other values." Certainly a desire to better the fare of the public is a primary motive for becoming a public servant. Other motives include, as Rehfuss points out, prestige, authority and "ego satisfaction...a desire to increase your ability to influence what happens." Once a person achieves a public position, the motives for securing that position take a back seat to ethical considerations that must be taken into account in administering programs. What, however, are the appropriate ethics that a public administrator should follow?

Ethics

Two separate documents attempt to list general ethics for a public manager. The American Society for Public Administration published the "Code of Ethics and Implementation Guidelines," and the International City Management Association published "The International City Management Code of Ethics." The only similarity among the top three ethical considerations listed in each is the ethical necessity of portraying honor and integrity in personal and public affairs for the express purpose of inspiring confidence in the public institution. A good reason exists for this common element between the two codes. In a society where almost all institutions for the public good are overseen by public managers, the public must be able to trust their representatives. Unfortunately, in our society, guilt by association plays a strong role in public perception, and when the perception toward the administrator is negative, the agency's ability to function to its potential is compromised. Even the personal affairs of administrators affect the public's perception and could therefore compromise the agency's ability to function. Since the populace expects its leaders to be paragons of morality, an administrator must go to extraordinary lengths to show moral

uprightness. Among other similarities are the ethical responsibility to promote civic improvement, and the ethical responsibility to avoid personal aggrandizement by the use of the public office. All of these are important ethics.

The most important ethical responsibility for the public official is to promote the general good of the community over the political, personal and professional interests of the administrator. The question arises: Where is the challenge in this responsibility?

The Challenge

A barrage of problems that have no easy solutions faces a public administrator daily. In solving these problems, an administrator must surely alienate some members of the public. Since each public decision has the potential of alienating some people, the ethical principle of "inspiring confidence" in the public institution is conceivably compromised every time a public administrator acts. The public administrator must live with the Catch-22.

The difficulty in juggling a positive public image as against pursuing the needs of the general public is enough to make one realize the complex task confronting a public manager. Secondly, the strain of maintaining an ethical image is immense; it does not help that the administrator, because of the responsibility to further the general public good, may have to ignore his conscience at one time or another. An administrator cannot have the luxury of using his personal preferences alone as a reason for making a decision. A good administrator must be willing to make a decision for what he perceives to be the benefit of the general populace, even if it could result in his losing public support.

A beleaguered administrator, Richard Nixon, writing in his latest book, *In the Arena*, illustrated the above by stating: "By refusing to accept any but the most honorable and equitable peace in Vietnam, I lost the support of the many liberals, conservatives and moderates who felt that supporting me was too risky politically. These are examples of the perils of purpose."

Conclusion

Regardless of a public administrator's motives for assuming his position, regardless of your own perceptions of the administrator, you must recognize the vastness of the challenges that he faces in order to strive toward improving our lives. Accept the occasional inconvenience while still retaining your faith in the institution. Finally, above all else, recognize the *challenge* that a public administrator faces while serving you.

Although former President Nixon's motives and ethics are highly suspect by many, his description of the challenge and the rewards of public service are applicable to many public servants: "While it has been a rough game, it has been worth it. I might not want to do it again, but I would not have missed it. I know I have lived for a purpose, and I have at least in part achieved it. You must live your life for something more important than your life alone."

Alex Rogers was a student at the Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville at the time this essay was written.

Decision Making and Melville's *Billy Budd, Sailor*

Elsie B. Adams and Darrell L. Pugh

If we cannot *clarify* the ethics of the organizational world, perhaps it will help if we can advance *understanding* of the complexity and confusion. If ambiguity cannot be eliminated, then a "tolerance for ambiguity" becomes an essential operating skill.

Dwight Waldo
The Enterprise of Public Administration

Introduction

Administrative literature makes much ado about the process of decision making. It is the principal focus of numerous articles and books that range in approach from the scientific to the anecdotal. Managers are regularly schooled in a variety of rational decision models that posit a logical, systematic, linear process that varies from the comprehensive to the incremental, from the analytical to the political. Emphasis is often given to the objectivization, simplification, and evaluation of reality. With a stress on data collection, hypothesis building, and analysis as precursors to choice based on rational self interest, the models may sometimes appear artificial, parsimonious, and dehumanizing. There is a challenge in helping students approach administrative choices with a better understanding and perhaps a greater capacity for imagination and creativity while engaged in the process of decision making. It is our belief that literature provides one means of responding to this challenge.

In our essay, we are interested specifically in what literature can offer in attempts to understand the process of decision making. Can literature suggest an alternative to the familiar models for decision making? Does it widen or alter our perspectives as we face day-to-day problems or critical issues? One thing that is immediately apparent is that, whereas management theory frequently looks to models or to frames in its approach to decision making, literature has as one of its major characteristics a refusal to simplify. Literature resists categorization and exploits ambiguity: it asks questions instead of proposing answers; it muddies the political and decisional (as well as the moral and ethical) waters instead of charting channels for safe navigation or clearing a path. If clarity and rationality are the usual objectives in decision making, what then can we learn from the study of literature as it applies to decision making?

Literature might serve the functions that Charles Lindblom has suggested that classic works of utopian thinking serve: "we take from them not closure but new insight--specifically, powerful fragments of understanding"; he admits that "they give us no sound basis for policy choices. . . . But they do greatly raise the level of intellectual sophistication with which we think about policy" (1979, p. 522). Recent renewal of interest in the use of literature in teaching Public Administration lends support to this belief. For example, in an essay on "Literature and Public Administration Ethics," Frank Marini supports the use of literature in this way:

By reading imaginative literature, our students may gain not only a knowledge of what we consider key issues for our field but also an empathetic grasp or vicarious experience of these issues. The literature can focus issues and at the same time allow students to identify personally with fictional characters who have confronted similar issues. . . .It permits an analytical perspective from a safe distance: the subjects are, after all, not real people (though they may seem familiar enough); their problems may be our problems--but we know that our analysis of them is not a matter of somebody's life or death. More important than the safe analytical nature of literature is its affective quality: literature helps us feel the dilemma of an administrator responsible for

upholding policy while confronted with questions of compassion, exception, human considerations, and specific circumstances, the frustrations of someone caught in bureaucratic red tape, etc. Out of the analysis and vicarious experience offered by literature, we enjoy a widened perspective arising out of our imaginative experience of people in different situations. At its best, literature can alter our world view. (1992, p. 113)

In our application of literature to the decision making process, we have turned to a classic American novel by Herman Melville, *Billy Budd, Sailor* (henceforward *Billy Budd*), written in the late nineteenth century (1888-1891) but not published until 1924. It is a widely anthologized novel, and the Melville scholar William T. Stafford notes that it is probably more frequently taught than *Moby Dick* (1968, p. 4). It exists in a number of inexpensive paperback editions, and is the subject of a fine play by Louis O. Coxe and Robert Chapman (1947; revised 1949). It is also available on film in a British motion picture of 1962, for which Peter Ustinov (who plays Captain Vere) and DeWitt Bodeen wrote the screenplay. It seems ideally suited to a study of decision making because at its core is a decision that must be made in which law and conscience, duty and individual inclination, are in conflict.

In a work such as *Billy Budd* we are presented with a precise and detailed context for the actions depicted in the story. We encounter various perspectives on the problem, and we are allowed to test our own reactions to it. Through the empathetic dimension of literature, we are able not only to feel the agony that sometimes goes into responsible decision making but also to imagine making the decision itself without having to suffer any of the consequences if it goes badly. Because of the nature of a work of literature, we can reflect on the consequences of a given decision as we evaluate the pros and cons of it--a luxury not possible in the workaday world. If we want to engage in speculation "outside of the story," we can make a different decision from that in the story and fabricate a different outcome, writing our own story, as it were.

It can be argued that, because of the extent to which fiction replicates the ambiguity and complexity of human experience, it may be more descriptive of the reality of decision making than much of the theoretical literature that addresses the subject. Melville encourages

us to believe in the reality of *Billy Budd* in that the story purports to portray an actual event: the narrator of the story insists that he is writing a factual account and that he is not writing fiction. At the end of the story we are provided with a ballad of "Billy in the Darbies," as if to say: If you want "literature" about Billy Budd, here it is in this poetic rendering; the preceding narrative is an attempt to present the truth. Melville also gives us in the next-to-last chapter a newspaper account about the central incident in Billy's story--a dreadfully oversimplified and ill-informed account of the action presented in the body of the story. Both the poem and the journalistic report are Melville's way of urging our belief in the reality of the situations and the characters in the fictional story--as over against mere journalism or "literature."

The Story of *Billy Budd, Sailor*

The story of Billy Budd concerns a young sailor who is impressed onto a British warship toward the end of the eighteenth century. While on this ship, he is falsely accused by the ship's master-at-arms (Claggart) of conspiring to mutiny with other impressed sailors. When confronted with this accusation in front of the ship's captain (Vere), Billy strikes the accusing officer a blow to the forehead which turns out to be fatal. The central event in the story is the trial of Billy, and the central problem is how to deal appropriately with the killing on shipboard.

The law governing Billy's action is clear: the Mutiny Act carries the death penalty for striking a superior in grade, and Billy not only struck, but fatally struck, Claggart. Given this law and the military context, the decision facing the captain and his appointed court would seem to be clear-cut. But Melville complicates the problem by surrounding it with a number of issues directly bearing on it and militating against an easy decision. At the background of the central incident, which occupies only a fraction of the larger narrative, is the war between England and Napoleonic France. The killing of Claggart occurs within months of two mutinies at sea, and the captain and his officers live in fear of mutiny on board their own ship. Numerous sailors on board, including Billy Budd, have been impressed into service, and several (*not* Budd) are perhaps plotting a rebellion. So the moral and legal aspects of impressment, mutiny, and war all figure in the decision about Budd's fate.

Furthermore, Billy Budd has in his defense mitigating circumstances. At the time of the killing, Claggart has just falsely accused Billy of plotting a mutiny. Billy's physical handicap, a speech defect which causes him to stutter under stress, renders him unable to answer the charge; in frustration, he strikes out (instead of speaking out) with the blow that kills Claggart. Finally, to complicate the moral issue thoroughly, the narrator describes Billy Budd as an example of absolute, guileless, prelapsarian innocence; whereas Claggart is seen as "elemental evil," an example of "Natural Depravity," unable even to conceive of elemental innocence as exemplified in Budd.

In spite of these mitigating circumstances, the captain and the court of ship's officers which he has formed sentence Billy to death. Billy Budd is hanged and buried at sea. His dying words: "God bless Captain Vere!"

Decision Making in the Story

The focus of the story is the captain's decision about what to do: whether or not to carry out the death penalty prescribed by law, knowing that the killing was inadvertent and that, as the story puts it, "innocence and guilt personified in Claggart and Budd in effect changed places. In a legal view the apparent victim of the tragedy was he who had sought to victimize a man blameless [a reference to Claggart's accusing the 'blameless' Billy]; and the indisputable deed of the latter, navally regarded, constituted the most heinous of military crimes [i.e., the killing of a superior officer]" (Melville, 1962, p. 103). The depiction of the steps the captain takes in reaching his decision and its aftermath constitute an eloquent statement of the complexity and ambiguity at the heart of decision making.

Edward Vere, the captain on whom the decision falls, is a distinguished, seasoned sailor of aristocratic background; he is knowledgeable in his profession, a strict disciplinarian with his men, pragmatic yet given to "a certain dreaminess of mood" and to a leaning toward intellectualism. He is said to have "positive convictions" about fundamental issues that he knows will remain "essentially unmodified" throughout his life: "His settled convictions were as a dike against those invading waters of novel opinion social, political, and otherwise" (p. 62). His intelligence and sensitivity

make him capable of understanding the full dimensions of the problem he faces, just as his conservative orientation makes the final decision predictable. Like almost all Billy's shipmates, Captain Vere likes Billy, and before the fatal incident is thinking of promoting him because of his good conduct and sensible attitude. Conversely, the captain dislikes and distrusts Claggart. When Claggart accuses Billy, the captain immediately summons Billy to face his accuser, and he moves the scene off deck--out of sight and hearing of the other sailors--to his quarters. In electing to move to his cabin, the captain behaves in a prudent administrative fashion: he controls the environment in which the confrontation between the accused and his accuser occurs. Subsequently, this move assumes even greater importance in that it permits the captain's strict control of the trial process.

After the killing, in a gesture suggesting the initial distress at facing the consequences of Billy's act, the captain briefly covers his face with his hand, while the narrator asks, "Was he absorbed in taking in all the bearings of the event and what was best, not only now at once to be done, but also in the sequel?" (p. 99) The question is not answered, but when he uncovers his face Vere has changed from a fatherly figure reassuring Billy that he need not hurry to answer Claggart's charge to a "military disciplinarian" speaking in an "official tone." He acts quickly and decisively, sending Billy to a stateroom aft, sending for the ship's surgeon, then setting up a court to hear Billy's case, ordering secrecy about the proceedings. It could be argued that, in spite of the weighing of issues and the philosophical deliberations in the trial that follows, the Captain in that moment of covering his face with his hand has examined the case, foreseen its inevitable conclusion, and already made his decision. He greets the surgeon with the exclamation that Claggart has been "Struck dead by an angel of God! Yet the angel must hang!" (p. 101). In terms of the process of decision making described by proponents of a rational comprehensive approach, in the moments after the killing the captain has classified the problem and defined it as generic and not exceptional; in other words, he has decided to treat the case using established protocol.

The surgeon seems less convinced of the urgency of action than the captain: the surgeon believes that they should postpone action until they rejoin their squadron and then refer the case to the admiral. This is a familiar enough approach to a hard decision: wait and hope that things don't heat up; buy time until other heads are available;

and then bump the decision to someone else. Indeed, the surgeon's reasoning parallels the advice to decision makers offered by Chester Barnard: "The fine art of executive decision consists in not deciding questions that are not now pertinent, in not deciding prematurely, in not making decisions that cannot be made effective, and in not making decisions that others should make" (1964, p. 194). However, the surgeon's program for decision making is not presented to the captain, for "To argue his [the captain's] order to him would be insolence. To resist him would be mutiny" (p. 102). Though the surgeon feels that the captain's sense of urgency and his demand for secrecy may reflect an unhinged mind, he summons the ships' officers to the tribunal, sharing his concerns with them. They too think the decision "should be referred to the admiral" (p. 102) and are critical of the captain's policy of secrecy.

The narrator assures us that, given the nature of the case, the captain himself would have preferred delay and referral of the decision. But the captain clearly feels that a decision cannot be delayed--that in Barnard's terms the decision *is* "now pertinent." He has decided that this occasion is an important test of his own capacity to maintain order and discipline on his ship and that it requires the initiative of decision making. And as Barnard astutely observes, when a decision is made on the administrator's own initiative, "this always may be (and generally is) questioned, at least tacitly" (1964, p. 191).

Driven by "his vows of allegiance to martial duty," Vere appoints "a summary court of his own officers, reserving to himself, as the one on whom the ultimate accountability would rest, the right of maintaining a supervision of it, or formally or informally interposing at need" (p. 104). In setting up the court, he arranges to share the decision making with others without relinquishing his control of it or dodging his responsibility to make it. The captain's decision to set up the court is in keeping with sound administrative strategy for delegation of decisions, for organizational decisions to be viable and effectively executed often requires a sense of shared responsibility (Barnard, 1964, pp. 188-189).

In the court scene, Vere serves as both witness to and judge of the killing. In presenting the central issue before the court, Vere makes a statement summarizing the classic conflict between legal justice and mercy, between the organization and individual conscience. For Vere the principal dilemma is "the clash of military duty with moral scruple--scruple vitalized by compassion." He recognizes that Billy

Budd is "innocent before God" and understands that the court is reluctant to condemn an essentially innocent man—but he relegates the question of Billy's wider innocence or guilt to "psychologic theologians," denying that a military court has anything to do with such a question. Vere's appeal is to duty, to "law and the rigor of it," to "the code under which alone we officially proceed." Following the dictates of the heart and private conscience are ruled out. Arguing against individual inclination and individual conscience in wartime, Vere reminds the court that extraordinary rules prevail which force (impressed) Englishmen "to fight for the King against their will. Against their conscience, for aught we know." The role of the military man, he insists, is to obey, and his officers are to "adhere to [military law] and administer it" (pp. 108-112).

To the officers' suggestion that, given the extenuating circumstances of the case, leniency might be offered, Vere moves to a pragmatic argument: he alludes to the recent Great Mutiny at the Nore and to the necessity for rigorous discipline in response to what will be perceived by Billy's shipmates as a mutinous act. This reasoning suggests that the decision to condemn Billy Budd is made not only in response to the legal and moral issues but also "to the practical consequences to discipline" (p. 113). The narrator, less sure than Vere of the necessity for stringency, cites an historical parallel in which the death penalty was swiftly invoked in response to incipient mutiny. He explains the risk incurred in any prompt decisive action in a memorable nautical metaphor in which fog, speed, risk of casualty, oblivious cabin occupants, and an anxious captain coalesce: "The greater the fog the more it imperils the steamer, and speed is put on though at the hazard of running somebody down. Little wien the snug card players in the cabin of the responsibilities of the sleepless man on the bridge" (p. 114). (The passage might serve as a motto for any harried administrator proceeding cautiously and underappreciated through treacherous waters.)

In *Billy Budd* we do not see into the mind and soul of the "sleepless man on the bridge." That Vere is distressed by the decision facing him is evident in the surgeon's anxieties as to Vere's soundness of mind. And we see Vere's initial agitated comments on the killing. But after covering his face with his hand (symbolically concealing the inner struggle), Vere emerges as the military disciplinarian that we see for the rest of the story. At decision time in the courtroom, he stands with his back to the officers, "gazing out from a sashed

porthole to windward upon the monotonous blank of the twilight sea" (p. 109). The process of arriving at a decision is seen only in what Vere does and what he says, not in what he thinks and feels. It is as Barnard describes: "It is a perplexing fact that most executive decisions produce no direct evidence of themselves and that knowledge of them can only be derived from the cumulation of indirect evidence. They must largely be inferred from general results in which they are merely one factor, and from symptomatic indications of roundabout character" (1964, pp. 192-93). In Vere we see that, after an initial emotional recoil from the decision facing him, he apparently seizes control of his emotions in order to act swiftly (too swiftly in the surgeon's opinion) and decisively. He decides to consult his subordinate officers before acting and sets up the court for this purpose, at the same time recognizing that "ultimate accountability" for the decision rests with him. In stating the issues before the court and in outlining the practical consequences of leniency, Vere directs the officers toward the decision that--it can be argued--he had already made when he exclaimed immediately after the killing that "the angel must hang!"

We see both officers and captain acting against their personal inclinations and their private opinions to render a decision to uphold discipline and to follow the letter of martial law. How the officers come to this decision is clear in the story: the captain persuades them to do so in his summary speeches. How the captain comes to his decision is less clear: although we are told that he is "no lover of authority for mere authority's sake" (p. 104), the way that he is depicted as holding "settled convictions" suggests a possible rigidity in responding to a crisis. Though he ostensibly consults his officers, when they exchange "looks of troubled indecision" he turns to "the monotonous blank of the twilight sea." What he finds in that blank--or what he finds when he covers his face after Claggart's death--remains a mystery.

Narrative Ambiguity

Fortunately for those of us interested in the process of decision making as revealed in this story, we are offered another lens through which to view the events of Budd's impressment, his crime, and his punishment. The story is told by a first person narrator, an old sailor looking back on events of a century earlier. He makes it clear that he is not writing fiction or creating a hero of romance in his

narrative of *Billy Budd* but instead aiming at "[t]ruth uncompromisingly told" (p. 128). He admits that there will be "ragged edges" in his narrative and insists that--using as sources personal observation, his reading of naval history, and hearsay from other sailors--he has "faithfully given" the tale of Billy Budd (p. 128). In this realistic narrative, then, the narrator attempts to make sense of the story as he has heard it, providing "bypaths" and digressions in his search for the truth of it. Unlike Captain Vere, however, the narrator does not hold "settled convictions"--at least not about the significance of events in the story he tells. His technique is indirection and ambiguity: he asks questions, offers alternative (sometimes contradictory) interpretations, and expresses uncertainty about what happened and what it meant.

The unnamed narrator's account is sprinkled with words like "perhaps," "not improbably," "may or may not," reminding us that finding the truth of a matter frequently is not a direct but an oblique process. Chapter eleven, in which the narrator is trying to explain the motives for Claggart's hostility to Billy, exemplifies the searching, tentative nature of the narration. There are a series of questions: "What was the matter with the master-at-arms?...What indeed could the trouble have to do with one so little inclined to give offense [i.e., Billy]...? Yes, why should Jemmy Legs [the sailors' nickname for Claggart]...be 'down' on the Handsome Sailor?" (p. 73) The narrator admits that he could *invent* something to answer these questions, but--since he is writing an account that aims at fidelity to the facts of the case--he declines to fictionalize, to create "some romantic incident," to explain Claggart's motives. Instead he turns to a personal conversation of years ago which turned on the difficulty of understanding human behavior and gropes his way toward an answer, admitting that "At the time [of the conversation], my inexperience was such that I did not quite see the drift of all this. It may be that I see it now" (p. 75). In a later section of the narrative, worrying about why Billy should trust Claggart implicitly when Billy has been warned that Claggart is "down on him," the narrator says: "This is to be wondered at. Yet not so much to be wondered at" (p. 86). This self-contradictory statement typifies the narrative method: it conveys the full (and ambiguous, often contradictory) sense of reality. The narrator wonders at Billy's naivete but at the same time understands that many sailors, like Billy, are unsophisticated, innocent, devoid of subtlety or suspicion of it.

The narrator is equally unhelpful to those seeking certain answers as to Captain Vere's handling of the case. Of Vere's insistence on secrecy in the proceedings the narrator says, "Here he [Captain Vere] may or may not have erred" (p. 103). And in offering another and later instance of haste similar to Vere's in arriving at a decision, the narrator is again equivocal: "But the urgency felt, well-warranted or otherwise, was much the same" (p. 114). It is thus throughout the narrative: we receive the story of *Billy Budd* through a tentative, uncertain perspective, through the eyes of a narrator less than secure about assigning motive and analyzing results.

Issues in *Billy Budd*

Where, then, does this leave us, the readers of the story looking for enlightenment about the nature of decision making? If the captain and his motives remain enigmatic and the narrator insists on indirection and ambiguity, what, finally, does the story offer to us? We can, perhaps, take our cue from one of the speculative comments of the narrator. He is talking about the fine line between sane and insane behavior, specifically, about the advisability of Vere's insistence on haste and secrecy in making the decision. As is customary with this narrator, he begins with a question, offers no secure opinion of his own, and concludes, "every one must determine for himself by such light as this narrative may afford" (p. 102). And this is precisely what we are left with in *Billy Budd*: the narrative itself and our own conclusions.

As we suggested in our introduction, one of the things that a work of literature can do for us is to present not only the dilemmas frequently invoked in decision making but also the rich and complicated context in which a decision is made. Diverse dimensions of the problem are laid out and, as readers, we are often privy to information sometimes denied to the characters--the actors, the decision makers--in the story. Such is the case in *Billy Budd*. For example, we know that the history of Billy Budd prior to the killing of Claggart has him at least twice responding violently to provocation. The captain of the merchant ship from which Billy is taken tells the story of Billy's violent reaction to a fellow sailor's insult: "Quick as lightning Billy let fly his arm. I dare say he never meant to do quite as much as he did, but anyhow he gave the burly fool a terrible drubbing" (p. 47). The account prefigures the killing of Claggart: words such as "Quick as lightning," "he never meant

to," and "terrible drubbing" could apply equally to the unintentional killing of Claggart. Another instance with a potential for violence occurs when one of the other impressed sailors asks Billy to join a gang with presumably mutinous intent; Billy is able to stutter out an answer--a threat to "t-t-toss you back over the r-r-rail" (p. 82). So when assessing the degree of innocence or guilt in Billy Budd, the reader--unlike the captain and his court (who do not have this information in front of them, as the reader does)--must take into account the fact that Billy apparently has reacted violently on other occasions before the killing of Claggart. That he cannot speak in moments of crisis helps to explain the frustration that could lead to violence but it does not excuse the violence: striking a man (so hard that he dies, in Claggart's case) is not an acceptable answer to an accuser's charge.

The readers are also aware of other matters pertaining to Budd that are not before the court that decides his fate. Billy is asked directly if he has knowledge of any "incipient trouble (meaning mutiny, though the explicit term was avoided)" on shipboard. After hesitating, Billy replies negatively. We, however, know that Billy has been approached by an impressed afterguardsman and invited to "help" a gang of impressed sailors in some unspecified (but apparently mutinous) plan. The narrator explains Billy's lying to the court--just as he lied earlier to a forecabinman's question about the incident (p. 83)--in two ways: first, Billy is ignorant of his duty to report the incident and, secondly, he has "innate repugnance to playing a part at all approaching that of an informer against one's own shipmates" (p. 106). The failure to report, the lie to the court about knowledge of possible trouble, and Billy's impulsive violence all serve to complicate any view of Billy as "innocent before God," as Captain Vere characterizes him.

On the other hand, we are presented with the fact of impressment: men forced into military service in wartime against their will and, perhaps, as Vere points out, against their conscience. To contemporary readers accustomed to the idea of compulsory military service impressment may seem a justifiable if harsh method of recruitment. Nevertheless, in considering the situation of Billy Budd, we must acknowledge that he has been forced into a service that he did not sign up for. It is true that he does not complain and proceeds willingly in his new duties; but this should not obscure the fact that Billy is held accountable in a contract to which he did not consent.

On the day after his impressment, Billy witnesses in horror the flogging of a young sailor (whose crime is absence from his post at the time of an intricate ship's maneuver). After seeing this cruel punishment, Billy resolves on exemplary behavior on his own part. But the account reminds the readers that the military law to which Vere and others cling permits at the time of the story cruel and inhuman punishment. This fact, along with the dubious practice of impressment, sully the law invoked in the judgment of Billy Budd.

But the judgment, we have suggested, is made not only with the law in mind but also with the fear of mutiny. The story takes place in the summer of 1797, following--as the narrative makes clear--two serious mutinies on other English ships in April and May of that year. The officers of Budd's ship live in fear of another mutiny, this time on their own ship: this anxiety and, of course, the wartime atmosphere, shape the final decision made by Vere and his officers. The story illustrates the truism that decisions are not made "purely," in a vacuum: the political context, the emotional ambience, the obscurity of human motive, as well as the rules or codes in effect, all play a part.

An interesting aspect of the story is that the surgeon's initial reaction to Vere after the killing is to wonder--*Caine Mutiny* fashion--if the captain has lost his mind. Vere's passionate talk of "divine judgment" and an "angel of God" leaves the surgeon questioning whether or not the captain has become "unhinged" (pp. 101-102). This question is not resolved, and the surgeon obeys the captain in summoning the court, realizing that resistance would be mutiny. So too do the officers in the court suspect a possible "mental disturbance" in Captain Vere when he insists that they look to the fact of Claggart's death rather than to Billy's provocation. Nevertheless, in spite of their doubts and "though at bottom they dissented from some points Captain Vere had put to them" (p. 113), they follow his lead in condemning Billy Budd to death.

Conclusions

Finally, the readers are left with a complex web of circumstances, motives, and conflicting opinions in making a final assessment of the case of Billy Budd. We can acknowledge the narrator's emphasis on Billy's simple, primal innocence (an inability to

comprehend or even imagine the existence of evil in others); at the same time we note that this simplicity includes at least in one instance ignorance of one's duty, loyalty to comrades over adherence to rules, and occasional violence. That all of this is as natural to Billy Budd as it would be to an animal does not exculpate him: following one's nature is not offered as a value in this story, for Claggart, too, is an example of "natural" behavior. The latter's innate depravity exists alongside the natural good will of Billy Budd.

Instead of nature--impulsive, unthinking, blind reaction to provocation--as a value we have the law, codes of behavior, and human beings attempting to make rational decisions according to the law and codes. The narrator constantly reminds us of the elusive, slippery nature of the search for truth, of the difficulty of sorting through the evidence to arrive at an unambiguous answer to a problem. Though Captain Vere is able to make a clear decision and to see to it that his decision is supported and implemented, he too recognizes the contradictions inherent in it. In his "the angel must hang!" he declares both Budd's innocence (in moral or philosophical terms) and his guilt (in legal terms and in terms of expediency). But the captain puts aside these subtleties in making his decision and substitutes procedure, law, and expediency for conscience and feeling. When Billy is accused, we see that the first thing that the captain does (after moving the hearing to a less public place than the ship's deck) is to call Billy to face his accuser and to hear the charge against him. After the killing of Claggart, we see a similar concern on the captain's part for due process: he forms the court, knowing that this "would not be at variance with usage," thus allowing a wider participation in the decision, reserving--as we have noted--the right to participate himself and to supervise the proceedings.

Vere does, finally, control the decision of the court. His summary of the issues and his outline of the officers' duty to martial law, along with his reminder to them of the danger of mutiny, brings in the decision to condemn. The officers act out of deference to both Vere's mind and to his rank. And, as we have observed, their final decision may derive from pragmatic considerations as well as from philosophical or legal convictions. (The decision of the court brings up the interesting question of whether or not, in making decisions, we frequently have to abandon ambiguities and subtleties and act out of pragmatic necessity. If we do not, will we--like Hamlet--be forever debating the question and never getting around to action?)

Perhaps it is appropriate that we bring to a close our analysis of *Billy Budd* with this unanswered question.

Focussing in *Billy Budd* on the methods used in arriving at a decision, the characters involved in making it, and the consequences of it, suggests a good deal about the nature of decision making. First of all, we see that sometimes the political and social context figures as importantly in a decision as the organizational and legal issues. And we find that the "purity" of a decision may be contaminated by the exigencies of time and place. Secondly, we find that the people making the decision are subject to psychological frailties and individual sensibilities that may come in conflict with the official roles they play; moreover, human motives are sometimes so complex as to be virtually incomprehensible. As Lindblom notes in "The Science of 'Muddling Through,'" agreement often cannot be reached on values and objectives; therefore, consensus about a solution to a discrete problem--such as that of the captain and his court--may be the only plausible outcome and perhaps the only necessary test for effective decision making (1959, p. 268).

In *Billy Budd* we confront a decision that involves not a single issue but instead multiple issues that complicate movement toward a clear solution. Finally, we see that, once a decision is made, its consequences may resonate in wider circles than the immediate problem would suggest. In short, the "tolerance for ambiguity" which our epigraph calls a necessary skill for public administrators (Waldo, 1981, p. 113) is perhaps the most valuable benefit from the study of literature. Though a study of *Billy Budd* may not make decision making easier, it should make decision making more responsible, in that it increases our responsiveness to and awareness of the elusive human motives as well as the complexity and ambiguity that lie at the heart of decision making.

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Summing Up

A Three Character Play in Three Scenes

Seymour Z. Mann

The Characters:

Joseph Wharton--A widower who appears first as a sixty five year old just after his retirement. He had been the Director of the Department of Probation in a rather large U.S. city. In a flash-back scene he appears as a younger probation officer before he had become the Department's Director.

Tim Wharton--Joe Wharton's adult son.

Spud Jenks--A young, convicted felon who had been one of Joe Wharton's pre-sentencing case loads during his time as a probation officer.

The Scenes:

The time of the **First Scene** is the present. It takes place in the living room of Joe Wharton's home. It is a modestly furnished room of a small house. Its furnishings and general appearance are suggestive of the place of an older man who probably lives alone. The scene is set using only the left half of the stage, while the right half is completely blacked out. At SL of the set a few feet from the room's wall, a sofa is set at angle toward the front of the set. At a comfortable viewing distance from the sofa at SR is a good-sized TV set. A very small entrance foyer is in the corner of the room at upper SL so arranged that the entrance door from the outside is just visible. When the lights go up for the opening of the scene there is only faint light in the room. From a window at the rear wall of the room traces of light enter the room from the outside street lighting so that its rays play on Joe Wharton sitting on the sofa.

Scene Two is a flashback that took place some twenty years previous. The setting which takes up the right half of the stage is a room in a not-so-modern public office building. There are no windows to the outside, but the upper-half of most of the back wall consists of panels of the sort of white, opaque frosted glass typically found in old office structures. One can tell from the changing shadows seen through the glass panels when the lights come up that there is a larger open office on the other side. At the right hand corner of the rear wall is the entrance door to the room. It is made up of two panels--the lower half panel is of dark wood matching the wood panels of the lower half of the rear wall, and the upper half is of the frosted white glass. Painted on the outside of the glass in large black letter is INTERVIEW ROOM. This is visible in reverse from the inside of the room. The room is sparsely furnished with old and scarred plain wooden office furniture. In the center of the room is a six or seven foot long narrow, rectangular-shaped conference table. It is placed on a slight angle so a person sitting at the upper narrow end of the table will be mostly facing the audience. Chairs are scattered around the table and in other parts of the room. There is no other furniture, and the room's lighting is from an old-fashioned incandescent-type chandelier with three bulbs encased in white glass globes.

Scene Three is a repeat of the first scene as it was last viewed.

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Scene One

(As the lights come up and the set becomes visible, JW is seen sitting on the sofa in a stiff posture with a downtrodden air about him staring fixedly at the TV set which has a dark, blank screen. JW is in shirtsleeves, tie at half-mast and otherwise looking somewhat disheveled. A few moments of silence ensue with no action after which the house entrance door opens, a shaft of outside light is momentarily seen in the room before the door is slammed shut.)

TW. *[While still in the foyer in a rather cheery voice:]*

Hi'ya Dad, how are'ya doin'? *[Walks briskly into the room, and then abruptly stops. With the cheeriness in his tone gone:]* Why the hell is it so dark in here? *[Moves to the wall in back of the upper corner of the sofa and flicks on wall switch which turns on some*

lamps in the room to illuminate the set. He then positions himself at the SRear end of the couch facing his father:] Dad, what the heck is this? You're sitting in the dark, staring at the television, but the damn thing isn't turned on.

JW. Hell, Tim, I know it's not on. I was just sitting here thinking.

TW. *[Sits down on the arm of the couch to the right of JW positioned so he can slightly lean over and talk directly at him in a sympathetic but pleading kind of way:]* My God, Mr. Joseph Wharton it seems to me you've done nothing else for a whole week now. Every time I've popped in on you, you're sitting and staring into space with a sick dog look on your face. For Christ's sake, you're not even answering the phone. I've called several times today and gotten no answer. And I've had a lot of calls at the office from a number of your buddies wanting to know if you'd left town for a while.

JW. *[While still staring straight ahead:]* Take the messages. Maybe I'll call them, maybe I won't.

TW. *[Crosses over to a chair placed slightly to the left of the TV and a few feet forward of it and positioned in such a manner that when TW sits down he is looking directly at his father:]* Aw c'mon Dad, I just don't understand. Last week before the retirement shindig the Department threw for you, you kept telling me and everyone else how much you were looking forward to retirement.

JW. Yeah, yeah, and that was then and this is now.

TW. So what does that mean? What happened to all the activities and projects you laid out for yourself? The only thing I've seen since I drove you back here after that great speech you gave at the end of the party is this sitting around and moping. What's with you anyhow?

JW. Damn it, Tim, please don't remind me about that stupid farewell speech. I made an ass out of myself.

TW. Hey, don't bite my head off, and what I just heard is really stupid talk. The retirement party was terrific, and when you finished your speech at the end of the evening all your city cronies who were there and all the guys and gals from Probation were applauding and

cheering. Gosh, it was like the count of the votes had just been reported and you were elected Mayor or something. What the hell, Dad, you worked your way up from the time you were just a young intern to become the head of an agency that you molded into one with a solid reputation--even among professionals around the country. I know you don't particularly like the term, but you have been a unique public servant--yes, in this town or any other place by all the standards one can apply.

JW. [*Pushing his hand in the air as if waving away Tim's speech:*] Yeah, well I don't think I was so unique, and right now I'm of a mind that much of my reputation was undeserved.

TW. [*Gets up, walks to the rear of the sofa directly behind JW and lightly grips his father's shoulder:*] C'mon, Dad, quit all this disparaging crap. I don't know if unique was the right word, but I can tell you a lot of things that made you different than a lot of others in this city. You were the only head of a major Department who was not an out-an-out political appointee. For god's sake, three mayors from two different parties appointed and reappointed you as Director. There hasn't been an administration in twenty years here that wasn't touched by some sort of scandal, corruption or notorious inefficiency. That's what this damn place has been noted for too often, but you survived it all and won a reputation as an honest and effective administrator. Shit, you know that probation people from some of the states and bigger cities than ours have for years been coming to you for advice and guidance. And--most of all--in as tough and squalid a business as probation is today, your reputation is that of a man who had a heart and who always remained a compassionate person. [*Puts his other hand on JW's other shoulder now gripping them tightly as he asks firmly in a slightly angry tone:*] So what's with it, huh?

JW. [*Breaking away from TW's hold, JW bolts to a standing position, turns and speaks directly into his son's face:*] That's the problem, Tim, all that business about heart and compassion! [*As he finishes this pronouncement, JW gets up from the sofa and starts to walk out of the room.*]

TW. [*As JW moves toward the door near the upper corner of the room on the SR wall, TW moves quickly to interpose himself between his father and the room exit door. He puts his face almost at JW's nose and very forcefully says:*] Whoa there, Joseph

Wharton ex-Director of Probation, you are not walking out on me after that kind of a remark. Now, just sit down and start talking.

JW. *[After a brief interval of silence during which father and son just continue to stare at each other in that face-to-face position, JW shrugs his shoulders as in a what-the-hell gesture, heaves a big sigh, returns to his former place on the couch and while doing so he says to TW:]* Okay, okay, you can calm down now. You take a seat too, and I'll try to explain.

TW. *[Throws his hands up in the air in I-don't-know gesture, turns and returns to the chair he was formerly occupying.]*

JW. *[After another interval of silence during which JW and TW stare at each other across the room, JW then begins to speak:]* I admit it. I have just been sitting here for most of the days since the retirement party--yes, just sitting and thinking as I've tried to sort out some things. The truth is I've been reviewing over and over in my mind some aspects about my professional career. Unfortunately, I don't like the bottom line answers I've been getting.

TW. I don't understand, Pop. Why, your speech at the retirement affair was a terrific summing up. Do you think that all that applause and cheering, all the back-slaps, and the hugs and kisses by your colleagues, employees and friends when you came off the dais was faked flattery?

JW. Well, I don't remember too much about all that. There were a few moments after I left the podium and the applause and the huzzahs hadn't yet died down that I did have a wonderful warm and tingly feeling.

TW. Well that's no wonder because what you said and how you said it was wonderful. I don't know when I was ever more proud of my father. You were just great, though I thought you were much too modest--you hardly even mentioned anything about what you had done in making the Department get its hard-won national reputation ...

JW. *[Interrupting TW:]* For Christ Sake, cut that crap. I don't want to hear anymore about reputations.

TW. [*Ignoring his father's interjection:*] And in your introduction you were genuinely entertaining when you regaled them with a few stories about all the characters you had come into contact with over the years. The fact is you were really colorful when you described a probation officer's clientele as consisting of those: pimps, prostitutes, peddlers of drugs, pick-pockets, con-men and women, the white-collar criminal bastards and the convicted murderers of all colors and creeds. Do you hear how I remember your words?

JW. Enough! Enough!

TW. [*Still ignoring his father's plea, and now quite animated gets out of his chair and moves to take a position facing JW in front of the sofa:*] But the best part, Dad, was the heart of your remarks when you spoke mainly of what for you was the most satisfying part of your work--the investigations and interviews that led up to the pre-sentencing recommendations you reported to the judges in the cases to which you were assigned. Damn. It was simply beautiful how you explained why those kind of tasks gave you the most satisfaction--and it was easy to see that for those remarks you were talking eyeball to eyeball with the younger men and women in the Department.

JW. [*Seemingly affected by TW's last speech, he sort of bends over or bows his head looking down at the floor while says:*] It is true, that work always seemed important to me because it didn't take me long on the job to understand too well about the insidious influences that surround a person behind the prison bars and walls. I learned very early that there was very little in the way of rehabilitation, and I knew that the potential for a man or woman to go straight after his or her time was served could be utterly destroyed if the confinement were too long or was perceived by the inmate as being more than deserved. Yeah, yeah, I prided myself on the belief that my judgment more often than not had produced recommendations on which judges had acted. To me at least, though there were frequent doubts that crossed my mind about my performance, for the most part I had always thought that this meant that perhaps I had saved a life, allowed a man to become father, helped a woman to be a true lover, had made it possible for a former thief to become an honest businessman, or for a younger person to live the bulk of his adulthood in freedom.

TW. [*As he speaks, sits down on the sofa next to JW on the US side:*] You did score with all those points, Dad.

JW. [*Suddenly jumps up from the sofa just at the moment when TW was about to put his arm around JW's shoulder. He quickly strides to FSC looking back at TW saying:*] What I scored, Tim Wharton, was zero. [*Reaching FSC he looks directly out at the audience and continues*] This should have been the beginning, the middle and the end of what I should have said: Folks, my name is Joe Wharton, and as you know there are a lot of people in this town who know me. After all, I've spent my whole career here--mostly in the probation field. Hell, for the last seventeen years I've been this city's Director of the Probation Department. Damned if I didn't set some kind of a record: outlasted five elected Mayors. This was the day, as you all know, that I officially retired--exactly on my sixty fifth birthday. I have really been looking forward to this day--not especially being sixty five--but as it approached I can tell you that I have been literally tasting the freedom and pleasures I was sure retirement would bring. By God, in recent days I fervently believed that I had earned and deserved that freedom and those pleasures. What I have to tell you now, though, is that some god-damned-shit-punk-kid who had been a long-ago case of mine has spoiled the whole thing. That's it, thank you.

TW. [*Quickly getting up and moving toward his father as he speaks:*] Joseph Wharton, what kind of nonsense are you talking now? C'mon Dad, give me the sensible explanation you promised of this mood change of yours which seems to have started when you returned to our table right after your speech at the party.

JW. [*Avoiding TW's approach, he walks around him and returns to his former seat on the sofa:*] I just told you. It was Spud Jenks.

TW. [*Turning toward his father:*] More nonsense. Damn it, who in the hell is or was Spud Jenks? Are you trying to tell me that he was the punk-kid that screwed everything up for you?

JW. Yep, go sit down again. Be a little patient, and I'll try to give you a sensible explanation--strange though it is.

TW. [*Returning to a seat on the sofa:*] Well, I certainly hope so.

JW. Spud Jenks's name suddenly popped into my head just as I was leaving the rostrum the other night. The case that had involved me with Jenks had been completely out of my memory for twenty years--maybe even more. But in the middle of all that after-speech hullabaloo his name came to me like it was stabbed into my consciousness, and as it did I had this absolutely clear vision of my pre-sentencing interview with him--just as if it had happened that very day. I guess I was in a funk when I returned to our table, because by then I was already replaying the whole interview scene in my mind. The only thing was, though, the replay had an entirely different ending than the original production.

TW. Aw, c'mon man, I can't believe that the name of a criminal in a case that may have occurred more than twenty years ago could be causing you all this depression and gloom, and which has been giving me all kinds of aggravation.

JW. Well it has. Now just listen until you hear the whole thing. Jenks had been convicted on a drug peddling and serious assault felony charge--it could easily have been attempted murder. The record showed that at his trial he had been a rough and obnoxious character. My pre-interview investigation, however, left me a little baffled about him. I had not been able to track down anything about him to indicate a pattern of violent behavior even back to the few years he had spent in an inner-city high school. I also discovered that his employment record was totally inconsistent with that of every other drug peddler I had run up against until then. *[He pauses for a few seconds at this point in the explanation.]*

TW. *[Breaking the silence:]* So? Go on, go on.

JW. Yes, yes, I am going on. I was even more perplexed when I entered the Interview Room where by then I had conducted similar meetings at least a hundred times before and sat down at the table with a nineteen year old first-time convicted felon. There was the kid fidgeting nervously with his hands and hair as I entered the room. The Public Defender lawyer, though, had obviously prepared him well, for he was no longer unkempt and slovenly as records showed he had been at the trial. Despite that record which had included threats of contempt citation by the judge because of Jenks's mean and disrespectful behavior in the courtroom, as the interview was about to begin there sat what looked to me to be a personable, scared young man.

(Lights go out, the set is completely darkened as JW and TW sit staring at each other. End of Scene One.)

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Scene Two

(After a brief pause the lights come up illuminating the other half of the stage. Spud Jenks is seen sitting at the middle of the US long side of the table. For a moment or two he is alone in the room, he sits silently though fidgeting nervously with his hands and hair. Near the end of the pause a shadow is seen through the rear glass panels moving toward the entrance door of the Interview Room. The door opens and an appropriately dressed, younger version of JW enters the room and takes a seat at the upper end of the rectangular table.)

JW. *[Opens a brief case, takes out some papers and spreads them out before him on the table. For a few seconds he looks at SJ as if sizing him up, then he speaks:]* Mr. Jenks, my name is Joseph Wharton, and I'm the Probation officer assigned to your case. My task is that of preparing a pre-sentencing report for transmission to the judge who presided at your trial. Do you understand, then, the purpose of this session?

SJ. *[Although he tries throughout to speak well and pronounce clearly, he nevertheless often slips into using street lingo, slurs words, substitutes "d's" for "th's" and drops final "g's". Now as he responds to JW he is looking straight back at him, but with a frightened facial expression:]* Yessir, I do.

JW. You don't have to be nervous about this procedure, so just take it easy. It's true that it is my job if the facts about you so indicate, to give a report to the judge that will support his passing a sentence which will keep you off the streets for as long a time as the law will allow. But you can be sure that I will be fair and show understanding in what I provide the trial judge. If what I have learned from my investigation thus far, and from what I may learn from this meeting leads me to believe that you can make a clean break with drugs and that there is no reason to suspect a potential for continued violent behavior on your part....then that will be in

my report, and my recommendation would be against a maximum sentence.

SJ. Ya don't have to go on. I bet you wanna know if I always am and always was a bad ass kind of guy.

JW. That's right, Jenks. What have you got to offer?

SJ. Would it be okay if I told you a story that I think would show you something about the kinda guy I really am?

JW. *[Showing his surprise at how much of the interview strategy Jenks anticipated and taken aback by the nature of Jenks's response:]* Well, you seem to read me quite well. Your request is a little unusual, but go ahead. Tell me your story.

SJ. *[Does not speak immediately, but pauses for a few seconds as if preparing his story in his mind. During the brief interval of silence, his demeanor seems to shift from that of being nervous and frightened to one of calmness and showing no apparent fear:]* I want you to know that I didn't always live in this hell-hole of a city. After my first Pa died, my Ma sent me to live with my grandparents who had a small farm in the Midwest. There was a small barn that had stalls or pens, I don' know whadya call 'em anymore, for four cows. It had a rough wood floor raised off the ground maybe six inches or so. My Grandpa always had dogs around, and it seems there was always a new litter from some bitch. One day I was in the barn wit'im, and he was tryin' to teach me to pick up the old straw an' da cow flop usin' a pitchfork toss it out da open window on to tha outside manure pile. It was a'ready a heap almost to da--tha--window level. *[Pauses again, takes an obvious deep breath and audibly exhales in a sort of sigh or quiet moan]*

JW. Don't worry, take your time. Continue when you're ready. *[Turns slightly to the side, as if to make it easier for SJ by avoiding eye contact while he tells his story.]*

SJ. After a few tries at some tosses one of which hit the wall and splattered back at me, I stopped for a rest. As I plopped down on one of the milking stools I heard the tiny squeaks of what I knew by that time were newly-born puppies. Grandpa heard 'em too, and he angrily said something about Dinah has done it again deliverin' dose

damn pups under the barn...[*Again, his voice trails off into an extended silence.*]

JW. Go ahead, go ahead--I'm listening.

SJ. Well, Grandpa in the mean voice he offen used when order'n me around told me to hurry up and fish out dose puppies 'at were under the floor because Dinah would not be able to do'id herself, and if they stayed there dey would surely die fast. Then he left da barn to start on some udder--ugh, other--task of his own.

JW. So what was your next move?

SJ. [*Haltingly now:*] I went out and got on my hands and knees to figure out how I was goin' to get at those puppies under the barn floor. I saw what looked like two furry balls right smack in d'middle a' that space under the damn floor. After I tried wrigglin' between the floor and the ground I knew that if I did it so I would sure-in-hell get stuck too. And I was scared of that happenin' 'cause I didn't wanna screw up so that my Grandpa would have to get me and those pups out of that space. It bugged me that I might do somethin' stupid and look like a fuck-up in da old man's eyes.

JW. [*After a long silence on SJ's part, JW turns, faces Jenks directly again and breaks the silence by saying:*] I get the impression you were really afraid of your grandfather.

SJ. [*In an instantaneous angry outburst:*] Christ, man, what in the hell gave ya that idea? Shit, I ain't never said so. He could be goddamned fuckin' mean sometimes, but he wasn't bad to me. Jeez, I was actually gettin' to like it there, and to like him--though I was never sure about my grandmudder. But then he upped and kicked d'bucket, and I was expressed back to a shitty home in the city again. I did get terrible mad at 'im for dyin' on me that way.

JW. [*Holds up his hands in an apologetic gesture, indicates by a nod for SJ to continue and merely says:*] Sorry, sorry.

SJ. [*After a sharp glare at JW:*] Okay, okay. Anyhow, though I could barely see in the dark space, it looked like one of the fur pieces was moving some, but the other one was lyin' quite still. I got up and found a long stick of some kind on the barnyard woodpile, and after a time I was able to use it to slide dose pups

out. Right away I could see one of dose pups was dead. But when I looked at d'udder one I was scared shitless: it was still squealin' in its tiny voice... but its eyes were covered and surrounded by masses a maggots.

JW. How awful. So what did you do?

SJ. I ran off to tell my grandfadder what I'd found. He shouted at me I get d'one with the maggots killed, and then to make sure dose two dogs was properly buried by takin'em out to the pasture and diggin' a hole fo' em at least a foot deep. Now I knew what he meant by killin'da pup because I had seen'im drown newborn pups by dunkin'em in a pail of water. He did so when a litter was too big for a mudder to care for and feed'em all. I ran and got a pail of water and came back to dose two puppies lyin' on'na ground. Ginger so I picked up that one d'at was still alive. Jeez, I tought, I'm supposed t'hold it under d'water for at least three minutes. But I couldn't do'd even dough I knew I would be puttin' it out'a its misery, I couldn't bring myself to kill it. At the same time I kept thinkin' about what I'd tell the old man--I sure couldn't tell'em that his grandson from the city had a weak streak and couldn't drown a puppy who was already mor'n half dead. He'd think I was chicken.

JW [*Proddingly:*] So what did you do?

SJ. [*Going on as if he hadn't even heard JW's question:*] I tell you, man, that picture is so clear in my mind even today--I stood between d'pail and the edge of the barnyard with my arm outstretched away from my body and the small, furry ball restin' on d'palm a'my hand. Shit, I was crazy shiverin', and I could feel my warm piss leakin' out. I stared at d'pail, and then all of a sudden widdout even thinkin' I throwed d'tiny thing wid'all my might over the fence and into d'tall grass and weeds that was growin' thick in a'field dere. God damn it, I couldn't kill the puppy, and I couldn't face the old man to ask for his help. Quickly I took a spade and laid the dead baby dog on it. Sneakin' out of the barnyard I went to the pasture and buried it--sorry it was dead but glad at the same time that I did not have to be told that it too hadda be drowned.

JW. [*During the last part of SJ's last speech, Wharton had shifted his position so that he was gazing intently at SJ. Now he bends across the table with arm outstretched, in a gesture of empathy or*

comfort, he brushes J's shoulder with his fingertips as he says to him:] You're angry now.... son, you can ease up.

SJ. *[Moves his arm as if withdrawing it from JW's touch. He still appears agitated and displaying some intensity and anger speaks:]* Shit, man, I ain't never told anyone about this before, but I cried that night as I kept seeing the puppy with the awful crawling maggots as it flew from my hand into the air--and I cried because I knew I'd caused dat--that--helpless animal extra pain by doin' what I did. *[Pauses for a second or two, then his body and facial expressions change as if relieved from tension, and he calmly folds his hands together, places them on the table, fixes his eyes on Wharton and starts talking again:]* Yeah, I know you probably won't believe it, but I live that scene over whenever I see a sick animal or pass a garbage can with flies buzzin' around it cause I know that inside that can swarmin' on the rottin' meat scraps will be those fuckin' awful white maggots. You won't believe this either--but screw it I'll tell ya anyhow: tough guy that I am, tears can still come to my eyes when a picture of that messy, sickly-lookin', just-born puppy crosses my mind. *[Now crooks his left arm, rests his elbow on the table, cups his chin in his hand and looks directly and quietly at JW.]*

JW. *[Returns SJ's gaze, but seems stunned or perplexed. During an extended silence while looking at SJ, he rubs his face, pulls on his chin. Then fiddling with the papers in front of him with one hand while using his other hand to tap, tap his pen on the table he repeats several times:]* Hmmm, umhmm, hmmm.

(Lights out, leaving set in complete darkness. End of Scene Two.)

Scene Three

(After a pause giving JW time to resume his appearance as it was during Scene One, the lights come up illuminating that set as it was at the conclusion of Scene One. JW and TW are in their same positions and postures as seen prior to the darkening of the set at the end of Scene One.)

TW. That is a very moving but very strange story and situation, Dad, how did you play it?

JW. I admit that when he finished his tale I was both stunned and perplexed at the same time. After sitting there for a while sort of mumbling to myself something that I guess was yes and no at the same time, finally, in as non-committal way as I could, I reminded Jenks of the date he was to appear for his sentencing and told him he could leave. He got up abruptly, and without saying a word turned and left the room.

TW. O.K., but what did you put in your report?

JW. Well, I sat there slumped in my chair for a long time. I couldn't even move myself to get back to my own desk. I kept asking myself if Jenks's story had been a contrived and carefully rehearsed performance to gain my sympathy and to skillfully convey the message that there before me had been a man who was really not a person given regularly and ordinarily to violent behavior and traits. On the other hand, I wondered if it were a sincerely told and true recounting of an event which really did reveal the core character of the convicted criminal about whom I might literally be making a life or death judgment.

TW. So, how did you decide?

JW. Well, I opted for believing Spud Jenk's story was the genuine thing-- which meant that I had convinced myself that I was tempering justice with mercy. Hah, that's a laugh. When the trial judge read my report, he didn't believe it at first. I was called into chambers and carefully questioned. Finally, the judge concurred with my recommendations, and at the sentencing appearance he handed down the shortest sentence the law at that time allowed for the offenses of Spud Jenks.

TW. *[TW does not respond immediately, then he gives a big shrug of his shoulders, gets up and walks toward his father, then around the sofa all while he is talking. By the conclusion of this speech, he ends up at wall unit placed behind the television set, takes out a bottle from one of the shelves and pours himself a drink:]* Okay, you ex-public servant, despite your dramatic recounting of that interesting episode in your life, there are still two big questions not completely answered, at least for me. And I gotta have some explanations of them. Also, there's one observation I'm going to make that I want you to hear good...I think I could use a drink.

JW. I don't see you touch that stuff very often, Tim. I am sorry to have upset set you so much that you need that.

TW. [*Before responding to his father, he drinks the liquor he has poured for himself, moves to the TV and plunks the glass down on top of it. Then as he begins to talk, he moves over to the chair he had previously occupied and sits down:*] Listen, 'upset' is a mild term to describe what your behavior these past days has done to me. So let's get to the bottom of what's causing or has caused these stupid shenanigans of yours. Okay, I'm sure you've made some mistakes in judgment during this long career of yours, but considering the thousands of cases you've surely handled and the kind of cast of characters you've had to deal with in the unsavory business probation is so much of the time that is more than understandable; besides, I am certain beyond a doubt that no matter how many of your judgment calls were less than the best, you certainly gave it your best effort. And I'm sure no one in the field can match your record of integrity and dedication....

JW. [*Interrupts TW and says bitterly:*] That's what I've always tried to convince myself of.

TW. [*Ignoring his father's interjection:*] Now, see if you can give me some straight answers to these questions: First, can you explain to me how between the time you finished the last words of your speech and your arrival back at our table this whole recollection which you just described could have been played out in your mind so clearly and in such detail? That's totally unreal, and it more than puzzles me. Second question, assuming that this vision of yours did occur in its entirety during that brief interval of time, what was there about it that so quickly turned you around from elation to gloom?

JW. I don't know that I can give a satisfactory answer to your first question, especially since I haven't yet satisfied myself with a rational explanation. I've always heard stories of how persons who have had near fatal accidents will later report that in those fleeting moments when they were sure death was imminent, they clearly relived many incidents in their lives which happened long in the past or which had been absent from their memories until those moments when it was though dying was about to occur. I never quite believed those stories before, but now I do believe them--because, damn it, such an experience did happen to me that night. [*Gets up and moves*

around to the back of the sofa. He places his two hands on the back of it and bends toward TW looking at him intently while he speaks:] Now, your second question is even more difficult to answer, so don't expect there'll be the reasonable and satisfactory explanation I know you'd like to hear.

TW. Dad, at this point I'm anxious for any kind of an answer. Whatever you tell me now is not going to destroy my cherished esteem for you because of the very model of a logical and reasonable person and father you have been for me.

JW. *[Now begins to pace around and assume different standing positions in the room as he talks:]* Nice speech, son, thank you, but you can forget about logic applying to anything about this explanation. Yes, as I spoke the last words of my little address the other night, I did feel that what I had told them all had been appreciatively listened to; and I did feel that the main points I had made did have the special impact on the younger people in the Department, as I had hoped would be the case. But then when out of the blue that name Spud Jenks flashed into my consciousness, those inner-feeling warm waves of satisfaction I had momentarily experienced were pushed away by the onrush of a quite different kind of feeling. It was like an emerging cloud over the mind was dampening the other sensation of warmth. Then when in that brief flicker of time I relived that interview scene with Jenks, I became distinctly aware that what was happening to my feelings was being caused by a crushing sensation of self-doubt. I was at that moment totally unsure if the words I had just spoken were really true. Worse than that, I was wondering if I really deserved all the praise that had come my way about my professional integrity. The terrible truth, I realized, was that there was much room for doubt. *[By the end of this speech JW is back at the sofa, and he plops down on it in a dejected slumped-over position.]*

TW. For Christ sake, Wharton, that is an explanation absent of all logic--and it certainly does not ring reasonable or rational to me. So you remembered Spud Jenks, and you had a vision of a pre-sentencing interview you had with him. So what? All you've indicated so far, is that you gave the kid a break. That's great, it's what I would have expected of you.

JW. Oh shut up, Tim. You haven't yet heard the rest of my answer to your second question. Maybe it is hard for you to believe, but as

that whole Spud Jenks episode replayed itself in my mind, it caused the whole recollection to move into a new register. It was like a revelation, and it made me see why after all these years I had done more than just forget such an easy and simple a name as Spud Jenks. It dawned on me that somehow I had deliberately repressed that name so as not to connect it with some other things I had later learned about him--things that were sure evidence that the judgment I had made about him was wrong.

TW. [*Gets up, crosses over to the sofa and sits down on the arm of the sofa near JW:*] Alright, alright--as I said before, even if you made several dozen wrong judgment calls in all your years of service they wouldn't tarnish your reputation given the whole of your record to balance them against.

JW. [*Deliberately ignoring TW's observation and comment:*] Along with the recall of Jenk's name and his pre-sentencing interview, what also wormed its way into my consciousness was that over the years I had--in some peculiar way the human psyche functions--tricked myself into completely forgetting that Jenks while in prison had thoroughly proved that he had pulled the wool over my eyes with that grandfather-puppy tale of his. While I had heard stories around the office about a former case load of ours who had committed not one but two murders while incarcerated, I had literally tricked myself into ignoring them. Yes, that murderer was the kid I had judged not to have the potential for future violent and vicious behavior. If during all these past years I have suppressed and repressed every thing I should have remembered and admitted to myself about Spud Jenks --well , I'm just damn certain that I did the same thing in other cases too, and that there're lots of items about my professional life around which there is real doubt that can be cast. [*Moves to the back of the sofa and stands next to TW. He encircles his left arm around his son's shoulders and continues with what he was saying:*] And that realization led me to another truth I have been trying for many years to avoid. In the couple of months from when I decided I would retire on my sixty fifth birthday, I had given a lot of thought to myself as a person and to my professional life. I had, as you saw so well, begun to look forward to retirement with some enthusiasm. You see, I had finally convinced myself that I was not an impostor.

TW. The mystery is now becoming an enigma. What do you mean, impostor?

JW. I know it sounds kind of sick or neurotic, but as sure as I seemed about myself and my position to others it--well, it was not the mirror image of the view I had of myself. In fact, because others thought that of me, it only heightened my sense of doubt about myself. No, I was not what they thought of me, and even when I put such an emphasis on compassion and was so insistent about integrity, I was always nagged by the belief that it was part of an act that served to prevent the revealing of the fact that Joseph Wharton was not the renowned, unusually-long-in-tenure Director of this city's Department of Probation that most people seemed to think was the case. Now, because all of the old doubts that have been triggered again by the true recall of all the facts in the Jenks case, I am bugged or haunted by the self-knowledge that the impostor judgment of myself was and is a correct one. That's the sum and substance of it, Tim. That is my answer to your question of the why of my sudden change of demeanor and mood at the end of the retirement affair and the reasons for why retirement does not hold the same charms for me that it seemed to just a few days ago. *[JW lets his arm slip from his gesture of an embrace of Tim, and he walks slowly to the exit at the opposite side of the room.]*

TW. *[For a moment while JW is on his way to leaving the room, Tim sits in a kind of stunned silence. Just as JW twists the knob to the door that will let him exit the room, TW jumps up and starts after him. In what is at the same time an indication of concern, an admonition and a call to halt, he utters the words:]*
Dad.... dad.... dad!

(Without stopping JW exits through the door before TW catches up with him. As he pronounces the last 'dad,' Tim follows his father through the doorway. Although he can no longer be seen, we hear him saying: You're wrong, Dad, wrong. You were a unique,... competent,... and wonderful public servant! At this point there is a blackout and Scene Three ends.)

Seymour Z. Mann is Professor Emeritus, City University of New York, having been on the faculties of Hunter College, John Jay College and the Graduate School. He has served numerous governmental entities on special projects, and for several years was Deputy to the Executives at District Council 37, AFSCME.

Movies:

The Good, the Bad, and the Public

John Larkin

"I think the bureaucratic mentality is the only known constant in the universe," quips Dr. "Bones" McCoy to Captain Kirk in one of the Star Trek movies.

Such cynicism is only a small and relatively innocuous example in a long list of 70 mm depictions of government abuse, corruption and incompetence. Except for law enforcement agencies and the military, government rarely finds itself in Hollywood's spotlight; however, when it does, the light is dim and colored with the stereotypes and images that have unjustly tainted government employees.

In a recent issue of the *Atlantic Monthly* about Vietnam War POWs, H. Bruce Franklin, of Rutgers University's Campus at Newark has his own agenda when exposing cinematic portrayals of government; however, his point are well taken. Through motion pictures, the American psyche tries to heal itself of the loss of the Vietnam War, but now it is the U.S. government that is the enemy. "Those who

fought on the popular culture front," he writes, "could simply ignore the history and rely entirely on manipulative images."

"Government cowardice and betrayal," he contends, "could now be built into the mythological structure of...the image of a nation run by bureaucrats, politicians, and shadowy secret agents in business suits who revile and betray its true warrior-heroes."

Franklin was discussing an unexpectedly popular 1984 film called *Uncommon Valor* about a retired Army colonel's trek into Laos in search of MIAs, but his statements are equally valid when used to describe the intransigent Environmental Protection Agency representative whose bureaucratic incompetence and slavish adherence to procedure were responsible for setting free all the horrible creatures captured by three imaginative scientists in *Ghostbusters*. More recently, the *Coneheads* were pursued by an overzealous immigration official. It seems that movie villains are allowed a special license for stupidity when they work for the government.

Or even if they pretend to.

In 1992, Phil Robinson directed a film called *Sneakers* in which Robert Redford plays a professional computer hacker. Early in the film, he is approached by two government agents who blackmail him into retrieving an important piece of computer hardware. He returns to his partners and says, "The government found me. They offered me a deal."

The audience later discovers that the agents do not work for the government at all, but by then it no longer matters. The dimly lit office of the "government agents" with the shades pulled down, their shady, arrogant character, and their ability to shamelessly blackmail heroic Redford, all confirm the audience's image of a day in the life of the U.S. government. In fact, it is the audience's preconceived images of the government that lure the audience into believing the menaces which threaten the protagonists in the first half of the film.

In a scene at the end of the film, when our heroes are in a position to blackmail actual government employees, Redford asks them for peace on earth. In an effort to laugh off the negative images so brutally portrayed in the beginning of the film, the government

agent, play by James Earl Jones, say "We're the United States government. We don't do that kind of thing."

It is, however, important to note that not all images of government employees are negative. In fact, the positive light can be spotted in the unlikeliest of places. In the summer of 1993 director Renny Harlin brought us *Cliffhanger*, in which Sylvester Stallone, Ken Rooker, and Janine Turner work together to thwart John Lithgow and a band of ruthless terrorists. What is so remarkable is that the heroes of *Cliffhanger*, who thwart the bad guys with superhuman bravery and epic physical stamina, work for the National Park Service, where daring mountain rescues are just part of a day's work. The National Park Service logo is prominently displayed on the walls, on caps, or on the arms of the actors in a successful attempt to keep the audience aware of the government behind the bravery.

In fact, the film flies in the face of much of the negative images of government that is Hollywood's heritage. True, the terrorists are aided by a U.S. Treasury employee gone sour, but the government itself is never held responsible for this one twisted individual. Furthermore, it takes an unprecedented level of interagency cooperation to bring them down. The U.S. Treasury, the National Guard, and the F.B.I. work together with the National Park Service toward a successful rescue. Even the Federal Aviation Administration gets mentioned when its satellites help locate the antagonists.

And who would ever expect that Irvin Kershner, director of *RoboCop 2*, would be capable of such subtlety in the service of the public sector? All three *RoboCop* films take place in the near future in a Detroit suffering from (among other things) runaway privatization. *RoboCop* himself (Peter Weller), a "cyborg" (i.e. half man, half machine), has been constructed by a private corporation, Omni Consumer Products (OCP), which has received the contract to manage the police department. The cold and ruthless private company is secretly attempting to buy out the city despite the efforts of the shady, but compassionate and democracy-loving, mayor.

The final scene opens in the OCP auditorium, where the CEO is conducting a press conference to explain his plans for the new, privately managed Detroit. The camera quickly passes over a distant, lonely journalist in a wheelchair behind the very last row of

seats in the hall. It is a subtle tip of the hat to the public sector, which would have provided front row wheelchair access if the press conference were held in a public building.

Perhaps only the public administrators and the differently-abled in the audience noticed, but with all the negative stereotypes of government employees found in the movies, and with the country finding the cinema to be an effective tool for flaying one of its favorite scapegoats, it is important that we point out to each other the few positive images found in the nation's psychic mirror.

John Larkin is a member of the staff of the American Society for Public Administration.

Movie Reviews Invited

The movies contain a vast wealth of information about and illustrative of management and public administration. Unfortunately much of this is "hidden" in war films, westerns, prison dramas and other genres that do not immediately appear to be relevant. Fortunately, now that most films are readily available on tape, it is easier than ever to find and use this treasure trove of light and sound that so often illuminates the administrative world far better than any text. Thus *Public Voices* encourages and invites reviews and analyses of pertinent films. Many films stand by themselves; but it is often useful to consider several films by a single actor. For example, consider Gregory Peck. In *Gentleman's Agreement* (1949) he demonstrated the subtlety of racism in the corporate world. In *Twelve O'Clock High* (1950) he illustrated the life cycle theory of leadership behavior. In *The Man in the Grey Flannel Suite* (1956) he coped with the ethical dilemmas of the modern organization man. And in *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1963) he showed how one person of unstinting integrity could make a difference.

Gary Cooper was more than just a lanky cowboy. In *The Fountainhead* (1949) he was a premature supply-side philosopher. In *High Noon* (1952) he offered a case study of the need for more effective pre-retirement planning. In *Vera Cruz* (1954) he dealt with the problems of Americans offering technical assistance to the Third World. And in *The Court-Martial of Billy Mitchell* (1955) he portrayed a martyred organizational dissident. And Clark Gable was more than Rhett Butler, the war profiteer in *Gone With the Wind* (1939). In *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935) he rebelled against a famous practitioner of the Theory X management style. In *The Hucksters* (1947) he led a revolution against an organizational tyrant and transformed the company. In *Command Decision* (1949) he coped with the myriad political and administrative factors that so often frustrate public policymakers.

Similar summaries apply to the work of many other leading actors. The point is that we have within our collective memories hundreds of films that bear upon public policy and administration, but that have never been looked at in this light. So please accept the invitation of *Public Voices* and consider contributing your reviews of specific films or specific actors. Films are like great literature or history itself in that each new generation offers its own interpretations. The enormous backlist of U.S. and foreign filmshas hardly been interpreted at all by the public affairs community.

Reviews of 500-750 words should be submitted to:
Jay M. Shafritz, Movie Reviews Editor, *Public Voices*
Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
Forbes Quadrangle, University of Pittsburgh
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Fax: 412-648-2605

Books

A Tenured Professor, by John Kenneth Galbraith. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston. 1990. Paper. \$7.95.

Reviewed by:
Michael W. Popejoy

John Kenneth Galbraith, professor emeritus at Harvard University, has crafted a novel exposing a side of university life in general not known beyond the ivory tower, or maybe, just the stuffiness of Harvard life in particular. His wit is a high colonic for the anally retentive in academia. At the very least, his satire illustrates the flaws of those who presume to take themselves, and the profession of academe, a bit too seriously. He moves from the mundane to a high level of sophistication in his commentary, with a writing style much like that of William F. Buckley, and he does it quite well; and yet, so subtly as to reproach the reader for thinking to take this novel as a serious work of fiction. Perhaps though, it is a serious work, regardless.

The book opens with several senior faculty taking lunch at the Harvard Club discussing the recent rulings of the Harvard Faculty Council, a self-serious group of players, dealing with the issue of sexual harassment between students and the younger, presumably still sexually active, faculty. To make it a more tasteful topic for consideration by the Council, of course, a more important sounding description would be needed, so the Council deferred to sexual harassment as "amorous relationships in the instructional context". So far, so good until the issue of genuine love between a student and a teaching assistant poses a problem for policy. Well, the Faculty conclude, that with prior permission of the dean, and sufficient notification of the house master, love may prevail as an acceptable activity "in the instructional context", of course.

It is this discussion among the gathering of the cream of the intellectual crop of Harvard gossipers that Galbraith introduces the reader to his professors, a cast of characters, who more resemble

bored housewives at a backyard picket fence than the learned men of Harvard Yard. The hottest topic of discussion at the "long table" then moves to the young economics professor, fresh from a Harvard brain-raid at Berkeley, with a new "predictive" model of making money on the irrational decisions of investors in a free-market system. Even more rash, is that the professor is making a bundle using his model and his own money in the stock market. Galbraith informs the reader through dialogue that professors are not known to use their own money for anything--this is just the beginning of his barbs.

The book approaches academia humorously, but, without the usual comedic one liners that may be expected--although sarcastic zingers are quite evident, and quite funny--unfortunately, the funniest lines reveal the truest underbelly of the intellectual profession. His vision of university life, and his skill for portraying it so accurately, if irreverently, may well force the reader to stifle an occasional outburst of "Right on, Professor!" since the events he describes and the characters he introduces are well known to us all--only the names and places are different--probably to protect the guilty no doubt.

The flaw with this book is also its virtue. Academics who take themselves too seriously won't be amused, others not knowledgeable about the inner sanctum of academic life will be clueless, however, those both knowledgeable and holding only loosely to their own inflated image of self-importance will enjoy Galbraith's contribution to a better understanding of academic life. Since those lucky few are rare, it is doubtful any of his novels will sell adequate numbers of copies to make even a one week appearance on the nation's best seller lists. Pity, more could benefit from the wit and wisdom of Galbraith's insight--particularly new graduate students expecting to enter an academic career--if they survive. However, if the novel was written differently; less technical, less descriptive, with less insider detail; in other words, more for the mass readership, it would lose its contributory value to the rest of us.

Galbraith's hero, who by the end of the book is eventually ground down by the relentless socialization process of the university, is young Montgomery Marvin, economics professor and intellectual entrepreneur. His wife, Marjie, a reported liberal feminist who keeps him on a short leash, works quietly in the background with a

well charged cattle prod nudging her husband along is an equally likable character.

For every hero, a protagonist must live; for Galbraith's novel, that character is Angus Maxwell McCrimmon, a little known professor of psychometrics with tenure, but few students and no recent scholarly accomplishments. Any reader who has survived graduate school has surely been victimized by a McCrimmon. Protected by tenure, "McCrimmon had long ago discovered, the truly offensive aspects of his personality were a reliable source of attention". Surely, Galbraith must have used doctoral advisors as character models for McCrimmon. It would give away the story to say more about the plot, about McCrimmon's nastiness behind the scenes, about how Marvin moves through a maze of troubles over his "breakthrough" economic model to survive in the end with his tenure intact and appointed head of the university's United Way drive--seen as a good way to redeem himself with Harvard's faculty and administration--according to McCrimmon.

Academia, both the institution, and the professors and administrators that inhabit it, is characterized in Galbraith's novel in a way quite accurate in many respects. Even though written in a satirically humorous style, Galbraith's description of the university as a unique form of bureaucracy forces thoughtful readers to reevaluate what is important and what is not about academic work--or how it is different and how it is similar to work and working relationships within other types of organizations. However, the more cynical reader may see the book only as a tongue-in-cheek indictment of tenure, and will either praise or criticize the book solely on that single issue. Indeed, a subtle criticism of tenure may have been a stream of consciousness threading its way through the book, but surely Galbraith had more to say than that.

A Tenured Professor is a novel well worth reading, and even enjoying. Professors too often as not do not enjoy the books they are forced to read, and too often write. Untenured professors may find it comforting, and safer, to wrap the book in a plain brown wrapper while on campus. No sense in taking any chances.

Michael Popejoy is a faculty member at Palm Beach Community College.

Call for Books to Review and Book Review Essays

Suggestions for books to review, particularly fictional works, and book review essays about fictional literature regarding organizational life and bureaucracies, are requested for future issues of *Public Voices*. Books being suggested for review should have complete citations, including title, author(s), publisher and date. A brief explanation of why the book is an important contribution and should be reviewed would be helpful. Books and book reviews selected should conform to the mission of *Public Voices* and the ASPA Section on Humanistic, Artistic and Reflective Expression, which include unorthodox and controversial perspectives on bureaucracy; explanations of how novels, short stories, poetry and other genre contribute to our understandings of society; and how society is reflected in the creative writings of novelists and others.

Please send you suggestions for books to review or completed book review essays to Michael W. Popejoy, Book Review Editor, *Public Voices*, Palm Beach Community College, Lake Worth, FL 33461-4796. Office: 407-439-8338; Fax: 407-439-8208. Submissions on disk using WordPerfect 5.1, Wordperfect for Windows 5.2, or Professional Write are acceptable. E-Mail submissions can be sent via America On-Line, address: ARSCoordn

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