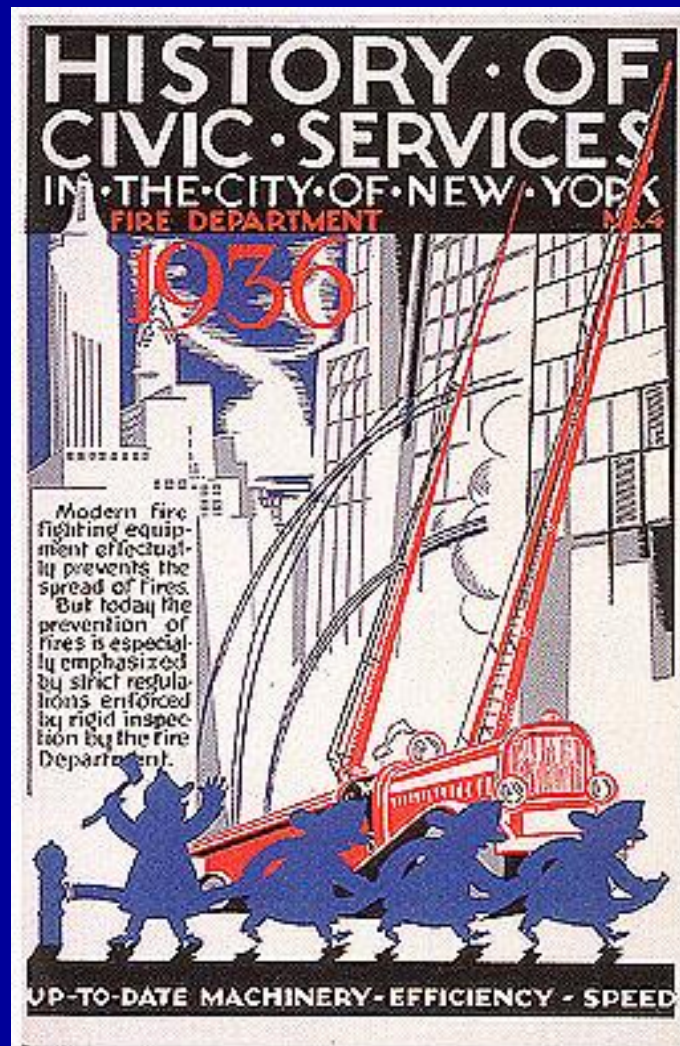


Public Voices



Public Voices

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Through the Wall: Images of Administration out of Time, out of Place— An Introduction

Mark R. Rutgers, Pieter Wagenaar, David J. Farmer, Bas van Gool

An Old Dutch children's riddle reads: "why does the miller look through the hole in the wall?" The answer has nothing to do with determining the direction of strength of the wind, but reads: "Because he can't look through the wall of the windmill." This children's riddle deals with the obvious, because it is so obvious we simply ignore it in ordinary thought. It indicates the difficulty to 'step back' from our everyday approaches to reality. Can we do the same with our ideas about public administration? If so, what may we expect to learn from such research?

The famous Thomas theorem perhaps expresses the most profound insight in the social sciences: "What people define as real is real in its consequences." The problem is of course that we disagree on what is real. On the one hand, most people believe in the "oneness" of reality, whilst on the other hand, there is a plurality of "defined" reality around. There can be a difference between "what is true" and "what is counted as true". The point is that, as the Kant of "Critique of Pure Reason" indicates, we deal with a world of "what is counted as true."

What is real in public administration? *Administrative Theory & Praxis* (no. 1, 1996) devoted a symposium on this issue. The participants in this "superbly wild debate on the question 'What is Real?'" (p. 48) arrived at a host of different conclusions and observations. To point out just a few, most underline that there must be some kind of reality: "The concept of public administration without having a subject would appear absurd." (p. 44). At the same time there is almost complete consensus on the idea that there is a loss of framework. This may result in calling for attention for new dimensions such as the unconscious and non-rational aspects (p. 50/1), or in the acknowledgement of the subjective nature of administrative reality, as implicit in "getting the job done in *your* world." (p. 48) But what job, we may wonder, and in what world? Facts are no longer acceptable as such, but instead seen as "the function of a particular language game." (p. 53).

Looking for alternative sources for understanding what constitutes our administrative reality is the topic of this symposium. It focuses on ways to get hold of the more "cosmological" underpinnings of our (Western) administrative universe. Making implicit assumptions and customary ideas about public administration visible to ourselves is difficult precisely because they require us to lay bare the very assumptions that make up the idea of public administration in the first place. As we cannot see "through the wall", we have to trace alternative "holes" to get a fresh outlook.

Despite the generally accepted insight that every ontology is ultimately an epistemological position, i.e. that there is no grounding of knowledge outside the conceptual framework, we can still analytically differentiate between the ontology and epistemology underlying administrative thought. Ontology in this sense refers to the construction of the real, i.e. the concepts constituting the phenomena and the relations between these phenomena that make up the substance of our "known universe." This is the object constitution. Although, this is in itself an epistemological phenomenon, it makes sense to distinguish this conceived reality or ontology from the ideas that deal with the way this reality can be known: the epistemology.¹

This implies that an ontology underlies all administrative thought. Ontology as a philosophy about the real, about what makes up our universe, can also be named the "cosmology": in our case, the ideas about the building blocks and characteristics of the universe in which administrative phenomena exist. As the Thomas theorem teaches, our cosmology influences our actions deeply. It is therefore of great importance to try and unravel the cosmologies underlying administrative thought. But can we? Can we step outside the framework and become aware of our cosmology? Or would that transcend our abilities to know?

We limit ourselves here to three approaches for trying to trace our own cosmologies. To start with, we can look for cosmologies in other cultures ("out of place"). Second, we can turn to the cosmology of our ancestors, i.e. history ("out of time"). Ideas about the nature of public administration, utterly strange to us now, once were very common. Finally, we look at attempts to explicitly manipulate both 'time and place' ("out of space-time"), i.e. cases where the everyday conditions and assumptions are manipulated in a thought experiment as undertaken in (science) fiction. In all three cases, the difficulty for research is two fold: can we 'step back' from our own time and place to reconstruct alternative 'administrative universes' and, at the same time, take the resulting images back to our own time and place as a source for better understanding of what "public administration" stands for?

Well then, in this issue of Public Voices David Farmer tries to break out of the boundaries limiting our thought by trying to imagine what stance St. Anselm would have taken, if he could have been present at our discussions on public administration theory. His main conclusion is that this medieval perspective can give us a stronger awareness of what he calls the "iatrogenic" character of our modern public administration discourse. It is a character that comes in part from privileging administration, parts, things and nations (cultures). One of his contentions is that tracing the medieval perspective on public administration proves radically helpful in as far as we learn that privileging administration would have been utterly foreign to Anselm. Our tendency to regard administrative behavior as paramount - as "in charge" - limits our ability to understand some aspects of social reality, to transcend the presuppositions of the discourses in which we are immersed.

But we, of course, don't have to reconstruct historical public administration-cosmologies if we want to step out of our own. Historical thought on public administration is, after all, still available, because in the past, a lot of thought was (also) devoted to the nature of "public" administration. Pieter Wagenaar finds, however, that the ideas used to understand and legitimize administrative practice are sometimes rather different from present-day approaches. When the starting point in administrative thought is, for instance, 'the great chain of being' and 'cosmic harmony' the meaning of administrative phenomena is very different from present-day perspectives. Despite the fact that we are dealing with our own ancestors and that their thoughts are even part of the etymology of our present-day concepts, taking a closer look at their views does by now means ensure a shared cosmology used for understanding and legitimizing public administration. Indeed, the final conclusion may be that we can know, but never really share our ancestor's cosmologies.

Does the same problem confront us when we try to understand the cosmologies behind public administration-thought in cultures different from our own? Yes, probably, Bas van Gool states. True is,

that looking at non-western concepts of public administration is one way of trying to avoid our everyday biases. Indian thought, e.g. seems to deny the familiar Western conceptualizations: reality is constructed by means of a different kind of logic, constituting a classification that is often even untranslatable into Western thought.

Perhaps then the solution lies in thought experiment. Could we escape our cosmological boundaries by consciously constructing alternative ones? Fiction, especially science fiction, might be a way to look beyond everyday limits, Mark Rutgers proposes. As it happens in this body of literature ideas about administrative phenomena (leadership, bureaucracy) figure in abundance: in theory therefore science fiction allows us to carry out thought experiments and develop "scenarios" that are not hampered by our everyday starting points and implementation problems. Do such stories out of space present us with an object of study that warrants more attention? Can they provide us with an interesting perspective on public administration, and its underlying cosmology? Yes and no, it turns out. Yes in as far as science fiction is a mirror of everyday ideas, if not a looking glass that magnifies our suppositions. No, in as far as it fails as thought experiment on public administration and does not seem to be able to generate alternative cosmological perspectives.

The issue at hand is most certainly not new, but we invite the reader to try and reflect on some possibilities to make our cosmologies visible at least. The main key is that cosmologies, as belief systems are 'local' in time and place. The danger, however, is that precisely because of our stubborn (innate?) tendency to look for continuity and coherence, we are often not aware of differences in cosmology. Thus, similar wording easily suggest that we are dealing with similar representations of reality. But does administration really mean the same for people in New York, Denver, Amsterdam, New Delhi? Or to Clinton, John Kennedy, Gandhi, Peter the Great? We could try to trace the cosmologies in use in distant times and places and thus attempt to become aware of our own ideas and assumptions. Of course we would find that alien cosmologies are very difficult to understand and even incommensurable with our own cosmology, but that is not the same as "un-understandable."

The relevance of tracing the borderlines and contents of our cosmologies is to be found in, for instance, our ability to keep in contact with the very roots of administrative thought. Thus, the traditional legitimization for public administration may be in play: is a reference to the Pilgrim Fathers in any meaningful way applicable for legitimizing present-day ideas about public administration? Does a reference to Montesquieu's ideas about a separation of powers make sense in our present-day cosmology? So we underscore the issues evoked by the claims of Thomas' Theorem and the meaning of the miller looking through the hole in his windmill.

¹ The distinction is analytic, as ultimately the two "presuppositions" constitute one-another.

Paulus Teding van Berkhout: The More I Know Him the Less I Understand Him

Pieter Wagenaar

Out of Time?

The first article in this symposium, Paulus Teding van Berkhout: The More I Know Him the Less I Understand Him, poses the question to what extent we can know the cosmology underlying our ancestors ideas on public administration. At face value we are able to reconstruct, i.e. describe, and understand historic cosmologies. A closer look, however, learns that we always will remain 'distant observer', unable to really capture what motivated historical figures. For instance, what constitutes a 'metaphor' from our perspective was very a fundamental insight into reality to Berkhout. Understanding this implies that we learn important lessons about ourselves.

Introduction

Two years ago I started doing research on Paulus Teding van Berkhout,¹ a 17th Dutch public functionary who put his views on administration to paper, and he hasn't left my mind ever since. I have continued my research into his thought since then, and, surprisingly enough, the better I get to understand him, the more alien his ideas appear to become to me.

I've read more or less everything there is to be read about the society he lived in, I'm even better versed in 17th century Dutch politics, and I'm among the very few who actually studies the Dutch public service system as it was in early modern times. And somehow all this knowledge seems to widen the gap that exists between Berkhout and me, instead of narrowing it. Why is that?

A Brief Summary of Berkhout's Ideas

Berkhout's primary concern was attacking local particularism. His entire work consists of one huge plea for a centrally led state bureaucracy penetrating all of society. Politicians (which Berkhout understands to be the delegates to the Estates of Holland) should be absolutely in charge. Their subordinate public functionaries (by which Berkhout not only means civil servants, but also the local governments who sent

the afore-mentioned delegates to the Estates) should obey under all circumstances.² That after all would be the only way to defend the public interest against the private. "Partisan politics that furthers private interests", he wrote, "is diabolic because wheeling and dealing produces complots, complots produce cabals, cabals produce factions, factions produce mutinies, mutinies lead to war and war to the ruin of the people and to murder".³

Strongly voiced as they may be, these ideas appear to be ordinary enough, but at closer look the dichotomy Berkhout makes between politicians and public functionaries is a rather peculiar one. Why did he think a Holland burgomaster a civil servant, but a politician once local government delegated him to the Estates?

Enemy of the Corporate Society

Berkhout was a high public functionary, who lived in The Hague, Holland's administrative center, and worked for the Estates of Holland, more or less the county's most central governing institution. As is sometimes said about present day Russia, however, in 17th century Holland the center *was* the periphery. The province consisted of many almost autonomous towns, eighteen of which cooperated with the nobility in the afore-mentioned Estates, but at the same time, like every other government body, tried to evade Estates' influence on what they saw as their own exclusive business as much as possible. Holland was a *Ständegesellschaft*, a *société des ordres*, which consisted, on every level, of largely independent corporations.

Berkhout presided one of the Holland auditing offices, which administered the Estates' domains, and was thus an integral part of the very limited central bureaucracy that did exist at the time. In that quality he had to do business with local powers constantly, and, what is more, had to defend the Estates' interests against them. His bureau was under threat of being abolished, because of lack of function. If Berkhout permitted local powers to infringe on his bureau's authority, and consequently on that of the Estates, he was threatening the future of his own bureau, and, with that, not only his own but his childrens' as well. After all, office was often passed from father to son during Holland's *Ancien régime*. Small wonder that Berkhout was prepared to throw in his fate with whatever ideology ready to defend the centralizing tendencies in Holland's administration and society.

Republican versus Orangists

And such ideology was in stock. It is true that Holland knew many governing corporations, but it could be united under single political leadership at times. Two functionaries qualified for the role of head of state. Sometimes the "Grand Pensionary", the Estates' legal specialist, assumed the role. At other periods, especially in times of war, the "stadholder" -formally an Estates' functionary only, but in practice often a kind of semi-monarch- got the upper hand. Defenders of the stadholder's position adhered to a form of government known as "the regimen mixtum". The perfect polity should be a monarchy, an aristocracy, and a democracy at the same time, and the stadholder, they felt, was the monarchic element in the Holland political system. Those who favored a strong position for the Grand Pensionary, on the other hand, were usually absolutists. They often wanted to the Estates to be in sole charge of the entire body politic.⁴ It will come as no surprise that Berkhout adhered to their views.

Until now there appears to be no problem in understanding Berkhout's ideas, but appearances deceive. What I haven't told you yet is that Berkhout used different arguments than most of us would. His political views were interwoven with the religious dogmas he adhered to.

Calvinist in a Pious World

Holland knew no state church in Berkhout's times, but it had a "public church" that was favored by governments on all levels. One usually had to be a member of the Dutch Reformed Church if one wanted to apply for public office. Berkhout was.

According to the standards of his time, he was not a particularly strict Calvinist, even a bit of a heterodox in some respects, but compared to the role religion plays in the minds of most of us, it is striking how deeply Calvinist creed penetrated his views, especially those on government. He started his treatise on the Holland polity by describing heavenly government, and subsequently explaining the relation between divine and earthly rule, quoting the Bible constantly as he went along. In his time people still took the Script literally, and Berkhout was no exception. He argued that subjects owed their God-appointed regents complete obedience, by citing Romans 13:1-7. He was also in the habit of using biblical metaphors, likening, for instance, the "stadholder" to the molten calf. To quote him literally:

"it would be easy to prove that a stadholder is as necessary to our polity as a fifth wheel to a wagon. Why then do the ignorant so desire a stadholder? Why do entire cities take to the streets to see him as if there were something divine about him? Brainless and foolish people even stop singing psalms when the infant enters church, only to gaze at him and to bow to him although he isn't even stadholder yet, and should be barred from the office anyhow. They look up to the princes who they want to raise, while the princes look down on them, who they want to demean.

It is because the blind people are confused by satan. They are comparable to the Israelites who worshipped the molten calf when Mozes was on the mountain, which as we know provoked God's punishment. Just like the Israelites the people are now looking for a visible deity to worship, which is the way God puts it to the test. It has to obey Him by obeying His intruments, meaning the Estates, not the Stadholder who isn't even in government. The Lord then, has created the stadholder as a trap, to be able to separate the righteous from the wicked, just like the molten calf in Mozes' time".⁵

Most of my countrymen have long abandoned Berkhout's strict belief, although some stern Calvinists can still be found. I occasionally stumble across them, and am quite familiar with their way of thinking, even with theocratic thought, that hasn't disappeared completely. It is different from Berkhout's though. When Berkhout discussed local government's arrogance he listed the consequence it was already having in the year he wrote his central treatise: provoking God's wrath. "God had warned Holland with a comet in 1665", Berkhout wrote, "and scourged it with pestilence and war. War had then destroyed commerce and navigation, the fountains of our prosperity, which would lead to famine and scarcity. To these calamities He had added the menace of flood disaster, strokes of lightning in towers and churches, spontaneous combustion of haystacks, discord among regents, the menace of changes in the old foundations of state, scarcity of public finance and high taxes, which would eventually lead to despair, confusion and total ruin".⁶

Berkhout seems to have actually believed all that. Obviously there still remains something to be explained. His "ordering of reality", his "cosmology" differs from ours.

The Great Chain of Being

Berkhout utilized the Bible differently than my orthodox Calvinist contemporaries would. He believed that the entire universe was created by a single divine will, and was therefore structured according to one hierarchical principle. Creation formed a "chain of being", as modern scholars have styled the ordering of reality he adhered to, a hierarchy stretching from God to man and on, until it finally reached the realm of minerals. The dividing line between microcosm and macrocosm ran through man, because man had an immortal soul, part of which belonged to the macrocosm. This great chain should not solely be envisaged as a straight line, but could, on closer look, be divided up in subsystems, that mirrored the superstructure. The body of one single human being, for instance, was such a subsystem, in which every organ had its place in a hierarchy. The same could be said of the human mind, in which reason occupied the top position and all kinds of natural urges the lower levels. However, next to differences in hierarchy, there were also differences in functions between the constituting parts of the subsystems: stomach and liver performed different functions. A similar thing went for the subsystems that made up the superstructure as a whole. Now what political theorists like Berkhout did, when they advocated a particular polity, was likening it to some other of creation's subsystems, pointing out the "analogies" and "correspondences" between their ideal form of government and the solar system for example, and thus proving that their political ideas answered to the same divine and cosmic order.

Berkhout, and many of his contemporaries, did not use argumentations like these as a figure of speech only. They actually believed that the entire cosmos formed one integrated hierarchical system, in which all the constituted subsystems were linked. The "harmony" the entirety of creation formed could therefore be endangered by alterations in one of the subsystems. That is what Berkhout meant when he wrote that infringement on the Estates sovereignty by local government would cause all sorts of other disasters, fires in haystacks and high taxes for instance, or pestilence. Comparing the stadholder with the molten calf was no rhetorical strategy either. Berkhout literally believed that he knew the way the Lord divides the righteous from the wicked and that God was putting the Hollanders to the test in an exactly analogous manner.⁷

The preservation of God's order in earthly government was therefore a central notion to Berkhout. To cite him again: "hell is the place where order is nonexistent, it consists of nothing but confusion, disorder and destruction, and consequently all thinkable and unthinkable sorts of misery. In consequence putting government out of order is detaching the foundations and ruining the building of government, which will lead to all kinds of confusion, disorder, destruction and other miseries."⁸

In adhering to the theory of the great chain, Berkhout was not alone among his contemporaries, far from. Clerical opposition against the ideas of e.g. Galileo, Copernicus and Descartes is best understood as an attempt to preserve the scientific cosmology that supported the kind of holistic view on man, his maker and the universe on which so much of the *Ancien régime*'s ethical thought, and political thinking, was based.⁹

Once one is familiar with the concept, one finds the chain everywhere in 16th and 17th century writings: in Shakespeare's plays and Bodin's treatises, in a Dutch poet's description of his garden, and even in the very architecture of such 17th century formal gardens itself. The chain is therefore a familiar enough concept to those studying the early modern period, an "ordering of reality" we have long grown accustomed to, but it does, nevertheless, supply the answer to the question posed in the beginning of this paper.

Analogy and Correspondence

And that answer lies in the use of arguments. It is not Berkhout's arguments in themselves that are completely alien, though. It is the *way* of arguing. When we lost Berkhout's cosmology, arguments of "analogy and correspondence" lost their validity. Nowadays it is no longer possible to prove one's view of government right by pointing out the similarity between stadholder and estates on the one side, and the solar system on the other, because we have lost the idea that all of these are part of one grand divine plan, which is designed according to one single principle. Neither do we believe that distortions in one part of creation, for instance politics, can create distortions in others, for instance the weather. Relating comets, strokes of lightning and floods to local government's arrogance, the way Berkhout did, can no longer be done. The very notion has become absurd and indeed hardly recognizable. That Berkhout, when he likened the stadholder to the molten calf, didn't mean that metaphorically, but literally, is something one has to know, of course, but also a thing that takes time to accept. And when one finally comes to accept that Berkhout thought the way he did, the resulting knowledge widens the gap between him and you instead of narrowing it.

Conclusion

The reason why Berkhout and I are so very far apart is clear, therefore. It lies not in his long gone society, nor in the political circumstances of his time, almost forgotten nowadays. Neither can it be traced to Berkhout's role in his society, nor to his position in the public service, nor even to his creed. The reason Berkhout is so alien to me emanates from his completely different way of arguing, which is an integral part of an entire cosmology that has disappeared in the mist of time. Making this cosmology visible destroys the superficial insight one appears to have in Berkhout's ideas.

If we take all this in consideration, can we still use history the way we often do, e.g., utilize the writings of the Pilgrim Fathers to legitimize our own views on government? I say we can't and I'd like to take the argument even further: I suspect that the mechanism I've just described not only applies to cosmologies of the past, but to those of the present day as well, which does have its consequences for the possibility of comparative administrative thought. It is a topic, which is discussed further on in this symposium.

Endnotes

¹ Pieter Wagenaar, 'Early fragments of Dutch administrative theory: Berkhout (1609-1672) on politics ('sovereine hooch overicheijt') and administration ('subalterne ampten')', *Jahrbuch für europäische Verwaltungsgeschichte/ Yearbook of European administration history* 13 (2000) This paper draws heavily on it: many of the data and arguments presented here as the basis for my reflections, can also be found in *JEV*.

² On Berkhout see: Cornelis Schmidt, *Om de eer van de familie: het geslacht Teding van Berkhout 1500-1950: een sociologische benadering* (Amsterdam 1986) and Wagenaar, 'Early fragments'. The writings of Berkhout cited here, are: On heavenly and earthly government 1665, Rijksarchief in Zuid-Holland (RAZH), familiearchief Teding van Berkhout (FATvB), inv. nr. 99: 'discours over de hemelsche en aertse regheringhe': '(...) alleen om mijne kinderen bekent te maecken de blindheijt van s'werelds saecken int stuck vande publijcke regeringe en haer te leijden ten rechten baene in cas t'eniger tijde, mogelijk tot de publijcke regeringe geroepen mogen werden, en in sulcken geval van dese schriftelijke memorie, tot nut van t'gemene beste en Godes heijlige naems eeren, haer mochten dienen'; On the foundation of government 1665, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 100: 't'fondament vande regeringe vindt men seer evidentelijck uijt gedrukt in den eedt van staet'; On nobility RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 101 'Blindtheijt en onverstandt vant menselijck verstant, ontrent de hoogmoedicheijt daer in geconsidereert de bedriechelijcke ijdelheijt tot berichtige mijner kinderen'; On rural industry, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 124, Memorie van mr. Paulus Berckhout betreffende de nering ten plattelande; On the Stadholder, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 110, 'Deductie over het stadhouderschap'; On improper applications for functions, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr.

111, Consideratiën van Mr. Paulus Berckhout tegen het onbehoorlijk kuipen naar ambten en betreffende het vergeven van publieke ambten; Memorandum on the authority of the Chamber of Account, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 131, memorie van Mr. Paulus Teding Berckhout betreffende de bevoegdheid van de rekenkamer van Holland en het ambt van rekenmeester 'Memorie Camere vande Reeckeninge' and Memoranda to the Estates concerning the domains Januari 1665 and 13th August 1671, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 134, 'Memorie ende korte deductie dienende tot bericht van Haere Ed. Groot Moogh. De Heeren Staten van Hollandt ende Westvrieslant nopende de gelegentheijt, nature, ende conditie van Haere Ed. Groot Mogh. Domeijnen Ingesteld, ende geformeert inde maent januarii anno XVI^e vijffentsestich, en ten selfden tijde overgelevert in handen van d'heer raedt pensionaris de With'and 'Tot voldoeninge vande resolutie van Haer Ed. Groot Mo. De Heeren Staten van Hollant, ende Westvrieslant, in dato den 13^{en} augustii 1671'.

³ On improper applications for functions, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 111. I paraphrase Berckhout instead of quoting him literally.

⁴ G.O. van de Klashorst, 'Metten schijn van monarchie getempert'. De verdediging van het stadhouderschap in de partijliteratuur, 1650-1686' in: H.W. Blom en Ivo W. Wildenberg ed., *Pieter de la Court in zijn tijd: aspecten van een veelzijdig publicist (1618-1685)*. Voordrachten gehouden op het De la Court symposium, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, 26 april 1985 (Amsterdam 1986) 93-136.

⁵ On the Stadholder, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 110.

⁶ On heavenly and earthly government 1665, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 99.

⁷ See W.H. Greenleaf, 'The Thomasian tradition and the theory of absolute monarchy', *English Historical Review* 79 (1964) 747-60; James Daly, 'Cosmic harmony and political thinking in Early Stuart England', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society held at Philadelphia for promoting useful knowledge* 69:7 (1979)3-41, see 5-7, 10; W.H. Greenleaf, *Order, empiricism and politics: two traditions of English political thought, 1500 - 1700* (London etc. 1964) 16-22, 25-32; Robert Eccleshall, *Order and reason in politics: theories of absolute and limited monarchy in early modern England* (Oxford 1978) 13-14, 18-19; Brian Vickers, 'On the function of analogy in the occult' in: Ingrid Merkel and Allen G. Debus ed., *Hermeticism and the Renaissance: intellectual history and the occult in early modern Europe* (Washington/London [etc.] 1988) 265-293; Eric Jorink, *Wetenschap en wereldbeeld in de Gouden Eeuw* (Hilversum 1999) 17-18 and Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The great chain of being: a study of the history of an idea* (Cambridge, MA 1936).

⁸ On heavenly and earthly government 1665, RAZH, FATvB, inv. nr. 99.

⁹ J.A. van Ruler, *The crisis of causality: Voetius and Descartes on God, nature and change* (Leiden 1995).

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Indian Administrative Cosmology: The Dharmic Bureaucracy?

Bas van Gool

Out of Place?

*Just as in the case of history, looking at other cultures results in a mixture of recognition and bewilderment. In **Indian Administrative Cosmology: The Dharmic Bureaucracy?** the author shows that what is perhaps a simple matter of administrative pathology from the western perspective, becomes a much more complex matter if the perspective of the 'observed' enters the picture. At the same time, it proves, however, to be very difficult to convincingly reconstruct and pinpoint the reality and impact of the 'local cosmology' on public administration. Other cosmologies only become 'understandable' once we realize that they are there.*

[O]ne can perceive the essential difference between the study of thinking and acting men and the study of behaviour, as would be made of insects, occasionally sprinkled with more or less epiphenomenal indigenous representations. The difference depends on the depth of the scholar's motivation: either he is ready to challenge himself in his own representations, the better to understand the other, or else he is reluctant to do this and, consequently, refers what he observes and experiences to a system of essentially immutable coordinates. The relation to the other is deepened by the consideration of ideas and values. The refusal to focus attention on ideologies is tantamount to the scholar's refusal to challenge himself in his research. It is true that this challenge can only be empirical and piecemeal; one challenges now one representation, whether familiar or scientific, that is found to obtrude, now, perhaps, another one. One cannot wipe out at once one's own consciousness, nor all the conceptual apparatus of the discipline, upon which its members depend to communicate with one another (Dumont, 1998: xxiv).

Bureaucratic "Pathologies"

The best way for a Western student of public administration to familiarise himself with the functioning of Indian bureaucracy, is simply to do as I did: rent a house in India and start living there. He or she will

very quickly realise that things are not just as simple as that. An example will suffice to get the idea: As I had been warned about the tiresome procedures involved in getting a telephone connection, I decided to rent a house with a telephone connection already installed. So far so good, but what I had not thought of was to enquire as to whether my phone-line was installed in "tone" or "pulse" modality. I realised the far-reaching consequences of my negligence when, having acquired a highly prized internet connection after a prolonged battle of endurance with the officers and *babus* (clerks) of the Department of Telecom's internet section (the details of which I will spare you), I was all set to send my first email. Whatever I tried, my laptop kept telling me that "a connection with the server cannot be established". After consulting a number of software engineers who checked, rechecked and reinstalled all the software no less than a dozen times, only one explanation remained: My telephone line must be functioning in pulse, instead of the required tone modality. I had no choice, I had to do what I had wanted to avoid at all costs: pay a visit to the officers of the local Mahanagar Exchange to get the modality changed. Being already quite seasoned in dealing with the various public service departments, I came fully prepared. I had traced the name of the concerned officer – no one less than the chief engineer –, had an official request typed at the street corner near the Exchange and appeared at the gate of the Mahanagar Exchange building at 11.30 sharp. By this time even the highest officers must have reached the office (government offices officially open at 10 am, but only officially, and in practice bureaucrats arrive at the office in order of rank and seniority: *peons* – office servants – arrive first and *sahabs* – officers manning the highest bureaucratic echelons – invariably last) and it is still too early for them to be out for lunch, which may last for the better part of the afternoon. At the gate I signed the visitors' register – not forgetting to state my address, the time and purpose of my visit and the name of the officer to be visited –, had my bag searched by the armed guard and proceeded to the second floor. There I reported to the *babus* at the reception desk, repeated the purpose of my visit in my best Hindi – expertly waving the typed request before their eyes, so as to show that I was not going to be sent away for neglecting to fulfil all formalities – and was told that unfortunately chief engineer *sahab* had been ill for the last five days and was still not well. Perhaps I could come back after a few days? I kept smiling and, mumbling the names of a few officers high up in the Telephone Department, replied that I would certainly do that. Nonetheless, in the meantime, would it not be possible to see chief engineer *sahab*'s immediate subordinate, maybe he could help me out in this trifling matter? The *babus*, seemingly unaccustomed to such daring perseverance, politely tried their best not to understand my question but when they finally realised that I was not going to leave, started making phone calls. For some time, every few minutes some or another *babu* would enter the room, asking the same questions and giving the same answers. Finally, the reception-*babu*, driven to well-concealed desperation, agreed to give me the name of Chaudhary *sahab*, who might be able to help me. Chaudhary *sahab*, hearing the word internet, visibly sighed with relief and was eager to explain to me that for internet related matters I should go and see Verma *sahab*, in the Department's other office on Lekhraj Market. Again I explained my "work" and, using the politest forms of address, succeeded in convincing officer Chaudhary that he really was the person who could help me out. Suddenly, without wasting another second, Chaudhary *sahab* silently grabbed my request, signed it and an hour later I sent my first email to the Netherlands.

In this particular episode, I was lucky enough to somehow strike a responsive chord with the concerned officials and got my work done in a little more than an hour, an achievement I have not been able to match since. I was, for example, substantially less successful when I tried to get my motorbike registered with the Road Tax Office (one month) or mail delivered at my home (the first letter arrived after six months), not even mentioning getting a gas connection, opening a bank account or having my dead telephone line revived. Of course, one does not have to go all the way to India to experience the pleasures and tortures of bureaucratic "pathologies"; many of you will easily come up with examples from your own surroundings.

Images of Indian Bureaucracy

While it is certainly true that one finds striking similarities in bureaucratic “pathologies” in countries all over the globe, it is equally true that public bureaucracies in different societies have their own distinctive patterns of bureaucratic behaviour and operations, their own particular “feel” (cf. Heginbotham, 1975: 3). Thus, before we proceed, let us first take a look at – what I consider – a representative sample of excerpts from studies of Western – or “Westernised” – students of Indian bureaucracy. The examples all relate to the latter’s role in effectuating and guiding developmental processes:

[B]ureaucrats [in developing countries, bvg] have weak incentives to provide good service, whatever their formal, pre-entry training and professional qualifications. They tend to use their effective control to safeguard their expedient bureaucratic interests – tenure, seniority rights, fringe benefits, toleration of poor performance, the right to violate official norms- rather than to advance the achievement of program goals (Riggs, 1967: 129).

The restricted nature of interaction [with officials, bvg] is indicated by the fact that two-thirds of all respondents said they had never talked directly with officials. Almost half of them did not know who these people were. For others recognition was often confined to seeing them in the market or taking tea on the *pradhan*’s [village mayor] front porch. Only fifteen per cent of all respondents claimed frequent contact with officials. These comprise respondents mainly from among the *pradhan*’s supporters and neutral higher castes. Other sections of the communities were largely ignored. Low caste respondents, in particular, often claimed that officials had never entered their street, never stopped to talk to them, and did not visit their fields. These respondents were often reluctant to visit the block offices or headquarters for fear of rebuff. Those who had gone there were made to feel unwelcome (Hale, 1984: 70).

Many civil servants in the planning and rural development sections, once comfortable with the interviewer, were more than happy to discuss the political intrigues of the day. No one, however, really thought that land reforms, poverty programs, and other rural problems are issues worthy of conversational interest. [...] Bureaucrats seek favours with politicians, protect their positions, and carry out routine administration; and no one debates the government’s developmental responsibilities. The political idiom in which a government is conceived of as responsible for social ills ... was mostly missing in U.P. [i.e. Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state, bvg] (Kohli, 1987: 198).

In India no major groups within or outside the government are concerned with enforcing child-labor laws or making education compulsory, for no particular group is moved by theological, ideological, moral, or even self-interest considerations. The result is that officials who prepare central and state budgets merely make incremental changes in yearly educational budgets, officials in state education and labor ministries show no interest in tightening legislation, administrators are not inclined to enforce existing laws, state and local governments pay little attention to elementary education, and teachers sit by idly as children drop out of their classes (Weiner, 1991: 203).

The government is housed in the block headquarters, usually a long distance from the village, and the people there are described as “sitting nicely on their ass”. The VLW [village level worker, bvg] visits the village once in a while but ... definitely not with any altruistic motive. The others, except for the police officers, just draw their salaries, and wait for the *goondas* [criminals] and corrupt *punji*pati [rich people] from the village to visit them and work out their schemes (Lieten and Srivastava, 1999: 246).

Many of the patterns highlighted in the foregoing excerpts could easily be elaborated upon and reinforced with the findings of other observers and with notes that I myself have been collecting during field research on the functioning of the lower echelons of the development bureaucracy in Sitapur, a district in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. Also there I found the large majority of bureaucrats heavily preoccupied with internal personnel policies, very selectively interacting with the public, disinterested in discussing goals and performance of poverty alleviation- and other development schemes, and systematically engaged in a wide array of corrupt practices. Moreover, I was struck by the enormous amounts of files that are, as it seems, aimlessly being shuffled around by *peons*, the elaborateness of the noting system, the nerve-wracking slowness and obscurity of office – and decision making procedures, the highly cultivated aloofness of officers vis-à-vis their subordinates, the virtual absence of camaraderie – especially among bureaucrats of differing ranks and cadres –, the all-pervading atmosphere of mutual distrust between officers and agencies, the fatalistic attitude with regard to the possible effectiveness of measures of administrative reform, and, more generally, the widespread dissatisfaction of bureaucrats with their work and work environment.

What is striking in the foregoing passages is the pejorative language that scholars almost inevitably feel forced to use to describe and analyse the distinctive patterns of Indian bureaucratic behaviour and operations. Secondly, and more importantly, when seeing these patterns or “pathologies”, enumerated as discrete phenomena, one is left with the unsatisfactory feeling – at least I am – that these phenomena are not necessarily discrete at all; that somehow these patterns must be interrelated, part of a larger picture, although one does not quite know how this larger picture might look like and with what kind of language it could be described. Such a language would be desirable, however, not only to get rid of the rather depressing language currently in use, or to do justice to the “lived” and “thought” realities of the bureaucrats, their clientele and the society they live and work in, but rather to arrive at a picture that more sharply brings into focus the underlying dynamics of the observed phenomena and, through this, makes these phenomena and their underlying dynamics understandable and analysable in a comparative administrative perspective.

The Dharmic Bureaucracy

Stanley Heginbotham's *Cultures in Conflict: the Four Faces of Indian Bureaucracy* (1975) is one of the pioneering and most successful attempts to “understand” the patterns of Indian bureaucracy in a comparative perspective. Using culture as the primary explanatory variable, Heginbotham developed four, what he called, cognitive models¹ that can be said to inform (or have informed) certain defining characteristics of Indian bureaucracy's formal structure, its compliance system, its working norms and relationship with its clientele. Although four models – the *dharmic*, the British colonial, the community development and the Gandhian – are developed, it is to the so-called *dharmic* model that Heginbotham devoted most attention and accorded most descriptive and explanatory power. Let us see what this *dharmic* model of Indian bureaucracy entails.²

At the time of Heginbotham's fieldwork in the late 1960s, a large majority of the lower level bureaucrats he was studying, were born and raised in villages. The *dharmic* bureaucracy, then, is rooted “in the ethos of social, economic and political life in Indian villages, rather than [in] the experience of large, formal organisations” (Heginbotham, 1975: 20). In order to begin to understand the behavioural orientations in a bureaucracy that derive from the Indian village ethos, we should first have a general idea of some of the central features of Indian village organisation. Within the villages, the whole spectre of human relationships – social, ritual, political and economic – is generally structured by the “occupational, ritual, and hierarchical features of caste” (ibid: 21). Caste is closely associated with occupation! Although there

exist occupations that are open to all castes – such as farming –, specialised services – i.e. washing clothes, smithery, butchering, fishing and ritual occupations etc. – are generally the preserves of smaller castes. With the overwhelming majority of the population engaged in agriculture and related activities “land has been the dominant and controlling factor in the production of goods in the village economy” (ibid: 22). Before the Indian government launched its first attempt at land reforms in the early 1950s, the majority of land was in the hands of large landowners, who “maintained regular exchange relationships with specific individuals or families from most or all of the various service and labour castes represented in the village” (ibid). This “common pattern of economic exchange” is called the *jajmani* system, “the dynamics [of which] are extremely complex” (ibid: 22, 23).

Participants in the *jajmani* system conceptualise the interpersonal, interfamilial and intercaste relations that follow from it “in the broader context of order and authority represented in the concept of *dharma*” (ibid: 23-4):

At its most general level, *dharma* is seen as the governing principle of the universe. It is the source and nature of order and balance among all aspects of the universe. At the level of political theory and philosophy, *dharma* is the principle that regulates the activities of the various components of the Hindu nation or kingdom. The king is seen as the upholder and enforcer of *dharma*. . . . For the individual, *dharma* represents those specific activities which are his responsibility to perform. . . . When each individual fulfils the duties traditionally accepted as his *dharma* he at once furthers his own religious development and makes an essential contribution to the stability, order, balance and continuity of the social units of which he is a part. . . . It is the complex set of economic, ritual, and service interactions that, by indirectly linking each member of the community to every other member, unites personal *dharma* (duties) with social *dharma* (order) (ibid: 24, 25).

The duties each individual has to perform to uphold *dharma* vary according to one’s caste, position in the family and gender but what these duties have in common is that they lay out, in meticulous detail, the approved patterns of relations within the family, the caste and the village, encompassing one’s religious, hygienic, economic, and social interactions. Failure to carry out one’s duties is equal to a breach of *dharma*, the consequences of which are existential:

Most village Hindus believe that if the tenets of *dharma* are not properly adhered to, the prescribed rites not performed in the right way, and the taboos or ritual avoidances not observed, in short, if the *dharma* is allowed to decay, there is bound to be chaos and disorder, and society will come to an end (Mathur (1964) in Heginbotham, 1975: 25).

It will be apparent that bureaucrats moulded by the ethic of the Indian village – consciously or unconsciously – adopt and develop perceptions of work that differ substantially from those of western bureaucrats. Let us take a look at a few of the more significant ones, i.e. those regarding: the relevance of motivation, the relative importance of duties, the relation between duties and resources and the seriousness of failure.

Firstly, for a dharmic bureaucrat, writes Heginbotham, “motivation, as understood in the west, is irrelevant”:

The will, desires, and needs of the individual are not the roots of analysis; rather, the needs of the social order, the role of the individual in meeting those needs, and the religious advancement achieved as a result of the disciplined meeting of those needs are the important components of the individual’s work environment. (Heginbotham 1975: 27).

Secondly, a dharmic bureaucrat takes all of his duties equally seriously: since failing to carry out any particular task within the range of one's duties is considered threatening to the balance and order of the social system, "all tasks are clearly important" (ibid: 32). Resultingly, a bureaucrat operating in the "dharmic mode" does not tend to accord relative importances to the various tasks that are his duty to perform because "*dharm*a is very clear: one does all of one's duties" (ibid). A third attitude to work directly follows from the former: Because all duties are equally important "one does not calculate what resources are available before determining what one's duties are. Rather the duties come first and determine how one's resources are to be used" (ibid). Finally, failure to carry out one's duty – i.e. "straying from the path of *dharm*a" (ibid) – can neither be justified nor explained. Dharmic bureaucrats make up excuses "but with the expectation that they will be treated as such" (ibid).

It is, then, self-evident that, in a dharmic bureaucracy, individuals are valued and respected for other reasons than their western counterparts. Where the latter may be valued for their initiative, creativity, and originality – qualities highly appreciated in "growth- and change-oriented cultures" (ibid: 33) –, in a dharmic bureaucracy – functioning in an environment geared towards order and stability in the context of a static technology and economy – it is "the individual who can stick to traditionally sanctioned behaviour patterns", who tends to be valued most (ibid). Because "new ideas and new ways of doing things disrupt an established balance, change the distribution of goods, and thus threaten to create conflict" (ibid), the resistance within dharmic bureaucracy to any kind of change tends to be formidable. Consequently, a dharmic bureaucrat, rather than striving to achieve results through planned and calculated action, will be happy to keep to "established procedures and standards -neither seeking innovations nor quality of work that exceeds the traditional system-maintaining norms" (ibid: 34) and will not tend to be unduly concerned "if the performance of one's duty produces what appear to be undesired consequences" (ibid.)³.

Attempts at Application of the Constructivist Approach

The reasons why Heginbotham decided to work with cognitive models as prime causative factors will be intuitively grasped by anyone who has spent a considerable length of time among India's bureaucrats. After a few months in the field, it is bound to dawn upon "any reasonably intelligent and sensitive observer" – to use Heginbotham's phrase – that although western public administrative thinking has over the decades generated quite an array of concepts and frameworks with which to "attack" empirical reality, none of them seem to quite "fit" the Indian context. True enough, very few Indian bureaucrats give the impression of being highly or even moderately motivated, but what is the value of this observation when we discover that motivation as such is irrelevant to a *dharmic* official? In the same vein, the going-through-the-motions way of file circulation – probably the most striking external feature of India's bureaucracy-in-action- is certainly inefficient and ineffective in the light of the attainment of official program goals, but what if we are to accept that the bureaucrats we study, do themselves not seem concerned with or aware of the goals of the programs they are "implementing" day in day out? In many ways, seeing things through the *dharmic* perspective makes sense of situations we can otherwise only describe in "negative" language: *unmotivated*, *inefficient*, *ineffective*, *unconcerned*, *untransparent*, *inactive*, *distrust*, *non-implementation* etc.

Whereas Heginbotham's attempt at "verstehen", by way of the construction of an administrative cosmology – in this case on the basis of religious and philosophical, indigenous literary sources – presents some difficult methodological, epistemological and even moral problems – some of which will be touched upon in the following section-, it does, I think, open up avenues for wider explanations and certainly enhances the potential for transmitting the "feel" of a particular bureaucracy. Let me attempt two examples.

The Hierarchy Principle and the Skewed Distribution of State Benefits

Heginbotham was interested in understanding the effect of institutional and cultural forces that “cause individuals to behave the way they do” (1975: 14), rather than in the effects or consequences of this behaviour, in terms of policy effects. This seems a missed chance because it is relatively easy – by stressing the inherently hierarchical and, thus, non-egalitarian nature of the caste system – to correlate the *dharmic* model with the extremely skewed distribution of development benefits, so typical a feature of Indian state intervention in social and economic domains.

Caste is, as we have seen, generally considered to be the essential social unit within Hindu society in particular and Indian society generally. Traditional Hindu society, then, can be thought of as a hierarchically ordered system of castes. Ancient religious texts – the very texts used as sources by Heginbotham – depict Hindu society as consisting of four *varnas* (lit. colours)⁴: *Brahmins*, the priestly caste; *kshatriyas*, caste of kings and warriors; *vaishyas*, caste of peasants and merchants and *sudras*, caste of agricultural labourers, craftspeople and “servants”. Rank and status of the respective *varnas* in this religiously ordained hierarchical scale is ultimately based on notions of purity and impurity: the pure Brahmins to be found at the top, the impure Sudras at the bottom of the Hindu order. Since they are in a *permanently* impure state, the untouchables have no place in this *varna* classification (whence *outcasts*). The ancient sources devote a lot of attention to what constitutes impurity and how persons affected by it should go about in expiating impure conditions.

What is important to note here, however, is the highly inequalitarian pattern of distribution that forms the inevitable concomitant of such a caste society: Whereas brahmins enjoy, by matter of birth, the highest status in Hindu society, just like kshatriyas have a legitimate claim to power, it is the *sudras* and especially the untouchables who, again by matter of birth, are left with being no more than servants or slaves of the former. As the Manusmriti prescribes: “The dwellings of Chandalas and Shvapachas [untouchables, bvg] shall be outside the village . . . their dress, the garments of the dead . . . their food . . . given to them . . . in a broken dish” (*The Laws of Manu*, X: 51-2, op. cit. in Beteille, 1983: 83-4).

When one studies the (re)distributive effects of state intervention in modern day India, the analogy with distributive patterns of the “ancient” caste system seems unmistakable. Although the social and economic position of the lowest castes has historically been (much) worse than that of the other castes and the fact that they continue to lag behind *now* is in itself no proof of a *dharmic* mode of state intervention, the tendency of state intervention – after the formal abolition of caste and untouchability in the 1950s – to continue to affect members of different castes differentially, seems, at least, a fair indication:

Major attempts at land reform undertaken in the 1950s, 60s and 70s (officially intended to benefit the lowest castes) ended up benefiting castes already quite advanced, and it is still a matter of debate whether landreforms, on balance, may not have adversely affected the lowest castes⁵. In any case, whereas the percentage of cultivators (land owners) has been decreasing for the entire population, it has been falling more rapidly among the former untouchables in spite of the state’s moves to allot land to them (cf. Saxena, 1999). Similarly, although corruption, in its multifaceted forms, has become a structural feature in the implementation of development policies in India, affecting its entire population, Lieten and Srivastava (1999) recently found that the percentage of graft paid for loans under IRDP (integrated rural development programme; until shortly India’s most ambitious development policy) is inversely related to the economic category of the beneficiaries. Whereas very poor beneficiaries, the large majority of them low castes, paid on average around 25% of the loan amount in graft, people in the highest economic category “only” 8 percent. Hale (1984) has systematically studied and corroborated the correlation between caste status on the one hand and access to and benefit from government intervention on the other, a correlation which she, interestingly, attributed to the overwhelmingly high caste background of development officials.

If the Indian political psychologist Ashis Nandy is to be believed, the *dharmic*, hierarchical tendencies described above, are not confined to the field of development administration alone, but can be seen to be increasingly working their way into more areas of (modern) life, especially bureaucracy, perhaps even *because of* and not in spite of the emergence of modern institutions designed to promote a more egalitarian Indian society:

Indian culture traditionally applied the concept of hierarchy to more aspects of life than did many other cultures. One result of politicization in India has been that, whereas the criteria and incumbents have dramatically changed due to political competition and specially to electoral mobilization, the principle of hierarchy now applies to many more areas of life, including the expanding modern sector. It is as if the cultural tendency to hierarchize has found in politics a new criterion for social status. Thus the new politics and its bureaucracy have increasingly attracted status-motivated persons and devalued other "limited status systems"-traditional, as well as modern. Persons operating within special status hierarchies, which should be at least partially autonomous from the central hierarchy (such as the professions), tend to undervalue their occupations and try to rise in "general" status. An appointment as an inconsequential political or bureaucratic functionary often seems more important than recognition among one's peers in one's own area of specialization. The most creative intellectuals are often lost in government departments, frozen at their level of unimportance; influential positions within the educational systems frequently attract gifted scholars away from creative work; and worst of all, the self-esteem of persons not having political power tends to get badly damaged. . . . [I]f the monistic world-view in India is a means of incorporating the new, the strange and the different, the culture of Indian bureaucracy represents the society's attempt to "hierarchize away" the new, the disruptive and the noxious. The traditional style of containing chaos and fragmentation in India was to fit all contradictions within a new hierarchy compatible with the old order. The nation's modern bureaucracy embodies this style. The most radical and modern policies, therefore, tend to be translated by the bureaucracy into posts, rules, and procedures; even attempts to reform the bureaucracy merely generate new bureaucratic structures (Nandy, 1998: 54, 56).

Hindu Views on Wealth, Sin and Power and the "Legitimation" of Corruption

Another area of social scientific enquiry that could profit from a Heginsbothamian constructivist approach is corruption. Corruption, in fact, is a favourite topic of conversation of the people of Uttar Pradesh – bureaucrats as well as laymen – among whom I have lived for over a year; so much so that when -asked about the subject of my research- I told them that I was studying their state's or district's bureaucracy, I would invariably be entertained with a spontaneous and often detailed account about officer so and so who had managed to "eat" so much in such and such a way. Moreover, over the last decades India has witnessed a large number of corruption scandals involving high profile bureaucrats, businessmen and politicians, including prime ministers and chief ministers, that are widely reported on by the media, thus continuously fuelling the public discourse.

The social sciences have produced an impressive collection of treatises on corruption, and an equivalent number of typologies of this phenomenon. Although a vast array of corruptive methods exist, let me briefly discuss three forms of corruption – defined simply as the misuse of public money for private gains – that are widely practised in India: 1) corruption in the implementation of programs or policies (policy corruption), 2) corruption in the routine-provision of public services (service corruption) and 3) corruption in the administrative organisation of postings and transfers of bureaucrats (transfer corruption). Although many methods of extracting public money can be distinguished in policy corruption (Lieten and Srivastava (1999) counted no less than six in the implementation of IRDP alone), they are generally variations on a single theme: whoever wants to avail himself of a scarce service or good, for example a development benefit such as a loan for a buffalo, a brick house or a pump set, cannot expect – however

entitled he or she may be according to the official guidelines – to be provided with that service “just like that”. For most villagers approaching the bureaucrat concerned directly for such a service – if they are aware of its existence in the first place – is not an option: dealings with the bureaucracy are generally conducted through a middleman – who may be the *pradhan* (mayor), another local politician or relatively well-off, educated and “connected” person from the village – who charges a certain amount for his services. Depending on local arrangements, the low-level bureaucrat involved will either take a fixed share of the middleman’s reward or charges his own price, after which the bureaucrats higher up in the hierarchy get their shares. In cases where the banks are involved, such as agricultural loans, usually the bank employees have their own arrangements. Allowing for regional and local variations, a safe estimate is that only around 30 to 50 percent of the Indian rural development budgets reach their beneficiaries. Service corruption usually takes the form of “*bakshees*”, a relatively small amount that one gives to a bureaucrat for some special service (issuing a ticket on an already “fully booked” train) or to get something done quickly or without undue delays (having your phone line repaired). Transfer corruption has evolved into an art form of its own in India where – as a matter of administrative policy – bureaucrats are regularly transferred from one post to another. As it is, certain posts are considered prize postings, for example a posting as secretary in a public service department or the Finance Ministry (these departments bestow high status and involve a lot of patronage), whereas others are considered punishment postings, for example a posting as secretary Administrative Reforms. Bureaucrats are willing to pay substantial amounts either to assure transfer to a prize posting or to avoid being transferred to a punishment posting. As the power of transferring high-ranking officers rests with political functionaries, transfers are widely used to generate money for party-political ends as well. If there is a single topic that dominates the daily conversations of bureaucrats of all ranks, it must be transfers and ways to beat the transfer “system”; a bureaucrat who has managed to get hold of a prize posting or, conversely, to avoid a punishment posting, often commands great respect from his colleagues⁶.

Although corruption seems to be a form of human activity perfectly suited to political economy and public choice analyses, these approaches cannot satisfactorily explain why different countries have vastly differing levels of corruption, or why corruption meets such widely varying degrees of public indignation in different countries. For example, how can we explain that in India, which is widely considered to be one of the most corrupt countries in the world, corruption seems to be regarded with such indifference? Let us again take a look at the ancient sources, particularly the *dharmashastras*, and see what they have to say about wealth, sin and power, as one’s perceptions of these concepts inevitably colour one’s perception of corruption. It may be kept in mind that S.S. Gill, author of *The Pathology of Corruption* on which I will rely for the following exposition of classical Hindu views on wealth and sin, is himself a bureaucrat, belonging to India’s most prestigious civil service, the IAS (Indian Administrative Service).

Unlike the other world religions, Hinduism takes, as Gill shows, an explicitly favorable view of wealth: *artha* (wealth) is – along with *dharma* and *kama* (desire) – considered one of the desirable goals (*purusharthas*) in life for the common person⁷. Wealth serves as a prominent object of veneration during the yearly ritual worship of money and Lakshmi (the goddess of wealth) on Deepavali night. Kautilya emphasizes the fact that “wealth, and wealth alone, is important, in as much as *dharma* and *karma* depend upon *artha* for their realization” (Gill, 1998: 4).

The *dharmashastras* stress that wealth is necessary for performing every sacrifice, so that even a *brahmin* -who is supposed to have no worldly goods- is permitted to perform a sacrifice for his own benefit *only* if he possesses a hundred cows. Hindu ethics sees no contradiction between *artha* and highly esteemed *tyaga* (renunciation). As Gill explains, there exists no conflict between *artha* and *tyaga* because “[i]n the earlier stages of life, a person is duty-bound to earn money and live a full family life. But once he has finished his earthly chores, he is enjoined to sever worldly bonds” (ibid: 5).

Strictly speaking, there is no equivalent to sin – one of the strongest deterrents against deviant behaviour in western cultures – in the Hindu shastras. *Pantaka* [“fall from virtue or one’s *dharma*”] comes nearest to sin but its meaning is not the same: the dharmashastras generally conceptualise sin as “physical and external”:

It usually arises from pollution, violation of one’s *dharma*, non-observance of prescribed rituals or their faulty observance. . . . [P]ollution is the main source of sin, and it can be removed by [the] observance of rituals. A bath in the rivers, an act of pilgrimage, or various forms of *prayaschitta* (penance) wash away your sins. . . . In the post-vedic period . . . rituals acquire still greater importance for the cleansing of sin, and the importance of giving presents to the priests who perform them increases greatly. (Gill, 1998: 5, 6).

Moreover, man’s free will – if at all – has only little role to play in the commission of sin. The Samkya philosophy speaks of three *gunas* – *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (noble passion) and *tamas* (base passion) – “which combine in various proportions in different men and [it] is the *rajoguna* (dominant attribute) that is the cause of all sin” (ibid: 6).

This physical, external and “involuntaristic” conception of sin rules out any distinction between the “ceremonial, social and moral domains of the individual” and allows for most sins, irrespective of their nature, to be condoned by *prayaschitta* or ritual (cf. ibid: 6). This prevents the “rooting of sin in morality, or viewing it as an affliction of the soul. Consequently, sin gives rise to little sense of guilt or deep remorse” (ibid). And although different types of sins can be ranked in the order of their gravity, to be expiated by varying scales of *prayaschitta*, even so “. . . rituals manage to eliminate most sins, leaving no blemish on the soul” (ibid: 6, 7).

As described above, it is the king’s basic duty to uphold the *dharmic* order as he – according to the Manusmriti – has been created to be the protector of castes and orders who, all according to their rank, discharge their several duties. It is for this purpose that the king has been equipped with *danda* (power of punishment). It should be borne in mind, however, that “*dandniti* (administration of force) and *rajniti* (the conduct of kings) are purely *practical* guides for effective governance, and do not embody any philosophical concepts or theory of the state” (ibid: 9, 10; italics mine). For Drekeimer, “the constant reiteration of the need for *danda* in the preservation of the *dharmic* order” is suggestive of a “cynical view of human nature” and further evidence of the great tradition of Hinduism’s assumptions of man’s “natural depravity” and “suspicion of human nature” (Drekeimer (1962) in Heginbotham, 1975: 30).

From the foregoing we may conclude, firstly, that the Hindu tradition – as compared to the Judaeo-Christian tradition – adopts a rather accommodative attitude towards the quest for wealth and human frailty. Secondly, the ancient sources do not provide a coherent theory of the state, as we have come to understand this phenomenon. As a result, concepts such as the “social contract” and the “public good”, which have so strongly shaped Western perceptions and expectations of a what a state should be and do, never developed in indigenous Hindu thought.

To explain India’s present-day institutionalised public corruption with reference to thousands of years old ideas on wealth, sin and power is a long haul indeed⁸. In fact, some intellectuals explain the soaring levels of corruption by pointing to the gradual *breakdown* of the *dharmic* order. At the same time, one can hardly escape the impression that most modern day Indians view corruption and its alleged evils in a significantly different manner to that of most people in the West, certainly with less indignation. On the contrary, one often detects a certain feeling of amusement with or admiration for public figures who have cleverly used the state apparatus for their own ends⁹. The extent to which both bureaucracy and society have come to legitimise corruption, is best illustrated by the relationship between the Indian marriage market and government employment. In India, a social and cultural importance is attached to government

jobs at all levels, -be they ever so low. The IAS and the other services carry a special significance in the matrimonial market which is eclipsed only (even if that) by the importance of well-off business and industrial families (cf. Dhavan, 1997). The underlying reason for the social and cultural importance accorded to government employment and the general wish to marry of one's daughters to bureaucrats, is the fact that they can be trusted to amass amounts of wealth that very few other candidates are likely to match.

Promises and Limitations of the Constructivist Approach

In the foregoing sections I hope to have shown – however inadequately – that something can be gained by applying Heginbotham's approach to the study of public administration in countries where no autonomous indigenous tradition of theorisation on the subject has developed. By constructing conceptual models or cosmologies of public administration on the basis of authoritative sources, one is able to come closer to the "soul" of exotic administrative patterns, than if one were to stick to the concepts, terminologies and assumptions of Western public administration. Taking into account indigenous ideas on the nature of order and stability of society, the causes of social conflict and degeneration, the duties and rights of groups, the just distribution of resources, the nature of princely power, wealth and the ritual cleansing of sin, forces one to reflect upon one's own assumptions and – often unrealised – rootedness in tradition. Moreover, although I have not made an explicit attempt at this, I feel that the constructivist approach can more effectively make sense of the many "Indian paradoxes" that Western observers are so fond of postulating¹⁰.

However, the approach does have its problems and limitations: methodological, epistemological and, probably for some, moral. Let us start with addressing a few of the methodological problems. First of all, there is the problem of empirical validation. It is extremely difficult to prove that bureaucrats actually hold *dharmic* beliefs and perceptions, however partially or unconsciously. In the Indian case, I have not, neither in Heginbotham's narrative account of the development bureaucracy in Tamil Nadu nor in my own field research, come across many explicit references to the *dharmic* perspective. Interview-based comparative attitudinal surveys are difficult in the Indian context "given the deceptions and public adherence to egalitarian values commonly expressed by politically astute elites" (Mallick, 1998: 14). Heginbotham for his part relied heavily on stories elicited from *gram sevaks* (village workers) and agricultural extension workers. However, although stories can certainly be considered more acceptable means of cultural transmission in India than in the West, certain complications remain; most importantly the problem that stories, rather than being a key to attitude, "can just as well serve as ex post facto means of legitimizing and refining already held values" (Heginbotham, 1975: 190). Heginbotham's admission that "the relationship between the philosophical system of the great tradition of Hinduism and the conceptual framework that structures social and religious phenomena in the daily lives of Indian villagers [and more importantly, bureaucrats, bvg] is complex and only partially understood" (ibid: 24), probably holds more generally for any constructed administrative cosmology of any culture.

As a result of the problem of empirical validation, we are also faced with a second problem, that of causal imputation. Given the fact that we can hardly prove that persons hold the beliefs, ideas, values and norms ascribed to them, it is even more difficult to substantiate claims that certain behavioural patterns are – however indirectly – caused by these very same, cognitively held beliefs, ideas, values and norms. Thirdly, even if we were to solve both foregoing methodological problems, we would still be stuck with another problem of imputation, in case we want to explore the consequences of the patterns we have just explained: How can we know for sure that the consequences we attribute to the behavioural patterns are actually caused by the latter, if we also know that radically different principles of social organisation – when mediated through state policies – can produce remarkably similar results? Ross Mallick, for

example, makes an interesting comparative observation when he stresses the likeness of South Asia and the United States in their neglect of welfare-type state intervention by upholding cultural and political values that neglect the generally perceived “universal human entitlements”:

While in the United States this in part reflects a frontier individualism and entrepreneurship which resist state intervention for redistribution of wealth, in India the roots lie in the traditional caste hierarchy. These differing organizing principles, of individual rights in the United States and group/caste obligations and duties in India, have opposite philosophical roots but, when mediated by state policies, produce surprisingly similar results in their neglect of the poor. While traditional America stresses rights, India stresses duties (Mallick, 1998: 12-13).

Fourthly, given the multitudes and variety of religious and linguistic communities, ethnicities, castes and sects in India, there is reason to assume that the norms and values of the *dharmic* world view are selectively and differentially internalised, known and acted upon by these various groups, which is likely to be the case in all heterogeneous societies. The very scriptures quoted by Heginbotham were, for example, off limits to Sudras. Since the nineteen twenties, *Dalit* – name adopted by politically active former untouchables – intellectuals have repeatedly claimed that they never were actually part of the Hindu fold and disclaim any ideological and philosophical adherence to the basic tenets of Hinduism¹¹. My own observations, however, indicate that something like an Ambedkarite conceptual model is hardly acted upon by ex-untouchable bureaucrats and laymen, lending force to central arguments propounded by particularly Louis Dumont (1998) and Michael Moffatt (1979), i.e. that the moral hierarchy of Hinduism is deeply accepted even by its most subordinated elements.

Finally, a general problem of cultural explanations is that they tend to be rather “soft”, i.e. easily malleable, according to the phenomenon under scrutiny¹².

Apart from these methodological issues, some might argue that too rigorous or enthusiastic an immersion in exotic cosmologies, leads to representations of reality that are difficult to reconcile with basic tenets of Western morality: either because these representations are believed to be too tolerating of exotic realities¹³ or because “they tend to produce beliefs about [“other”] people that are morally wrong to hold” (Jones, 1995: 40)¹⁴.

Finally, I will conclude with a few brief remarks on the epistemological complications of cosmological construction. It is obvious that once one starts digging deeper and deeper in alien administrative cosmologies, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep looking for exotic – in this case Indian – equivalents of western “individuals”, “social structures”, “classes”, “statuses”, “efficiency”, “effectiveness”, “rules”, “leadership”, “informal organisations”, “implementation”, “authority”, “responsiveness”, “accountability”, “values”, “ideology”, “state” etc., without risking imposing an alien ontology and epistemology on the “natives” (cf. McKim Marriott, 1989: 2). In other words, the Western sciences – developed from thought about Western realities – “often do not recognise and therefore cannot deal with the questions to which many Indian institutions are answers” (McKim Marriott: 1). This realisation, of course, rather complicates the work of those scholars who consider it “the goal of comparative public administration to develop a single conceptual model within which both the patterned similarities and the local distinctiveness of bureaucracies in different cultural and historical settings can be described and analysed” (Heginbotham, 1975: 3).

As is, unfortunately, often the case, it is other branches of social science – most notably sociology and anthropology – that have started trying to find solutions for this intranslatability of exotic theoretical, philosophical and empirical entities into the language of Western science¹⁵. The most thorough and comprehensive attempt, to my knowledge, has been that of McKim Marriott c.s., who has begun to

construct an altogether separate Indian social science –“ethnosociology” in his vocabulary: i.e. “to build up -from India’s natural categories –”:

a general system of concepts that can be formally defined in relation to each other; to develop words and measures that can be used rigorously for description, analysis and explanation of Indian culture; to develop deductive strategies that can generate hypotheses for empirical tests in order that the science may criticise itself and grow; and to do all this in terms that will be analytically powerful enough to define all the major parameters of living in that culture without violating the culture’s ontology, its presuppositions, or its epistemology (1989: 4).

The result of this attempt – a science built up on the basis of the interrelationships and social logic of classical Indian lists of three *gunas* (strands), three *dosas* (humours), three + one *purusarthas* (human aims) and five *bhutas* (elements) – does look very impressive indeed, and I am far from qualified to make any substantive comments on the merits of this newly constructed Indian ethnosociology. What is immediately clear – even to a layman – however, is that the construction of separate sciences for different cultures, in first instance serves to further increase the cultural intranslatability of the exotic into the Western. To solve this problem, we would have to think of constructing yet another scientific language – a truly universal one – that would enable practitioners of the various ethnosciences to communicate with each other. Even thinking about the complexity of this endeavour is dazzling; perhaps, this may just be too ambitious an aim – better left to the *karma* of comparative administrative thought – and we should resign ourselves to Ashis Nandy’s dictum that India has always

been a separate world, hard for any outsider, *Eastern or Western*, to penetrate. Such a culture becomes a projective test; it invites one not only to project on to it one’s deepest fantasies, but also to reveal, through such self-projection, the interpreter rather than the interpreted. All interpretations of India are ultimately autobiographical (1998: 79-80).

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Endnotes

- ¹ In the words of Heginbotham, "[t]hese cognitive models may be carefully developed and highly elaborated views of the workings of an institution or they may be relatively crude and ill-defined notions of what an organisation ought to look like. In either case, there is usually a constellation of views as to three interrelated sets of cognitive orientations. First, perceptions as to the broad goals and critical dynamics of an organisation. Second, perceptions of the motivations, loyalty, and responsiveness to various incentives and disincentives among different classes of the population, who man different levels within the organisation. Third, a similar set of perceptions relating to clients which the bureaucracy is expected to serve, protect or regulate" (Heginbotham, 1975: 10).
- ² This section is based on Heginbotham (1975), esp. pp. 20-34. Apart from skipping elaborations irrelevant to my present purposes, I have stayed close to Heginbotham's account. In presenting the *dharmic* cosmology I employ, like Heginbotham, the present tense. In some cases – such as the description of the *jajmani* system, which has all but disappeared over the past thirty years – this leads to empirical inaccuracies. However, as we are interested in the systems of thought that supported and legitimised these institutions, rather than in their empirical manifestations, I have decided to stay as close to Heginbotham's text as possible. All the more so, because possible and alleged changes in the direction and content of the *dharmic* view of life are a matter of ongoing and

as yet inconcluded debate among anthropologists and sociologists. For this debate, see for example Fuller (1997) and Srinivas (1995).

- ³ Rather, "[i]t is considered a virtue in village life to be able to persevere in the performance of duty even though the obvious manifest consequences of doing so appear to be entirely negative" (Heginbotham, 1975: 27).
- ⁴ Apart from caste as varna, there is a second conception of caste, that of caste as jati: it is the jati conception of caste that is acted upon in daily social intercourse. Every Hindu, "even" the untouchables, by birth belongs to a particular jati, which Galanter describes as 'an endogamous group bearing a common name and claiming a common origin, membership in which is hereditary, linked to one or more traditional occupations, imposing on its members certain obligations and restrictions in matters of social intercourse, and having a more or less determinate position in a hierarchical scale of ranks (1984: 8). Dependent upon one's operational definition, at least thousands of jatis are found in India.
- ⁵ Paul Brass writes that the land reforms of the 1960s and 70s 'left most landholders in possession of lands they and their families had always cultivated, they involved very little redistribution of land and, therefore, considerable inequality among landholders and between the landless and the landholders' (1980: 397).
- ⁶ On the policy and politics of transfers, see Robert Wade (1985) and Frank de Zwart (1994).
- ⁷ As Gill stresses, "there is also the fourth goal, moksha (salvation), which is meant only for the spiritually evolved souls" (Gill, 1998: 3, 4).
- ⁸ For the ways in which ground realities in Hindu kingdoms differed from the normative precepts of Hindu philosophy, see e.g. Gill (1998: 13-18).
- ⁹ A good example in this regard is the ex-Chief Minister of the state of Bihar, Laloo Prasad Yadav, who has become somewhat of a folk hero in India. "Laloo" was a major beneficiary of the so-called fodder scam, in which – according to estimates – an amount of around \$ 225 million dollars was siphoned off by a racket involving politicians and bureaucrats through the virtually dormant department of Animal Husbandry. Before Yadav was sent to jail, he managed to install his illiterate wife Rabri Devi as the new Chief Minister of the state. For the details of many more scandals, see Chandan Mitra (1998).
- ¹⁰ I am thinking, for example, of the oft-formulated paradox of the Indian state's remarkable success in maintaining order and stability, while being notably unsuccessful in enforcing and implementing social and economic change; the related paradox of speedy and unproblematic initiation and adoption of progressive legislation and the failure to implement it; and the paradox of the apathetic public acceptance of "gross violations of human rights, rank misgovernance, denial of our legitimate due, high levels of corruption and myriad other injustices and tyrannies" (Gill, 1998: 9).
- ¹¹ The greatest propagator of this view was the late Dr. Bim Rao Ambedkar, a formidable opponent of Gandhi and Law Minister in India's first independent Cabinet, who wrote a number of highly provocative pamphlets and books, instigated public burnings of the Manusmriti and converted, shortly before his death, to Buddhism as an ultimate act of defiance of Hinduism. An interesting recent example of the Dalit view is Kancha Ilaiah's provocative and widely debated book *Why I am not a Hindu* (1996).
- ¹² Cf. how the Confucian ethic was described by Max Weber (1968) as an ethic stressing values and norms incompatible with capitalism, while the economic awakening of East Asian tigers by the end of the past century was attributed to the very same ethic of Chinese migrants and colonists in these countries. See Ruth McVey (1992) for a treatment of this "curious career" of Confucian culture in social science explanation.
- ¹³ See, for example, how Berreman (1979) reacts to Dumont's representation of Hinduism as a moral hierarchy deeply accepted even by its most subordinated elements: "Dumont fails almost totally to recognise caste for what it is on an empirical level: institutionalised inequality; guaranteed differential access to the valued things in life. Let there be no mistake. The human meaning of caste for those who live it is power and vulnerability, privilege and oppression, honor and denigration, plenty and want, reward and deprivation, security and anxiety. As an anthropological document, a description of caste which fails to convey this is a travesty." (op. cit. Mendelsohn and Vicziany, 1998: 15).
- ¹⁴ See Jones' (1995) scathing attack on Clifford Geertz's interpretive account of the Balinese cockfight in particular, and interpretive approaches in general.
- ¹⁵ Just how slow insights from other branches of social science tend to become incorporated in public administrative thought, is –involuntarily– shown by Yves Surel (2000) who considers an approach that allows for "cognitive and normative elements [to] play an important role in how actors understand and explain the world" no less than a "new research orientation" (495).

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St. Anselm: A Perspective on Anti-Administration

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Out of Time Square?

*The first two articles in this symposium learn that reconstructing cosmologies underlying administrative thought in other times and places poses challenges. We can learn a lot by looking through the window, but what it feels like to be outside remains a matter of much speculation. Can we perhaps use the perspective of other cosmologies? That is, can we confront our cosmology by looking from the outside in? This is at the heart of *St. Anselm: A Medieval Perspective on Anti-Administration*. The resulting distancing from ourselves enables us to understand the limited parameters of our own cosmology.*

This article shows that we can learn about anti-administration and about contemporary Public Administration discourse by reflecting on a medieval perspective of administration; and we have elected St. Anselm's perspective for this purpose. Archbishop Anselm was a successful and brilliant 11th-12th century churchman. We are prodded from this unlikely perspective toward a stronger sense of the iatrogenic character of our traditional Public Administration discourse that comes, in part, from our privileging of administration, of parts, of things and of nations. An "iatrogenic" condition refers to illnesses induced in a patient by a physician's words or action; similarly, public administration practice can suffer from the character of the words and actions of Public Administration thinking. From the medieval perspective, we can suggest that Public Administration discourse could be more health-inducing if it could (a) stand back further from a tendency to privilege the administrative function (e.g., contemplating even the subordination of the administrative to the programmatic) (b) include attempts to understand the full range of institutions (public, private, other), institutionalization, and anti-institutionalization (c) include a non-reductionist approach (e.g., contemplating as its unit of analysis the person as irreducibly bio-psycho-socio-spiritual), and (d) rise above our discourse's nationalistic (or cultural) limitations. The medieval perspective can underline the limited parameters of our traditional discourse.

All this does raise two prior sets of questions. What is "anti-administration" and how does it relate to Public Administration disciplinary discourse? And, why should we choose such a bizarre perspective as the medieval (and Anselm in particular)?

On the first set of questions, anti-administration is a metaphor that invites us to play (repeat - play) with the possibilities for upgrading our disciplinary thinking and practice by including perspectives (lens, frames, even people) marginalized or excluded by the constraints of traditional Public Administration discourse. It aims toward generating the greater energies of insight and action that are possible through juxtaposing familiar and foreign (even repugnant) notions, as in bringing together notions like "hierarchy and expertise" with those of "anti-hierarchy and dialogue." The metaphor holds up the prospect of juxtaposing administration and anti-administration, in a fashion similar to the interaction of matter and anti-matter where the two types of matter mutually annihilate upon contact and are converted into energy (e.g., see Farmer, 1998; 1999a).

Put another way, anti-administration points to opportunities to overcome limits in our traditional disciplinary discourse - opportunities in delineating problems more usefully and in developing a wider range of possible responses. As an example, consider the marginalization of macro issues in traditional Public Administration discourse. Macro issues (as opposed to micro tinkering to improve elements within the existing structure) include developing insights about how the world's or a country's institutional arrangements "as a whole" should be understood and perhaps re-founded. Certainly, such issues have been discussed (e.g., Wamsley, 1990); but it is a matter of emphasis. To repeat an example given before (Farmer, 1999); has not the marginalization of the macro encouraged us to devote too little attention to the macro "iron cage" problematics that Max Weber discussed - to put us in a sub-optimal disciplinary position to address at the core the pervasive and dehumanizing side-effects of growing private and public bureaucratization? To offer a different example (to which we should pay more attention) - is not this marginalization impeding us from making a more robust contribution to macro radical challenges like globalization, the dialectics of the double movement toward globalization and localization?

On the second set of prior questions, why should we consider a medieval perspective? My interest is in indicating that even the most unlikely and apparently unpromising lens, like the medieval, can add helpful understandings when used as a starting point; exploiting such foreign perspectives, now marginalized or never included, can add to understandings from more familiar perspectives. Earlier, anti-administration has been discussed through a postmodern framework and then from a modern perspective. One account described anti-administration as a shift away from rationalism and technocratic expertise in an emerging post-ist context, for example (Farmer, 1998). But the metaphor of anti-administration would be an oxymoron if it were limited to a single mind-set like the postmodern. Two accounts of the metaphor have been given in terms of a modernist perspective, with the help of Herbert Marcuse's notion of one-dimensional man (Farmer, 1999a). Ideas like imaginization, deconstruction, deterritorialization and a change in alterity - no less than anti-administration - can be examined through the modernist lens. It seems natural enough, although eccentric perhaps, to seek to add a medieval perspective. That is, it is natural unless one labors under the delusion that it is necessary to be a medieval person to use a medieval lens, to be a modernist to use a modernist lens, and to be a postmodernist to make use of a postmodern perspective. Milton Friedman reminds us, we can repeat, that the assumptions of a model need not be true for the results of the model to be helpful. The aim of anti-administration, promoting use (play with a purpose) of a multi-perspectival or reflexive language paradigm (Farmer, 1995), is to seek the energy from including marginalized and excluded insights.

This paper reflects indirectly on anti-administration (and traditional administrative thinking and practice) by focusing directly on features of the discourse exhibited by St. Anselm, a particular medieval perspective. Anselm lived from 1033 to 1109 A.D. As Archbishop of Canterbury and thus the second most important politico-administrative job-holder in the kingdom from 1093 until his death, he was part of the aftermath of the 1066 A.D. Norman Conquest of "England" - or "Engla-lond" (Lacey and Danziger, 2000, p. 31). Again, adopting this perspective does not require that we become (or not be) Anselmians; there is no need to be (or

not be) pro-Christian or fans of the conquering Normans. The middle ages contains critical differences in discourse between places (e.g., the great cities v. the hamlets), sub-periods (e.g., high middle ages v. dark ages, although Anselm was part of neither), and individuals (e.g., Anselm v. Thomas Becket). From within this variety, why is St. Anselm chosen? Three reasons attracted me. First, Anselm is a quintessentially medieval person. There is no doubt about Anselm's medieval credentials; for instance, his theologizing about the relationship of God and man is in feudal terms. Second, Anselm was a gifted thinker and an experienced practitioner. He was gifted enough to create the Ontological Argument - true or false, a philosophical brilliancy. Anselm's extensive practitioner experience included administering a monastery (at Bec) for 15 years, and the administrative and political work of being Archbishop (at Canterbury) for 16 years. Third, four aspects of Anselm's perspective raise interesting sets of questions - or trains of thought - about the limits in the traditional mainstream Public Administration perspective, especially the blinders that result from the privileging of administration, of parts, of things, and of nations. However, other medieval voices would have been equally as suitable in this anti-administrative play with a purpose.

Of Administration

Consider the first of the four juxtapositions of administration and Anselmian anti-administration. There may be some disagreement about whether administration is privileged over program in today's world. However, any such dispute can be side-stepped, because there is no doubt that this privileging of administration occurs in traditional Public Administration thinking. Was not a central reform goal in American Public Administration from its earliest days to develop a generalist class of administrators, e.g., where the idea is that department X should be managed not by a program specialist but by a generalist trained in the skills of administration? Public Administration discourse so privileges administration that, despite the argument whether administration can be separated from politics, much of the thinking (like in this paper) treats administration as if it could be studied by itself.

St. Anselm, being a medieval, would not have sympathized. Although he administered (in his fashion) for some 29 years, Anselm had a principled objection to being an administrator. It was more than a virulent form of the "modern" attitude that looks askance at bureaucracy. It certainly was virulent. When the king appointed him archbishop in March 1093, Anselm resisted, eyes streaming with tears, nose bleeding; he begged to be excused. The bishops had to pry open his clenched fist so that the pastoral staff or crozier could be forced into his hand; he and the pastoral staff had to be carried out of the room. Sixteen years earlier, when elected as Abbot of Bec, he had similarly thrown himself on the ground and begged the monks to spare him. In his 1097 five-year review of his archiepiscopal tenure, he begged the Pope to "release my soul from this slavery." But Anselm's objection was principled in that he thought that all nominees for promotion should genuinely wish not to be promoted and that they should do all possible to avoid it. As he wrote earlier, he thought that one should accept such responsibilities only if the best advisors available think that the promotion is the best course. (Southern, 1990, p. 193). For him, the job was a distraction.

If we understand administration as routinized or directed activity, Anselm was opposed to it within the confines of the monastic life. He disliked the Cluniac reforms, for instance, on the grounds that they took up so much of a monk's life in organized prayers that, in his view, the monk was not left enough time for meditation - what in monkish terms (compassion and contemplation) he would consider programmatic.

What resultant possibilities are suggested by a juxtaposition of "privileging administration over program," against Anselm's anti-administrative "devaluing of administration?" For me, it suggests the possibility of a range of administration-program relationships. The range extends from one extreme (where "administration

is completely privileged over program") through intermediate positions to the other extreme (where "program is completely privileged over administration"). The juxtaposition points to the possibilities of mind games (and even natural and systematic experiments, as advocated in Rivlin, 1972) exploring the relative advantages of alternative positions. The alternative that is especially interesting is that where the perquisites of office are in inverse proportion to one's place in the administrative hierarchy, because that holds some promise for a radically new workplace order. The general notion of adjusting the relative position of administration also opens up the prospects of the change in administrative alterity toward authentic hesitation (e.g., see Farmer, 1995). The juxtaposition, in brief, suggests the possibility of standing back further from a tendency to privilege the administrative function. It problematizes any implicit assumption that administration should be boss.

Of Parts

Consider the second of the four juxtapositions of administration and Anselmian anti-administration. There is likely to be little dispute that contemporary Public Administration discourse has a specialist (or partial) focus. Public Administration as a discipline does exist, after all. This focus is more partial than it need be in terms of disciplinary scope. The scope is limited to only a sub-set of public goods, for example. Public good is used here in the traditional economics sense to mean "a commodity whose benefits may be provided to all people - in a nation or town - at no more cost than that required to provide it for one person. The benefits of the good are indivisible, and people cannot be excluded from using it" (Samuelson and Nordhaus, 1989, pp. 980-981). A producer of big cars is producing cars and (at least) bigness in cars, for example; and it seems clear enough that the latter is a public good. Public Administration's disciplinary focus is partialized to exclude consideration of a range of "public goods," e.g., in the "private" workplace and in market governance.

As he lived before the creation of social science specializations or social science itself, St. Anselm could have no specialist interest in public administration. Even if he could, clearly he would not have sympathized. For the world in general, he lived before life was viewed in modernist terms, e.g., seeing the universe and the body as a machine, or valuing rationalization or scientific information. For administration in particular, Anselm would have accepted - to use Southern's anachronistic adjective (1990, p. 258) - the "amateurish" state of government in his times. He was "accepting," as befits a conservative. He accepted hierarchy and control as givens. Sainthood though he was, Anselm was regarded as "one of the boys" by the warlike Norman lords - warlike denoting their tendency to dominate with psychological and physical violence. Anselm would have had no interest in rational efficiency, even in day-to-day administration. He was not alone in not valuing - or possessing - business-like habits; Southern (1990, p. 256) describes this as a "defect" (Southern's word) which was usual. Anselm's own view is that all decision should be based on "rectitudo" (rightness in action being equivalent to truth in knowing, for him) and on obedience. He considered liberty to consist not in having choices but in obedience to God. Anselm's notion of obedience certainly did not extend to blind obedience, however; superior orders should be obeyed but only insofar - a big loophole - as they represented the will of Christ. Also one can be smart about it; there was an occasion in 1102 when Anselm delayed in opening a letter from the Pope so that he would not have to do what he anticipated would be inappropriate (Southern, 1990, p. 296). Rectitude and obedience being primary, Anselm would have no room for rationality or efficiency. He would have no understanding of any distinction between different kinds of administration, and he would not understand any singling out of "public" administration. For him, the military, the royal, the ecclesiastical and any other administration would not have been distinguishable by kind. His own job was broad-ranging, including - for instance - directing the military defense of the Channel ports in 1095. At that time, Anselm was so busy with his military duties that he claimed that he did not have time to receive the papal legate - even though the latter

was bringing him his pallium.

What resultant possibilities are suggested by a juxtaposition of our specialist focus with Anselm's non-specialist attitude? For me, one is the possibility of moving beyond both conceptions. For me, it would be an advance to include all public goods considerations. For Anselm, he would have no interest in public, business or any other kind of administration. Yet perhaps we can say that Anselm would have better understood us (a) if we had chosen to deterritorialize our discipline and (b) if we had chosen (as thinkers like Jurgen Habermas have done) to study institutionalism, institutionalization, and anti-institutionalization.

Of Things

Consider the third of the four juxtapositions. There is likely to be less dispute that our traditional Public Administration discourse adopts as its basic unit of analysis "administrative man" in the same sense as Economics takes "economic man" as its basic analytical unit. If one accepts that people are creatures with a variety of dimensions that include the biological and the social and the psychological and the spiritual, analyzing in terms of administrative man constitutes a reductionist view of the person. It thingifies the human person. That is, it analyzes humans as if they were essentially "things." There is a concern with systems and issues which assume that people are basically no more than things. It is recognized, however, that others would prefer a different term. So, Herbert Simon gives his view about a person "as a behaving system" and an ant. "Only human pride argues that the apparent intricacies of our path stem from a quite different source than the intricacy of the ant's path" (Simon, 1969, p. 53).

St. Anselm, again, would be horrified, because it excludes issues of spirituality which he would consider at the center of any account or understanding of the human experience. Anselm has his own counter-modern reductionism; he tends to reduce human beings to the spiritual, and he understands spirituality (unlike many of our contemporaries) as limited to the Augustinian understanding of the idea. The sunny side of Anselm's spirituality is the fact that he was a vital and innovative force in the lives of others. There is a dark side, however, in his over-valuing of the claims of what he considered the spiritual. King Malcolm's 13-year-old daughter Matilda, as protection against the ravages of a marauding Norman lord, was disguised by a mother superior in a monastic veil. Anselm ordered that she should be treated as a runaway nun and forcibly kept in the nunnery (Southern, 1990, p. 262); his view was that, in being disguised as a nun, she was thereby committed to the cloister. But the spiritual, as he saw it, was what guided him even as an administrator. For instance, Anselm considered that he did not answer so much to the living Pope as to the long-dead first archbishop of Canterbury, Augustine.

What resultant possibilities are suggested by the juxtaposing of a privileging of things (and thingification) against an Anselmian privileging of spirituality? For me, the possibilities in Public Administration discourse are those of moving away from analysis that relies on the modern reductionist view of the human person. One possibility is in using as the basic unit of analysis the notion of the human person as a bio-psycho-socio-spiritual person. This would include understanding the human person as a bio-spiritual person. Spirituality in this case would not be limited to an Anselmian or religious view; it could include such ideas as privileging the poetic or even imaginization.

Of Nations (or Cultures)

The fourth juxtaposition could be spelled out in a way parallel to the second. In some ways, it is the least satisfactory of the four examples, e.g., some may prefer "of cultures" rather than "of nations." But it is included here, because I want to end with an appeal to a sense of disconnect - a sense which comes from the

fourth juxtaposition.

It would start with the claim that traditional Public Administration discourse is nation-bound (or culture-bound). Again, there is such an entity as American Public Administration, and we can see that successful American Public Administration writers (e.g., Ostrom, 1973) have found it desirable to include rhetorical material on national political theology (e.g., the views of the Founding Fathers). Challenges to this view could include the claim that the embeddedness of American Public Administration is neither necessary nor natural; it is just a way of talking, one that can be changed as easily as changing the title of a national organization to include the word "International."

The juxtaposition would go on to say that, living before the days of nation-states, Anselm could have had no understanding of a subject that was limited within national boundaries or a local culture. He was at home no more and no less in Canterbury than in Bec, in Lyons, in Rome or in Aosta (his Burgundian native town which he never re-visited as an adult). It is true that he could not speak the language of the local natives in England; but that was of no significance or interest for him. Nation-states were things for the distant future; he would not even understand the notion.

Juxtaposition of this feature of our traditional P.A. discourse with the Anselmian evokes an impression, for me, of disconnect. It reminds us of how eccentric Anselm (thinking as he did) seems to us. Arguably, the most important event of the era was the beginning of the investiture struggle that would change the face of Europe. Anselm heard of the struggle only after being on the job as archbishop for about six years, and even then he heard of it by accident (Southern, 1990, p. 234). Arguably, he did not even know that he was living at the important beginning of a "great revolution that would make the ecclesiastical hierarchy the dominant force in European society in the next two hundred years" (Southern, 1990, p. 233). It was a movement that would create a European-wide bureaucracy of the Church, struggling to be independent of the various kingdoms. Probably Anselm never did understand this early form of globalization in which - merely out of obedience (e.g., to the Pope) and with no programmatic conviction - he played a part. Historians, apparently, have not been content with this description. So many have mis-described him as constantly fighting with the king over the investiture struggle, the opening round of the great revolution. After all, it is hard to write about him as an important person if Archbishop Anselm had been doing nothing programmatic, and Southern (1990, p. 238) shows that he was busily engaged in doing nothing programmatic. Anselm did not know about the coming developments in terms of growing professionalism in royal administrations. In fact, his own staff hirings gave preference to monks rather than to competence. Anselm travelled with only a few humble companions. His retinue included "not a single scholastically trained lawyer or theologian or even one of the numerous class of Masters of Arts, who abounded in the households of all ecclesiastical, or even secular, magnates from the mid-twelfth century onwards" (Southern, 1990, p. 239).

Oddly, this impression of disconnect can remind us of a parallel disconnect between Public Administration discourse and a central problematic of our time - our contemporary globalization. What meaningful contribution can Public Administration, as it is presently constituted, make to current issues of globalization (or glocalization)? These issues will surely include items like world institutionalization, as well as others like the economics-politics relationship. The possibility of Public Administration discourse making a major contribution seems negligible. But the answer depends in part on how the current issues are conceptualized; and here we encounter not only our disciplinary disconnect but also the disconnect of other critical disciplines. There seems to be no discipline - not Public Administration discourse, not economics, and not political science - that is robust enough in terms of scope and method to analyze the macro issues of world institutionalization. Public Administration discourse's job application contains relatively too little macro experience, for one thing. There seems to be no discipline adequate enough to make the contribution that is needed to the critical battles in globalization that will probably center on the conceptualization of the

relationship between economics and politics (e.g., Caporaso and Levine, 1992) - as both should be constituted. This is outside Public Administration discourse, as the latter is currently constituted.

Conclusion

What contribution could Public Administration discourse make to glocalization and similar macro issues if it were reconstituted? What additional contribution could it make to agency administration and similar micro issues if it pursued the insights of anti-administration? For example, what could Public Administration discourse add to the macro debates and micro issues if it could (a) stand back further from a tendency to privilege the administrative function (e.g., contemplating even the subordination of the administrative to the programmatic) (b) include attempts to understand institutions throughout the range (public, private, other), institutionalization, and anti-institutionalization (c) include a non-reductionist approach (e.g., contemplating as its unit of analysis the person as irreducibly bio-psycho-socio-spiritual), and (d) rise above our discourse's nationalistic (or cultural) limitations. We could think of all of these possibilities without invoking anti-administration - without involving St. Anselm and the medieval perspective. That is, it is possible for alternative games to lead to the same insights. But it is unlikely that we can make the changes effectively unless we recognize our heritage as a chronologically limited project. We have inherited a modernist Public Administration project (as Waldo indicated, in 1984, p. lii; and in 1988, p. 834). This inheritance has been in a context which refuses to stand still, and the result is that we are not providing the policy-makers and citizens with enough intellectual space, e.g., to address emerging issues of institutionalism such as those manifested in glocalization. St. Anselm, I agree, would not have seen this - not in a thousand years. At the same time, he would not have understood why our Public Administration discourse reflects a privileging of administration, of parts, of things, and of nations (or cultures).

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The Borg Administration: Science Fiction and the Study of Public Administration

Mark R. Rutgers

Out of Time and Out of Place?

*In the previous article 'looking at ourselves' was the issue. This is also at the heart of **The Borg Administration: Science Fiction and the Study of Public Administration**. Can we learn about the present by looking at the future? It is argued that using 'thought experiments' is an interesting source to explore alternative ideas on public administration. However, the envisaged futures are hardly distinct from present-day reality: thought experiments are insufficient to 'break through the wall'. As before, studying the meaning of science fiction primarily confronts us with our present-day starting points.*

Introduction

Android to cyborg: "I wish to understand your organizational relationships."¹

An interest in public administration is not the prime drive of science fiction enthusiasts. Nevertheless, science fiction stories do depict ideas about administrative phenomena, that is, about the administrative actions and organizations that shape the "things to come". As such, science fiction is a potential source for studying ideas about public administration (cf. Holley & Lutte, 2000).

Images of public administration in science fiction are potentially interesting in two ways: they reflect ideas about administration as they are around in our society, and they exhibit creative extrapolations, exaggeration, reversals, and the like of these ideas in ways not possible in empirical reality and "not cone" in other genres of literature. In short, science fiction may explore existing ideas and practices in ways not possible otherwise. Thus, it is possible to contemplate on the functioning of entirely authoritarian regimes, as well as, utterly egalitarian and paradise like cultures, and work out their administrative needs and solutions. This "radical approach" to administration can aid our understanding. In this sense novels such as Orwell's 1984 do have a message that influences our ideas and opinions about public administration

Science fiction is used in serious studies outside the field of public administration. For instance, Guthke (1990) analyzes ideas about Extra Terrestrial Intelligence ("Are we alone?") in writings dating from the 16th to the early 20th century. Clark (1995) discusses the philosophical consequences of all kinds of ideas and notions developed in science fiction literature (such as a plurality of worlds, cloning, time travelling, etc.) on human morality.

Science fiction stories present an enormous diversity in ideas on public administration. For instance, the civil servant (secret agent) James Bond fights evil with a very special kind of discretionary power: he is allowed to kill. The borders of his legitimacy are treated as implicitly clear; when Bonds seeks personal revenge in *License to kill* (movie: 1989), he has to quit the job, thus leaving the image of high integrity of the administration he works for intact. This, "high moral" image of public administration is entirely lacking in the popular television series *the X files*. Here the administration the heroes work for, is a constant source of intrigue, cover up, misinformation, and even life threatening danger.

In this article, the potential meaning of science fiction for the study of public administration will be indicated, followed by a case study. It will be concluded that science fiction perhaps rarely is really imaginative as it primarily reflects the simplistic opinions around. Nevertheless, the potential of science fiction as a "thought experiment in public administration" may be further explored.

From Science to Fiction: Thought Probes

"...science fiction at its best, like philosophy, represents an intellectual challenge to the reader."
(Miller & Smith, 1989: ix).

Why study science fiction as a student of public administration? To start with, all fiction both reflects and creates ideas about public administration and is as such a legitimate object of study. For instance, Waldo looks into "administrative novels" as he calls them, and gives no less than seven reasons that make novels interesting for the student of public administration (Waldo, 1968: pp. 5-9). He mainly point at extending knowledge about administrative reality by looking at it through the perspective of the "man of letters".² However, there is a stronger argument around: in fiction the "unresearchable" or "scientifically unknowable" becomes the known. That is, fiction enables us to dwell upon the inner thoughts and motives of people. Kroll (1981) calls this "the third dimension of public administration". The first dimension is constituted by the formal organization and its official objectives. The second dimension deals with aspects of informal organization: "but practically never below the level of the informal group." (McCurdy, 1987: 569). Finally, the third dimension of public administration consists of the individual, i.e. the quality of people as a factor in administration. Here fiction can add to the scientific perspective, where Kroll supposes a gap: "The gap is the relationship of the private – sometimes intensely private – to the public." (Kroll, 1981: 11) As McCurdy states: "Rather than minimize this distortion [by the human mind], which is the approach of the scientist, the novelist explores it." (McCurdy, 1987: 571). This special position of fiction next to science is, however, debatable. Although fiction is perhaps still an interesting source for dwelling upon the inner motives and personal dimensions of public administration, there are at least two approaches used in the study of public administration opening this "third dimension" for empirical research: the biographical method and the narrative approach. The first aims at pinpointing the role of the individual and the influence of administration on the individual and vice versa (cf. Luton 1999); the latter focuses on the subjective reality of public administration by reconstructing the narratives of individuals (cf. Wagenaar, 1995).

Whereas fiction in general does no longer appears to have a privileged epistemological status, *science fiction* does: it enables us to "step out of this world", i.e. to ignore and bracket reality and create a *fourth dimension*. Everyday reality has, in the physical sense, three dimensions (taking time as a function of distance and vice versa), science fiction allows us to dwell upon realities that are not limited to time, place, or whatever actual premise tickles our interest. It enables us to take the impossible and unrealistic, i.e. the purely theoretical as premises for thinking about the nature of public administration. Thus we can speculate what might happen if some of our everyday premises are changed. The fourth dimension concerns *thought experiments*. That is, they are conceptual experiments. "It helps us to open our minds to questions about facts that may seem familiar and trivial to us by projecting us into fascinating and unsettling new realities." (Miller & Smith, 1989: 2). In similar vein Hertzler points at three possible approaches for understanding reality: looking back for inspiration, looking at the world-as-it-is, and looking ahead. A major motive for Hertzler to pick up his study on utopias, is the intellectual challenge to discover innovative ideas (Hertzler, 1965: 260).³

Miller and Smith (1989) use science fiction as a source for understanding and studying philosophy. They outline two kinds of differences between philosophers and science fiction-writers that apply to public administration: First, philosophical arguments must be logically valid: logical rules are used to prevent errors of reasoning. "Science fiction is not philosophy because it does not argue for its answers – it does not attempt to make inferences that are both valid and sound." (Miller & Smith, 1989: 10). What is more, ignoring logic might even be a valuable instrument for the science fiction writer in order to explore the (un)known. Second, science fiction writers can simply create their own reality and act as if something exists and/or is possible. In philosophy this does not apply, as arguments are supposed to deal with reality: "If philosophers wonder whether or not there can be intelligent robots, they need to consider what it means to be intelligent and what it means to be a robot, and then construct a sound argument to the conclusion that there can be such things, or alternatively to the conclusion that there cannot be such things." (Miller & Smith, 1989: 9). In short, science fiction writers do not have to prove the validity of their statements, whereas a philosopher or scholar in public administration has to provide extensive argumentation. Thus, a science fiction story can deal with a world where no hierarchy exists, whilst the administrative scientist has to argue the possibility (and perhaps even desirability) of such a situation in the first place.

Following Miller and Smith, science fiction can be regarded to be interesting for understanding public administration as it provides settings in which relevant questions can be raised and answers given. As thought experiment, science fiction allows for a *radical* analysis of administrative phenomena. In this context "radical" refers to a theoretical standpoint that discards the question whether or not something can empirical exist or be determined at all.⁴ This radical, experimental potential of science fiction derives from the special relation of this genre of fiction with scientific knowledge: science fiction often explicitly takes scientific theory as its starting point. This is most obvious when physical/astronomical phenomena like Black holes figure in the stories. More importantly, this also applies to insights from the social sciences. Thus, multiple personalities, bureaucratic organization, conflicts between cultures, gender, group think, etcetera, figure as key topics in science fiction stories, exploring their meanings and consequences. Some science fiction stories are evidently fictional experiments with administrative theories. McCurdy illustrated this with Orwell's *1984*, a book based on James Burnham's *Managerial Revolution* published in 1942 (McCurdy, 1987: 557). In this sense, science fiction stories can be read like reports on thought experiments, and in many cases this includes ideas on public administration.

From Fiction to Science: Were some went before

"Science fiction, like philosophy, is a way of exploring our condition." (Clark, 1995: 185/6).

The use of novels in order to study public administration is certainly not new. Not only 20th century authors such as Waldo and McCurdy point at fiction. The value of fiction in studying administration is indicated almost as soon as a "science of public administration" develops in the work of Johann von Justi, a prominent mid 18th century Cameralist (cf. Rutgers, 1995). Among his many studied books, articles and essays, there is a novel depicting the life of an Egyptian pharaoh as a good king/administrator (Von Justi, 1759/60).⁵ In the introduction Von Justi not only defends the reading of novels against moralists, but also explicitly calls for scholars to write historical novels. They should base their novels on as much factual research as possible, limiting the fictional parts to where it matters. Von Justi calls novels a tool to enlighten people, they allow to explore upon aspects of administration not possible within the scientific framework, i.e. depicting human motives and reasons, otherwise absent in scholarly work. Thus, Von Justi presents us with the same arguments as McCurdy and Kroll.

Robert von Mohl is probably the first to highlight the value of novels as object of study. Whereas Von Justi wants to limit the fictitious element in writing administrative novels, Von Mohl regards the more fictitious, utopian novel the most interesting to study. Von Mohl is one of the founders of the Rechtsstaat theory in Germany, and with Lorenz von Stein the first to acknowledge the need for a special social science (sociology). In arguing the relevance of a social study next to law and politics, Von Mohl points at utopian novels as the source for his discovery: they are forerunners in the discovery of "the social" (Von Mohl, 1851/1991: 25).

In an overview of the state-sciences, Von Mohl devotes a chapter to the value of fiction ("Staatromane") for studying public administration. He considers it unwise to overlook ideas simply because they are not in line with some school of thought, unproven, and/or expressed in pictures (Von Mohl, 1855: 168). He wonders what the harm is in providing a theory with "flesh and blood" in novels. The Staatromane can be insightful in two ways: by means of removing the defects from existing situations and picture them in a perfect condition. They enlighten us about failures and faults by means of contrast. With even greater effect, the writer can describe a non-existing, utopian situation. Consequently, Von Mohl distinguishes two genres: novels presenting idealizations of existing conditions and novels outlining utopian situations. According to Von Mohl, neither will be immediately useful for changing social reality, partly they may even be objectionable and absurd, but they are useful to better understand and assess the existing situation (Von Mohl, 1855: 168). As the idealizations do not start from different foundations as present in real life, Von Mohl regards them less interesting as object for research. The utopian novels, however, are of much interest, as they do not mimic existing realities and are (in our modern vocabulary) science fiction stories (compare note 3) presenting us with new ideas about the state.

A present-day author pointing at the relevance of fiction in the study of public administration is McCurdy. We met him before, when adding to Kroll's classification. McCurdy suggests that the rise of the administrative state is supported ("created and disparaged") by novelists of all kinds. He argues for instance that the widely read books by Mark Twain carry the unmistakable underlying message that government and its administration are the vehicle for bondage and injustice (McCurdy, 1987: 547). Some of the most widely read works in American fiction take an anti-administrative view according to McCurdy (1987: 552). A sentiment also encountered in Waldo analysis of 153 novels. McCurdy, however, points at social novelist as friendly toward the government. These social novels are a kind of "fictional experiments", whereby the author reports on the findings: "lab reports" as Zola called his own work (McCurdy, 1987: 548).

In the spirit of Von Mohl's earlier observation, McCurdy argues that novels sometimes are more advanced than theory. Thus Zola can be read as predating administrative thought by 57 years, and Joseph Heller's *Catch-22* predates Crozier's theory (McCurdy, 1987: 549 & 559). In fact, some novels even directly contributed to the establishment or changing of administrative arrangements.⁶

It is interesting to note that several of McCurdy's prime illustrations can be ranked as science fiction: "*The Andromeda Strain*, along with other futuristic novels such as *Congo* and *2001: A Space Odyssey*, take a step beyond traditional administrative novels...." (McCurdy, 1987: 567). McCurdy, however, does not refer to science fiction as deserving specific interest.

From Fiction to Science

"Novels, as well as movies made from them, reach a mass audience. They shape public attitudes toward government and public administration." (McCurdy, 1987: 552).

What lessons can be drawn from studying fiction? Let us first turn to McCurdy, Waldo, and Von Mohl, and then undertake our own case study in science fiction.

McCurdy concludes that "the sour view" of administration dominates American literature (McCurdy, 1987: 547), and that authors are ill informed about the workings of public administration. Although novels shape public ideas and sentiments about the nature of public administration, clearly this hardly seems to be a source for improving theory or praxis. Rather, McCurdy's remark may remind us of the adagio for the student of public administration put forward in 1812 by Bonnin: students of public administration must refute the false and superficial allegations about administration or bureaucracy.⁷ In a similar vein Waldo is disappointed in the lack of insight of novelist in organizational workings: "If he [the novelist] proposes to inform and guide us in our organizational world - and such purpose is often evident - he is obliged to make a serious effort to understand a world he knows not of." (Waldo, 1968: 79). He does not consider a conscious collaboration between public administrationists and "the man of letters" very promising.

Von Mohl sees no immediate gain from studying novels for understanding everyday administrative life, as the influence of novels on people's behavior and ideas is not measurable, or attributable. He does not deny that many scholars have read novels that may have influenced their ideas and perceptions. Concerning the scientific meaning of novels, one must distinguish between the criticism on existing starting points and teachings in novels, and the positive suggestions for improvement of the stately societal situations (Von Mohl, 1855: 212). As criticism roots in an assessment of real situations, dogma's and teachings, criticism can be treated with high regard, without making oneself ridiculous (Von Mohl, 1855: 212). In this sense, social novels constitute very good material for vivid treatment of society and provide imaginative and creative insights in what can happen in society, and what possible effects, specific social problems pose (Von Mohl, 1855: 214), but they are not focussing on administrative renewal. Of much less importance are the positive suggestions for improvement one can encounter in novels, they rarely warrant serious attention according to Von Mohl.

Where McCurdy points at the rather "negative" attitude in mainstream American literature, Von Mohl concludes that no novelist presents us with a new or even surprising image of the state organization. There are hardly any substantial deviations from everyday practice traceable (Von Mohl, 1855: 213). Although all kinds of situations are described in detail, and vividly depicted in novels, the representation

of formal arrangements and the details of whole parts of constitutions and administrations do not become part of poetic visions. (Von Mohl, 1855: 213).

Journey into the Fourth Dimension: The case of *Star Trek*

"...exciting adventures in space, and a close look at a dazzling hi-tech future world." (Reeves-Stevens, 1995: xv)

Does science fiction actually deliver us with enlightening or intriguing thought experiments on public administration? Is there more to be learned from the fourth dimension? A case study may shed some light on what to expect.

Which science fiction stories to study in the massive number of material available? First, a large portion can be cast aside as soon as "serious" science fiction is aimed at. That is, fictional stories set in non-real settings (in time and or place) that are intended to enlighten us about "the human condition", i.e. that have a serious message to tell. This does away with (most) comics, Buck Rogers, and Star Wars.⁸ Science fiction literature from authors like Isaak Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, and Robert Heinlein, and space soaps like Babylon five, however do have a serious content and deal with the "questions of life" and "the good society". They potentially contain interesting insights into administration. A second criterion for selection is the potential impact of a science fiction story. There clearly are a few science fiction stories having a huge impact or at least "following", in society. For instance, *2001: a Space Odyssey* is classic material as a movie. A third criterion is that, clearly, not all science fiction will contain enough and/or explicit references to administrative matter in order to allow a more thorough analysis. In this respect series are more promising candidates. Thus, the books by Isaak Asimov not only have a high readership, but several of his series explicitly outline future administrations. Similarly, the work of Larry Niven has a continuity that spans many books. These authors create (more) encompassing images of the future, usually referred to as the "known universe", that allows us to study their ideas about administrative phenomena. A science fiction epic fulfilling all three criteria is *Star Trek*.⁹

Star Trek is a long running (since September 1966), huge impact, series with a surprisingly consistent image of the future: its known universe.¹⁰ Administrative institutions are a central feature in this universe. All main characters are a kind of civil servants employed by Star Fleet in order to explore the universe and to maintain peaceful co-existence amongst its population.

In the decades since its first airing, a large number of television series, movies, and a vast number of novels have been sold all over the world. Next to the actual stories there is a huge amount of books adding to the known universe: encyclopedia, technical manuals, scripts, dictionaries, and so on. Star Trek also figures in a number of serious books on leadership or organization theory (cf. Marion, 1999). There are even examples of university courses using Star Trek as its main source for presenting and analyzing ideas.¹¹

What then does the administrative organization in the Star Trek universe look like? Because the series is so long running, and so many material has been written a relatively elaborate and coherent image can be created.¹²

To start with, there is an encompassing political body: The United Federation of Planets, or, for short the Federation. "An interstellar alliance of planetary governments and colonies." (Okuda, 1997: 536). Some of its membership requirements, such as the presence of a planet-encompassing governmental authority,

are "known". The Federation is the main organization for keeping interplanetary peace and protecting its members, and is depicted as centralized, and having a bureaucratic organizational structure. This bureaucratic nature is not treated as negative, but appears generally as a positive, enabling organization.

The Federation has a Constitution describing fundamental individual rights, such as protection against self-incrimination, and there is a "Federation Code of Justice" (Okuda, 1997: 148). The Federation is governed by a Federation Council that is composed of representatives from the member planets and lead by the Federation president (Okuda, 1997: 536). We do not know a lot about the business of this president, except that s/he gives orders, and can be encountered in important negotiations with other empires, although the use of ambassadors is more common. The Federation Council has chambers (that they exist is all we get to know). There is also a Federation Supreme Court, as the highest judicial body and a Federation Grand Jury: "Panel of citizens who evaluated judicial cases to determine if evidence warranted an indictment." (Okuda, 1997: 148).

The complexity of the whole undertaking is stressed by the existence of "Federation governmental agencies", with the most important one Star Fleet Command or Star Fleet for short: "Operating authority for the interstellar scientific, exploratory, and defensive agency of the United Federation of Planets." (Okuda, 1997: 467) Star Fleet Command dispatches spaceships, trains and employs space crew, and sends them out on all kind of missions. The main mission of this agency itself is "to boldly go where no man has gone before". To enable this in an orderly manner there is a host of Star fleet General Orders and Regulations. Prominently figuring in the stories is "the Prime Directive": the general order not to interfere with the normal development of any civilization encountered. Although the accounts are incomplete, and hap hazard there must be at least 104 orders, 157 regulations and 101 directives. There is also mention of codes such as the "Starfleet engineering code." Star Fleet formulates its own specific policies, such as the "temporal displacement policy" preventing personnel to interfere with history while on time travel. However, because of problems of long distance communication (in time and space), the captains traveling through the universe are granted "broad discretionary powers to interpret Federation policy." (Okuda, 1997: 467). The degree to which Star Fleet is depicted as a strictly hierarchical and even militaristic, or a more "humanistic", enlightened institution varies over the years (in particular in the movies the militaristic aspects surface, whereas the series are much more divers and complex in their stories).

The general administrative structure of the Star Trek universe has been outlined by now. However, a lot more material on "administrative matters" is touched upon in the stories, as they are cramped with references to administrative phenomenon such as command structures, communication and safety protocols, decision-making procedures, training arrangements, and the like.

Whereas many science fictions stories, such as the X-files and 1984 provide a grim picture of future administration, Star Trek in general presents a positive image of the future, including the way the future is administered. The Federation, although highly centralized, is depicted as an important and prestigious institution as is its agency Star Fleet. The vision of the future in Star Trek is optimistic and, in the words of Steven Yates (1997), "statist" in outlook with a "world-government-as-savoir theme". Almost all Star Fleet leaders and captains are professional, compassionate yet decisive managers and have high moral standards.¹³ Negative images sometimes arise out of individual (guest) crewmembers in the higher echelons of Star Fleet, but although "red tape" creeps in sometimes, most serious problems are caused by foreign (extra-organizational) influences. Despite perhaps over optimism about loyalty amongst the (core) crew, the general image is mixed with regard to good and evil in administration, be it a relatively centralized and perhaps even over-regulated administration.

To conclude, the Federation and its agency Star Fleet are boringly well known to any student of public administration. They do not only mimic well known administrative arrangements, but more in particular American administrative institutions, showing surprisingly little creativity. Apparently, it is difficult to deviate from the authors' own reality and/or it is regarded necessary to create a familiar setting for their main characters. This is illustrated by the rejection of an idea that would have implied breaking away from well known ideas about administration: while developing the series *Star Trek Voyager* the idea was raised to do away with a bridge. "Could command functions be decentralized? Was it time to break the traditional bridge mold?" (Reeves-Stevens, 1995: 140, see also 67 and 74) No, as it turned out!

Our analysis of administration in the *Star Trek* universe does not have to end here. There are more administrations in *Star Trek's* universe to be encountered, such as the Klingon, Romulan, Ferengi, and Cardassian, to name some of the more developed in the series. The most interesting and unfamiliar without doubt is the Borg administration. If any administration is "extraterrestrial", it has to be this one; it therefore merits our specific attention.

The Borg: Where no Bureaucracy went before

"... a truly alien threat – the Borg." (Reeves-Stevens, 1995: 94)

The Borg are depicted as an extremely powerful civilization of "enhanced" humanoids.¹⁴ They are intended to present something as alien as possible, as is reflected in, for instance, the designs used.¹⁵ Each individual member of the Borg, a so-called drone, is a humanoid that has been implanted with all kind of gadgets: "Different Borg are equipped with different hardware for specific tasks." (Okuda, 1997: 51). The drones are all interconnected; i.e. tied into a sophisticated subspace communications network. This network is called the Borg collective: a shared, species-wide consciousness. Individuality (including sex and gender aspects) is a meaningless concept in this collective. As a collective the Borg provide great benefits for the survival of individual drones, but has no regard for their individuality. The Borg collective has been modeled after an insect colony according to its creator Maurice Hurley. In a Web interview, he states that he looked for new villains and regarded "insect mentality" so interesting because it is relentless.¹⁶

On the positive side, the purpose of the Borg is to improve the quality of life for all life forms in the galaxy. They try to attain this by incorporating ("borgifying") other beings and their knowledge. That is, captured individuals are turned into drones and become part of the collective. As one of the many Borg web pages on the internet reads: "They wish to improve the quality of life for all species by assimilating them into their collective, thus bringing the galaxy one step closer to "perfection"." Consequently, they constitute the biggest evil imaginable in the humanistic and liberal *Star Trek* universe. This is stressed again and again in books, magazines, and web articles. The threat not so much derives from their overwhelming technological and military power, but seems to be primarily the result of their "amoral" nature. The Borg have no moral code, they do not differentiate between right and wrong. This makes them different from all other fictional people in *Star Trek*. Whereas they are extremely flexible to technological challenges, in reasoning and morality they are unable to change as a collective. As one of the authors, Brannon Braga, declares in an interview: "They are anti-individual, anti-freedom, and they are utterly, completely alien. They're the ultimate anti-American menace." (quotation from Kindya, 1996c). What is more, Kindya adds, "In another sense that is not specific to Americans, the Borg embody a more universal fear of untrammelled technology."

The collective nature of the Borg implies that state and society are indistinguishable, as are individual and collective. In a sense, each drone is under constant supervision and guidance, and guiding itself. Consequently, a Borg spaceship has no specific bridge (Okuda, 1997: 50). The Borg have no hierarchy or chain of command in the normal sense. The Borg exemplify an administrative organization that to the extreme is functional and assigns its members with very specific tasks (not just training them for it, but changing their bodies in accordance).¹⁷ This clearly is more than is called for in even the most ideal-typical representation of a bureaucratic organization. At the same time, however, the Borg administration has no hierarchy, no apparent locus of control at all.

In the movie *Star Trek: First Contact* the image of the Borg administration is changed considerably: a Borg Queen is introduced. Before, the concept of a Borg leader was an apparent contradiction in terms (cf. Okuda, 1997: 276). The queen is introduced as the central locus of the collective. She "is the collective" and presented as bringing order to the multitude within the Borg collective (Okuda, 1997: 50). The introduction of the Borg queen can be considered a relapse from the point of view of "creative" administration, i.e. the Borg as a thought experiment. Apparently the intriguing alien administration of the Borg became too big to handle, i.e. imagination failed, or the authors needed something more tangible not to lose their audience. Perhaps, just like the rejected "reinvention" of the bridge of Voyager, it is too difficult for the audience to grasp administrative arrangements that are so unfamiliar.¹⁸

The most interesting aspects of the Borg administration become apparent in the television series, depicting the tensions between an "entirely organizational being" versus "sapient individuals".¹⁹ To point just at a few examples, the first of many stories with this theme is "I, Borg" in *Star Trek the Next Generation*. A Borg drone is captured by the Enterprise crew and it develops individuality. In the end, the drone with designation number "three of five", is even given a name: Hugh. This results in a moral dilemma, as captain Picard is demanded to implant Hugh with an offensive computer bug that may wipeout the Borg Collective. Hugh is returned to the Collective without being infected, as Picard refuses to use Hugh as a means to commit genocide on the Borg. In the story "Descent I & II" the introduction of the notion of individuality into the Borg Collective by means of Hugh appears to have dramatic effects: "Deprived of their group identity, individual Borg were unable to function as a unit." (Okuda, 1997: 51): Chaos and disorder is the result (note: this is before the notion of a Borg queen is introduced). They throw themselves at the mercy of a charismatic and evil leader, thus constituting the *Star Trek* equivalent of Erich Fromm's famous *Fear of Freedom* (1942). In *Star Trek Voyager* this theme even becomes a key story line when the drone "seven of nine", for short "Seven", becomes separated from the Collective and starts to develop individuality as a crew member. Repeatedly the stories deal with tension between collective mind and individuality, and individuality and hierarchy. As Seven originally has known no hierarchy, no orders, no coordinating meetings, etceteras, she shows difficulty to adapt.²⁰ The stories show, for instance, that the Borg approach can be superior from the perspective of efficiency, but hardly ever in the moral sense. The ending of the story "Hunt" provides a nice example of the kind of paradoxes that are the result: Seven acted against the orders of captain Janeway. She is punished; i.e. denied some privileges. Seven complains that she is given individuality, by being forced from the collective, and once acting as a self-conscious individual she is punished. Janeway replies: "Individuality has its limits, especially on a starship with a command structure."

To conclude, it seems unlikely that the utter strange Borg administration will be further developed as such, as it is becoming more and more familiar in outlook and intent. Nevertheless, intriguing paradoxes and problems pop up in the stories that involve Borg or former Borg, in particular concerning the tension between individual, function, and organization, and/or between efficiency, humanity and morality.

The Final Frontier: Science Fiction on Administrative Reality

The case of Star Trek shows that on the one hand the fourth dimension, the possibility to explore existing ideas and practices in ways not possible otherwise, is not taken full advantage of as Star Trek's known universe mimics American administrative reality in detail. However, as the Borg administration shows, interesting, mind provoking, thought experiments do occur. What then is the value of science fiction for the study of public administration?

A number of observations and conclusions can be drawn. To start with, all fiction reflects and creates ideas about public administration and is as such a legitimate object of study. Does science fiction's potential for a "radical approach" to administration pay off?

Based on other studies, three potential areas of interest were distinguished earlier: (1) science fiction as a source for studying (popular) images about public administration in society, (2) science fiction as a means to represent the inner motives and drives of people in or confronted with administration (Kroll's third dimension), and (3) science fiction as a radical or thought experiment on the consequences of or concepts and theories on public administration (the fourth dimension distinguished here).

The Star Trek case shows that science fiction stories can allow for study of a relatively coherent image of public administration around in society. It must however be realized that studying science fiction for this purpose hardly pays off compared to other research tools available. With regard to the second potential area of interest, a more promising conclusion is possible. Star Trek stories are packed with personal conflicts, fears, tensions, stress, and the like. What is more, in Star Trek The Next Generation the presence of a kind of on board therapist, counselor Troy, and wise barkeeper, Guinan, enable not only to dwell extensively on inner motives, but actually demand the reflection upon them as part of the stories themselves. Von Justi can be pleased! Technology and science constitute the stage where "human" behavior can be studied. From this perspective, it appears that science fiction is perhaps not about "science": people constitute the nucleus of the stories in "serious" science fiction.²¹ Clearly, this is the case in all serious fiction, but science fiction allows for an extreme magnifying glass. At the same time, this implies that the stories depict the underlying ideas of the authors. They can be useful tools in education as science fiction provides settings in which relevant questions can be raised and answers given. There is, however, always the danger of confusing fiction with reality.

This brings us to the third aspect. As thought experiment, science fiction allows for a radical analysis of a theoretical standpoint that discards the question whether or not something can empirically exist or be determined at all. Orwell's 1984 was mentioned as an example of this. The work of Von Mohl and McCurdy even indicates that science fiction stories can be the forerunners or heuristic devices for theoretical discoveries.

In science fiction stories, it is possible, if not essential, that the universe in which the stories take place have specific characteristics that deviate from our own universe. It allows studying, i.e. speculating, about the behavior of people in circumstances where they are not hampered by normal boundaries: ranging from gravity to morals. Science fiction in this sense is a thought experiment: we envisage a world that is entirely bureaucratic and try to establish how people can or cannot live in it. Technology, other planets, and the like, provide a context that enables us to bring to the forefront some aspects of human behavior and, in line with our interest, administration.

Thought experiments can be useful, sometimes even powerful means to further develop and/or criticize our hypothesis and ideas on public administration. R.A. Sorensen explicitly dwelled upon the nature of

thought experiment and positions it for instance as a particular useful tools for analyzing inconsistencies in our ideas. But he also gives us a warning: "Sadly, they [thought experiments] systematically err under certain conditions and so are best used with sensitivity to their foibles and limited scope." (Sorensen, 1992: 289). To stick to our casus, science fiction can badly lead us astray if we overlook the fact that science fiction primarily reflects the present and is not about the future at all.

To conclude, next to educational possibilities (cf. Holley & Lutte, 2000: 4), science fiction can be interesting as an object of study for two reasons. First, it can be studied as a representation of ideas about public administration and people acting in administrative settings, i.e. as reflecting existing ideas or even the source of such ideas. The expectations of such a study of science fiction should however not be overestimated. The student of public administration has many other methods available to study popular opinion on public administration that are probably more worthwhile. Second, science fiction can be studied as a thought experiment in public administration, dealing with the general premises of it, or with a specific administrative phenomenon. The case of the Borg administration indicates that science fiction can be useful as a thought experiment and help us to reflect upon our common assumption about administrative behavior. In short, we can be a bit more optimistic as Von Mohl was 150 years ago: science fiction can be imaginative about administration, there are interesting "thought probes". It is thus worthwhile to analyze science fiction on its thought provoking qualities to help us reflect on our conceptualizations of public administration.

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Endnotes

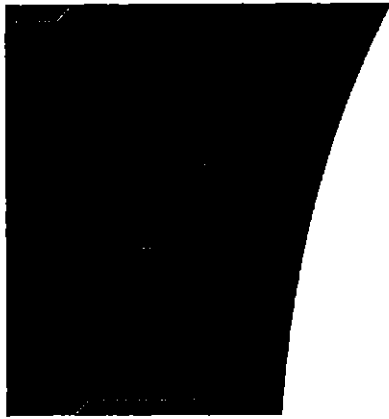
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- ¹ Quote from the Star Trek movie *First Contact* when Android Data is confronted with the Queen of the Borg for the first time.
- ² Waldo states that novels can point at different levels of knowledge and understanding, can extend the range of our knowledge, provide us with a view of administrative man by others, can give a 'desirable emotional stimulation or release', can provide us with a better professional balance and humility, bring us closer to the psychological and moral aspects of administration, and finally, can help us to achieve wisdom.
- ³ Hertzler's remarks apply to science fiction, as there are many similarities between SF and utopian novel, although the latter are by definition optimistic in outlook, the former not necessarily (in fact, they can be utterly pessimistic). A utopian novel also has a specific political message, SF not necessarily. Both share an interest in ideas and ideals in combination with the possible agencies of social change. Another genre difference is that utopian novels by no means have to be concerned with 'science', whilst SF usually has a world dominated by knowledge (science) not available to us. This difference is, however, not substantial in as far as most Utopias are populated by people with 'better' knowledge and morals, and many SF stories are not concerned with science at all.
- ⁴ In this sense, Quine (1969) talks about 'radical translation'.
- ⁵ Von Justi is probably the first administrative scholar using fiction in his attempts to further the study public administration. That is, leaving aside, for instance, Plato's *The Laws* and Thomas Morus *Utopia* as fictions dealing with important administrative matters, as they are not part of a specific 'administrative discourse'.
- ⁶ McCurdy argues that the arguments for creating the US Food and Drug Administration were derived from, or at least, strongly supported by Upton Sinclair's novel *The Jungle*, whilst Ken Kesey's *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, played a major role in opinions and policies concerning mental facilities.
- ⁷ "réfuter ... les allégations fausses de ces esprits routiniers et superficiels qui n'ont toujours vu dans l'administration que la bureaucratie ou l'arbitraire de l'autorité." (Bonnin, 1812: xv)

- ⁸ This is not to suggest they should be entirely overlooked. For example, Lee takes a look at a Star Wars movie and concludes that upon reflection 'bureaucrats' are the implicit heroes in the Star Wars saga (Lee, 2000: 29).
- ⁹ Some might argue that the foregoing is primarily a rationalization of a Star Trek fan. Undoubtedly there is a kernel of truth in this argument, however, the heuristics underlying the choice, do not automatically denounce the validity of the provided 'reasoned logic'.
- ¹⁰ Its continuity, goes even further back than 1966, as for instance in the second movie (1982) explicit use was made of a 1953 movie image of the future (Reeves-Stevens, 1995: 205).
- ¹¹ For instance the course 'Start Trek: US-amerikanische Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik im Spiegel einer populären Fernsehserie' taught at the John F. Kennedy Institut at Berlin in 1997/1998: in the meetings American politics were discussed by means of Star Trek episodes.
- ¹² The Star Trek Encyclopedia (Okuda, 1997) has been used as the main source for this 'reconstruction'. Other sources (books, movies, websites, CD-rom's) have been used to fill in the gaps where possible.
- ¹³ One might wonder, however, whether it is good leadership for captain to be in the forefront of almost every battle and danger him/herself, as is often the case in the stories.
- ¹⁴ This is where they got their name from in the first place: Borg is derived from Cyborg, and cyborg in the science fiction literature refers to Cybernetic organism, i.e. beings that are partly human and partly artificial or mechanical.
- ¹⁵ Thus the main graphic designers of Star Trek, Michael Okuda, explains that he tried to depict the entirely different mind-set of the Borg, but obviously, it must be recognizable as such to the audience at the same time. (Kindya, 1996a)
- ¹⁶ As special effects for an insect race was too expensive, the Borg were apparently the second best option.
- ¹⁷ As with the graphics, the makeup and costumes are carefully designed to support this concept: presenting an overall similarity of the drones, but at the same time showing that each drone serves a particular purpose in the Collective. (Kindya, 1996a).
- ¹⁸ Changes in story lines just to suit the audiences and/or create more dramatic effects are not uncommon, as scripts change during shooting (Reeves-Stevens, 1995: xix), or even entire new story lines are introduced after the try-outs ('Director', 1999: see also p. 56: in the same journal). That the Borg prove difficult to use in stories for large audiences is illustrated by statements of a (co-)writer of the movie Star Trek: First Contact (Kindya, 1996b). He talks about the Borg paradox for the writer: they provide an intriguing thread, yet are quickly boring as they have but one motive that drives them and are not open to reason.
- ¹⁹ One must, however, take care not to 'over-interpret' the meaning of the Borg. To start with, they were introduced as 'a tool or a function' to another story as actor John de Lancie points out (Kindya, 1996a), and the many different authors writing about them in very different kind of stories clearly indicate they are not intended to make some specific point, but rather invite many interpretations, as Kindya (1996c) puts it, they are not meant as a metaphor for one particular thing. This stands in opposition to some, that read in the Borg a strong metaphor against collectivism and communism, resulting in rather extremist exclamations such as by Yates (1997).
- ²⁰ Many more paradoxical aspects enter the stories and warrant attention, such as the obviously 'masculine' behavior of Seven and her physical appearance (the actress in question is Jery Ryan, a former Miss America), and the response of others on these 'contradictions', i.e. sexuality and gender in the workplace.
- ²¹ In this sense, Thunderbirds taught me at a very young age that technology is never the real solution nor posing the true problems, people (mis)using technology are the issue.
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"I have always likened Yoda to a powerful figure like Winston Churchill who might be having to make great decisions about the war, and yet while he's doing it, he's wondering if he should take that last candy in the dish or not, because he wants it really bad. It's that paradox. I think it makes him more human."

Frank Oz
***Star Wars Insider* #42**

Epilogue: Banging Our Head on the Wall?

Mark R. Rutgers

It has been great fun working on this symposium. The idea for composing it originates at the Public Administration Theory Network conference in Fort Lauderdale, January 2000. There the authors discovered a mutual interest in attempting to grasp what public administration is about in time and place. Others have greatly aided in the process of fine tuning the symposium and reviewing the texts: Richard Green (University of Wyoming), Jos C.N. Raadschelders (University of Oklahoma), Michael W. Spicer (Cleveland State University), and Richard J. Stillman II (University of Colorado). I also would like to include Larry S. Luton (Eastern Washington University) for his encouragement and Marc Holzer of Public Voices for letting me push ahead this project.

What is the final score of this symposium? In the introduction it was claimed that it is difficult to "step back" from our everyday approaches to reality. Our ideas about public administration are "infested" with suppositions that we are unaware of. Can we lay bare the "cosmologies" around in administrative thought? Can we overcome our tendency to look for continuity and coherence, blurring differences and incommensurabilities between cosmologies?

In diverging ways, the articles in the symposium point at the difficulty to reflect upon our ideas about public administration and the (in)ability to reconstruct and interpret the ideas of others. The articles on the one hand seem to substantiate that we cannot understand the meaning of "administration" in other cosmologies; on the other, the articles are themselves examples that we can and do talk about them. The reader may feel uneasy with the relativistic consequences that lure in the background. Can we really not understand what our forerunners meant with "administration", how "administration" works in other cultures, or even transcend our everyday ideas about administration in thought?

The questions posed in the introduction concerned our ability to make our implicit assumptions and customary ideas about public administration visible; can we look "through the wall"? Clearly administrative cosmologies constituted in different times and places are "alien" to us and may even be incommensurable with our own ideas, but does this imply that they are utterly "un-understandable"? Maybe this is not an issue at all, for ultimately we have to learn about ourselves and the meaning of our past, the interactions with others and with our future. Whether or not we can actually "reconstruct", let alone "live", the ideas and realities of over time and place is not really important. The most valuable lesson is that we should avoid "banging our heads" on the wall's we have built around ourselves.

It is now up to the reader to draw lessons. Undoubtedly the authors will continue their quests to understand what public administration is about. Hopefully they have aided the reader on his/her own explorations and provided them with some ideas where and how to look for the walls, and not to attempt to look through them. Some possible windows have been traced in the articles. We should, however, always keep in mind that "looking through the window", is not the same as "being outside".

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The Working Sheep Dog as a Model of the Street-Level Public Servant

Anne J. Hacker

There are examples all around us of natural, simple, yet amazingly complex organizational structures that demonstrate models of leadership that are of use today. The working sheep dog is one such example. It is a vision of grace, ability, stamina and integrity. The relationship that exists between these canine and human partners mirrors that of the street-level public servant and servant leader. Both exist in harmony for the well being of the flock. Over time, the relationship transcends the mere mechanics of shepherding to become a mystical union of a beneficent partnership for the good of the flock, the dog and the shepherd.

"People often wonder just what trainers give the sheepdog in exchange for its boundless willingness. Food treats and praise sit on the trainer's shelf, untouched, unused. The sheepdog is shown its possibilities, he learns what life is like for a good dog and is invited to walk in a rational world whose farthest boundaries are defined by grace," (McCraig, 1994, p. 201).

I have long been fascinated by the working sheep dog. Poetry in motion, responsive to the commands of the shepherd, in direct service to both flock and shepherd. This animal is in essence, the canine equivalent of the street-level public servant described by Vinzant and Crothers (1998).

The concept of the street-level public servant embodies discretion, power and legitimacy exercised in complex, fluid environments. Choices made by the street-level public servant are often difficult and require careful consideration, as they impact both individuals and communities. Decisions are made based upon a variety of factors and in a normative context. In that power is exercised by the street-level public servant, it must be legitimated, (Vinzant & Crothers, 1998, p. 5-7, 12).

Exercising discretion and legitimacy in delivering its services, the working sheep dog models these concepts admirably. In its daily work, it is sent forth by the shepherd to fetch sheep. While the dog follows the verbal and non-verbal commands of the shepherd, it also must make decisions on behalf of the flock and shepherd that will impact the sheep of the flock. The working sheep dog lives to serve its human partner on behalf of the sheep in their care. What attributes does this task-related relationship between human and dog on behalf of the flock possess that can serve as a model for the effective leadership of human organizations?

As the philosophy of leadership in public organizations continues to evolve, social scientists and public administrators recognize the importance of complexity co-existing with simplicity in the same

organizational construct, (Fairholm, 1999). This article briefly examines the model of servant leader and street-level public servant as demonstrated by the shepherd and sheep dog.

Trait theory is the oldest approach to studying leadership, (Vinzant & Crothers, p. 74-75). The Border collie is a bright dog with a keen working instinct. Physically attractive and active, they have become popular as pets. Although the American Kennel Club has set appearance standards for conformity, these are not accepted by the United States Border Collie Club, Inc. and will not be considered in this article. The standards established by the U.S.B.C.C. require the true Border collie dog to possess exceptional ability, a temperament that is sensitive to bend yet tough enough to withstand training, and that works sheep and cattle well, (United States Border Collie Club website, 2000). A dog must be eager to learn, confident and determined to work without much guidance. This passion for work includes a high degree of motivation to work as a team with its human partner.

While there is little disagreement that these characteristics affect the sheep dog's ability to work the flock, trait theory is limited in its application to the selection of the successful working sheep dog. The primary consideration that must be factored is the issue of "fit" between human and canine.

Characteristics of one individual, whether human or canine, may fit better with the characteristics of one partner than another. A dog with an easy-going temperament may work well with one shepherd, but not with another.

Trait studies do not take into consideration environmental and personality variables in which the street-level public servant operates. Likewise, personality types forwarded by Keirse & Bates (1978) consider individual temperament and communication as variables for consideration in leadership/follower relationships. A leader is a leader only if there are followers following. Regardless of our temperament, we all desire relationship and appreciation. The primary job of the leader, whether street-level or bureaucratic, is to appreciate and acknowledge the strengths of the follower. The leader's personality predisposes awareness of the achievements of the followers, (Keirse & Bates, 1978, p129-130). Understanding, adaptation and adjustment of these various styles may be a challenge but can be learned and mastered in order to become an effective leader. The aware shepherd can adapt commands and expectations to the abilities of the dog in order to elicit the very best of the animal, as well as foster growth to its maximum potential. Likewise, the wise servant leader can fine-tune expectations to the abilities of their street-level public servant colleagues.

The dynamic relationship that exists between the shepherd, the sheep dog and the flock is a beautiful thing to see in action. The cultural understanding that exists within this triad offers to this writer's mind, a splendid example of street-level leadership and the wise management of that resource. Management occurs when the shepherd directly interacts with the flock in limited formal and informal ways such as lambing, shearing, dipping, inoculating, and culling. These are planned events in the life cycle of the flock and exert control over the direction of the group rather than provide direct leadership. In fact, like humans, the domesticated sheep will naturally follow a lead sheep, and it is with the service of it's human and canine partners that the flock flourishes beyond that which might be found in its undomesticated cousins.

Shepherding people is the primary role of the servant leader, (Greenleaf, 1991). I would argue that the shepherd first serves dog, then flock. Without the sheep dog, the shepherd would have a measurably more difficult time controlling and maintaining the flock's well being. The top-level administrator must bear in mind as well that without front-line workers, or street-level public servants, the organization would not have as great an opportunity to grow. The relationship between the shepherd and the sheep dog on behalf of the flock parallels the relationship that exists between leaders, followers and organizational constituents. Understanding the culture of the flock and how the sheep dog interacts to the dominant

sheep in the flock is essential to effective flock administration. So too, it is essential that the servant leader understand the cultural dynamics at play between the street-level public servant and the organization's consumers in order to foster effective public administration. Without this understanding and sensitivity, bad principles become bad practice.

The shepherd influences the life of the flock by choice of pasture or shelter. Leaders may influence organizational life; they do not ordain it. The leader that elects a course of action for the organization without considering the perspective of the employees or customers is destined to have problems with employee morale.

Both contemporary and ancient leadership philosophies encourage a more natural flow of relationships between the leader and those served, (Fairholm, 2000; Heider, 1985; Vinzant & Crothers, 1998). This transforms the sometimes mundane work of the street-level public servant into a dynamic, personal relationship between the administrative leader, followers, and public. Yet there must still be leadership; someone to establish the vision.

Being comfortable with the leadership principle of uncertainty and ambiguity as a natural part of organizational life is essential to being both a good shepherd and an effective organizational leader.

"Control is a gift. The finest control is a delicate grip on chaos. Control must be prepared for, trained, invoked. Control is self-referential. Perfect control retreats before the seeker." (McCraig, 1994, p.78).

In the model of the sheep dog, the shepherd often leads by following. As eluded to previously, the sheep will self-select one of their own as leader. They respond to the sheepdog, representing legitimated authority. The sheep dog, using informal (instinctive) and formal (trained) discretion, guides the flock in the way the Shepherd has envisioned is best. The shepherd follows the flock and the dog, often standing back to view the big picture. This allows the shepherd to view the whole instead of looking at each discrete piece.

Sensitivity to the dynamic relationship that exists between the street-level leader and consumer, or the sheep-dog and flock, is essential to allowing for a natural flow to exist and evolve. To see the big picture in which the organization is situated becomes the primary role of the leader while the street-level public servants carry on the day-to-day tasks of the organization. The leader can assess strengths, challenges, opportunities or threats to the welfare of the organization. The shepherd warns of impending threats: predators, changes in pasture requirements, disease, weather, or community shifts. The servant leader can account for political shifts, economic forecasts, and internal or external threats to the organization. Both servant leader and shepherd are free to do so because of their ability to value their street-level personnel.

Vision sets boundaries or parameters of acceptable and expected behavior. It gives meaning and purpose to the dynamic relationships that exist within organizations. Leaders understand that vision is not a description of the organization's desired state. Rather the vision is a statement of its essential nature and values without dictating form. The shepherd monitors the flock and sheep dog for acceptable progress and behavior. The servant leader monitors and evaluates the organization for acceptable performance standards. Both shepherd and servant leader maneuver and redirect their organizations to achieve optimal performance. Through communication with the sheep dog or street-level public servants, the organization shifts in accordance with the renewed vision of the leader.

Naïve listening: respectfully listening with the recognition that because organizations and life itself is in constant progress and flux, one can never know anything absolutely, (Fairholm, 2000, p. 8). The shepherd understands the importance of monitoring varying conditions relative to the flock. Each day

brings new variables which must be examined with consideration of the impact on the flock tomorrow. The servant leader and street-level public servant must understand that to play ball on the ever-changing field that exists in the public and private sector requires attentiveness to the present with an eye towards the future.

Of all the characteristics possessed by the working sheep dog model that parallels organizational leadership, the one that seems most frequently missing in the human form is perhaps the most important to organizational vitality. The working sheep dog above all serves with tireless joy. The lolling tongue and comical grin at the end of a long day might be dismissed as frivolous by the human world. The cynic may consider the organization to exist to fulfill some public need or to make a profit. However, even the most jaded professional is aware that that organization is made up of human beings, without whom the organization would cease to exist. The servant leader desires for his or her employees the satisfaction of ending their day with the visible expression of a job well done, a battle won, a project successfully completed, a lesson learned. In considering the relationship between the sheep dog and the shepherd, I cannot help but wonder if there is all that much difference. The simplest relationships can form the most complex and beautiful systems, (Fairholm, 2000, p. 10). Simple rules and patterns allow dynamic, autonomous structures to emerge. The sheep, while independent, are drawn to a pattern of behavior envisioned by the shepherd and shaped by the sheep dog. Thus, the shepherd and sheep dog may serve as our model for the servant leader and street-level public servant.

Perhaps the simple relationship between the shepherd and sheep dog that has lasted for centuries can provide an example for complex organizations to thrive. Through the wise stewardship of either the shepherd or the servant leader, combined with the discretion and legitimacy of the sheep dog or street-level public servant, the efficacy of this relationship is demonstrated time and time again.

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Public Service Ethics and the Literary Imagination

Remarks at ASPA Ethics Conference, Portland State University, May 2000

John A. Rohr

Let me begin my remarks this morning with a passage from a great book familiar to all of us, Reinhold Niebuhr's Moral Man and Immoral Society, wherein he argues that

[i]n every human group there is less reason to guide and to check impulse, less capacity for self-transcendence, less ability to comprehend the needs of others and therefore more unrestrained egoism than the individuals, who compose the group, reveal in their personal relationships.

Although Niebuhr concedes that the catchy title, Moral Man and Immoral Society, states "too unqualifiedly" the distinction between individual and collective morality, he insists that "social groups, national, racial, and economic," are incapable of achieving the high-minded morality of individuals when they are on their best behavior. "Individual men," says Niebuhr, "may be moral in the sense that they are able to consider interests other than their own in determining problems of conduct, and are capable, on occasion, of preferring the advantages of others to their own."² This is precisely what groups cannot do and this is precisely why it is so difficult to write and to talk about ethics in government. Our religious and philosophical traditions teach us to think of morality in universal terms, but in a world of nation-states, ethics in government means thinking in particularistic terms of what is good for a certain nation and within that nation what is good for certain subdivisions such as states, provinces, cities, towns, counties, communes, boroughs, and so forth.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the telling contrast between our own Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. The former is universal. It announces to a waiting world the universal truth that *all* men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights. Worthy sentiments these, for warlike men about to launch a revolution in the name of these rights. When these same men, however, sat down eleven years later to "ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America," they carefully noted in their preamble that their purpose was to secure "the blessings of liberty *for ourselves and our posterity*" (emphasis added). This is group morality. First, we take care of our own. Those who would govern us ethically must first look to our well-being and only afterwards to the well-being of all mankind, thereby confounding the moral imperative that prompts the better angels of our nature to look first to the good of all. If we forget Niebuhr's insights, we are likely to forget why it is so difficult—not impossible, but difficult—to formulate ethical standards for government officials. We are trying to pour the wine of universal principles into the skins of particularistic interests.

In my remarks today, I propose to show how effectively the study of literature can bring out the moral tensions Niebuhr finds embedded in the structure of any serious examination of ethics in government. I hasten to add that there are many other approaches as well—such as rich and detailed case studies, systematic philosophical inquiries and the dialectic aspect of appellate and supreme court decisions with their majority, concurring and dissenting opinions. Each of these approaches has quite appropriately received considerable attention in public administration journals and I hope they will continue to do so. The study of literature, however has been somewhat neglected. I am aware of only four articles in Public Administration journals on the use of novels and plays for examining the nature of administrative action. These were by Rowland Egger in the 1950s; Morton Kroll in the 1960s; Howard McCurdy in the 1980s and Patrick Dobel in the 1990s. Of these only Dobel's article addressed ethical issues specifically.

Let us focus today on a play familiar to all of us—Robert Bolt's A Man for All Seasons, a splendid interpretation of the splendid life of that splendid man, Sir Thomas More.

For me, one of the most instructive aspects of the play is its treatment in dramatic form of the classic jurisprudential question of law and morality. Consider the scene in which Richard Rich, the scoundrel who eventually perjures himself to seal More's doom, finds himself in the presence of More, who at this point in the play is still Chancellor of England. Knowing that Rich was up to no good, More's son-in-law, Will Roper, urges Sir Thomas to arrest Richard Rich. More's wife and daughter join in urging Rich's arrest. Sir Thomas calmly replies, "For what [should I arrest him]?" They answer because he is a bad man. Let us pick up the dialogue:

Thomas: There's no law against being a bad man.

Roper: There is! God's law!

Thomas: Then God can arrest him.

Roper: Sophistication upon Sophistication.

Thomas: No, sheer simplicity. The law, Roper, the law. I know what's legal, not what's right. And I'll stick to what's legal.

Roper: Then you set man's law above God's.

Thomas: No, far below; but let me draw your attention to a fact—I'm not God. The current and eddies of right and wrong where you find such plain sailing, I can't navigate. I'm no voyager. But in the thickets of the law, oh, there I'm a forester. I doubt if there's a man alive who could follow me there, thank God. . .

Roper: While you talk, he's gone!

Thomas: And go he should, if he was the Devil himself, until he broke the law!

Roper: So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law!

Thomas: Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?

Roper: I'd cut down every law in England to do that!

Thomas: Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you—where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat? This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast—man's laws, not God's—and if you cut them down—and you're just the man to do it—d'you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake.

Here we see a dramatic enactment of the jurisprudential position that finds the morality of law to lie in the integrity of its procedures rather than in its capacity to achieve substantive goods and to avoid substantive evil—by, for example, arresting a bad man, like Richard Rich, simply because he's bad.

A variation on this theme appears in what More's zealous son-in-law, Will Roper, sees as a shallow legalism on the part of Sir Thomas. The scene has More and Roper once again in dialogue when More startles his son-in-law by saying he could support the Act of Supremacy which declares Henry VIII to be head of the Church in England. Roper is shocked that More could support such a statement, but More directs the younger man's attention to the wording of the statute which does indeed proclaim Henry to be "Supreme Head of the Church in England so far as the law of God allows." More adds his lawlerly interpretation: "How far the law of God does allow it remains a matter of opinion, since the Act of Parliament doesn't state it."

"A legal quibble," says the dismayed Roper to which More replies, "Call it what you like; it's there, thank God."

A similar exchange occurs when Roper and Margaret, More's daughter, tell Sir Thomas that the king is about to require his subjects to take an oath pledging their support of Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn. Let us return to the text:

Thomas: An oath? On what compulsion?

Roper: It's expected to be treason.

Thomas: What is the oath?

Roper: It's about the marriage, Sir.

Thomas: But what is the wording?

Roper: We don't need to know wording—we know what it will mean.

Thomas: It will mean what the words say! An oath is made of words. It may be possible to take it. Have we a copy of the Bill?

Margaret: There's one coming from the City.

Thomas: Then let's go home and look at it.

Roper: But Sir—

Thomas: Now listen, Will. And, Meg, you listen too. God made the angels to show him splendor—as he made animals for innocence and plants for their simplicity. But Man he made to serve him wittily, in the tangle of his mind. If he suffers us to fall to such a case that there is no escaping, then we may stand to our tackle as best we can, and yes, Will, then we may clamor like champions . . . if we have the spittle for it. And no doubt it delights God to see splendor where He looked only for complexity. Our natural business lies in escaping—so let's get home and study this Bill.

In the previous passage, we saw Sir Thomas use the law to restrain his own power to arrest Richard Rich and now we find him relying upon the rule of law to protect himself from the King's wrath. He is indeed a forester in the thicket of the law and makes no apologies for using his wits to survive. Earlier in the play, he had assured his wife, Alice, that "he is not the stuff of which martyrs are made" and now proclaims that it is God's plan for the universe that man should live by his wits and make every effort to escape situations that demand a choice between one's conscience and one's survival. This is what makes More so attractive and so human. To be sure, he dies the death of a martyr, but he is a very reluctant martyr because he loves life too much to face death with anything but reluctance. As martyrs go, he is the polar opposite of the stern and rigid Antigone who delights in tormenting her reluctant persecutors with her unbending self-righteousness.

As the play unfolds, King Henry and Sir Thomas strike an interesting bargain. Thomas will not openly oppose the King's marriage to Anne Boleyn, but neither will he support it. King Henry summarizes the bargain in characteristically blustery fashion:

Henry: No opposition, Thomas! No opposition! Your conscience is your own affair; but you are my Chancellor! There, you have my word—I'll leave you out of it. But I don't take it kindly, Thomas, and I'll have no opposition! . . . Lie low, if you will, but I'll brook no opposition—no noise. No words, no signs, no letters, no pamphlets—Mind that, Thomas—no writings against me!

To put the bargain in more analytic terms, Thomas agrees to compromise his principles to the extent that he will hold his peace and not denounce the marriage, even though he thinks this would be the better moral choice for him. Henry, on the other hand, will respect Thomas' silence and not compel him to support the marriage. Later in the play, Henry breaks his word, but for our purposes the itself invites a useful moral reflection.

The bargain recalls the distinction medieval theologians once made between sins of omission and sins of commission. When I fail to do what my conscience tells me I should do, I commit a sin of omission. When I do what my conscience tells me I must not do, I commit a sin of commission. This is a very important distinction for people in the public service to keep in mind if your decisions ever place a moral burden on one of your subordinates or one of your clients. Consider the case of a hospital administrator with a nurse on staff who is absolutely opposed to all abortions because of her profound conviction that a human being is present from the moment of conception. In her spare time, the nurse plans to organize a pro-life demonstration in the hospital parking lot. The administrator forbids her to do so and thereby places a moral burden on the nurse. From the nurse's point of view, she is being forced to commit a sin of omission. She cannot do what her conscience tells her she should do.

Consider, however, how much more serious the problem becomes if the administrator tells the nurse she must assist at abortions performed in the hospital. Now the nurse is faced with a sin of commission. She must do what her conscience tells her she should not do. Why is the second situation far more serious than the first one? Because if your conscience tells you that you must never abort, there is only one way to avoid what your conscience forbids and that is, quite simply, not to abort. The only way to obey a negative prohibition is to refrain from doing what must not be done. The nurse's self-imposed obligation to protest against abortions performed in her hospital is grounded in a different principle; namely, to do whatever one can to reduce the number of abortions. If she cannot demonstrate in the hospital parking lot, there are many other places she can demonstrate with impunity. She could also contribute to pro-life causes, write to state and federal representatives and so forth.

When dealing with persons whose religious and philosophical traditions are quite unlike our own, public servants may be insensitive to the severe moral problems their regulations may unwittingly create. As a small step toward achieving greater sensitivity in such matters, we would do well to bear in mind the distinction between sins of omission and commission—a good example of which we find in the bargain Sir Thomas struck with King Henry.

A Man for All Seasons presents a helpful insight into contemporary moral reasoning in a scene in which More defends his resistance to the King in an animated argument with his dear friend the Duke of Norfolk who urges Thomas to drop his intransigent defense of papal supremacy in matters concerning the Church. Norfolk admonishes Sir Thomas—

Norfolk: This makes no sense. You'll forfeit all you've got—which includes the respect of your country—for a theory?

Thomas: The Apostolic Succession of the Pope is . . . Why, yes; it's a theory; you can't see it; can't touch it; it's a theory. But what matters to me is not whether it's true or not but that I believe it to be true, or rather, not that I believe it, but that I believe it.

Author Robert Bolt makes good use of italics to stress the point More is making. What is important is not that I believe it, but that I believe it. Now, much as I admire Bolt's interpretation of Thomas More's life, I find it inconceivable that a sixteenth century man like Sir Thomas could make such a statement. It has the finger prints of the twentieth century all over it. This is not a criticism of Bolt's work which is an interpretation of More's life for our own times rather a then scientific historical biography. To say something is important because I believe it stresses the role of the believer rather than that which is believed. Men and women of the sixteenth century were far more ready than we are today to see an objective moral and religious order "out there" to which they should conform their lives. Contemporary men and women are far more likely to find their integrity in fidelity to subjective standards they have imposed upon themselves. This is a cardinal principle in the ethical theory of contemporary existentialism and fuels the debate over situation ethics. A critical reading of Bolt's interpretation of Thomas More alerts us to how our own moral reasoning today differs from that of men and women in times gone by.

This, I believe, is an extremely important point if we are to participate intelligently in the great moral arguments of our time. Consider Dr. Larch, the role played so brilliantly by Micheal Caine in the fine recent film The Cider House Rules. Who could forget the warmth and affection of this good doctor as he reads to the orphans at night and then bids them sleep well by saying, "Good night, you princes of Maine; you kings of New England."

But wait a minute—was he really such a good man? He regularly performed abortions that were clearly illegal at the time the story took place—in the 1940s. He lied to his Board of Directors about Homer's medical credentials and then falsified those credentials, thereby placing a clearly unqualified young man in the responsible position of medical officer tasked with caring for the health of helpless orphans. He lied to Homer about his heart condition and tried to control Homer's life when the young man was ready to leave the orphanage and begin to make his own way in the world. He even lied to the orphans about the death of Fuzzy. Dr. Larch was not the warm human being I oozed over just a moment ago. He was a reckless, irresponsible scoundrel and scofflaw.

Now those of you who have seen The Cider House Rules will know that my harsh judgment on Dr. Larch is simply preposterous, even though he was a liar who falsified medical records and broke the laws of the state of Maine. The film is far too complex to yield to my narrow moralistic censures. Recall Thomas More's saying that something is important because I believe it and we can begin to understand why we find Dr. Larch so attractive a figure. There is a moral consistency in his life that is single-mindedly dedicated to the well-being of others that enables him to justify—at least to himself—his readiness to violate the standards of ordinary morality. His moral strength came from within himself rather than from fidelity to principles outside himself. Certain matters are important not because he **believes** them but because **he** believes them.

In the introduction to A Man for All Seasons, Robert Bolt describes More as "a man with an adamant sense of his own self." He develops this point skillfully as follows:

Thomas More knew where he began and where he left off, what area of himself he could yield to the encroachments of his enemies, and what to the encroachments of those he loved. It was a substantial area in both cases, for he had a proper sense of fear and was a busy lover. Since he was a clever man and a great lawyer, he was able to retire from those areas in wonderfully good order, but at length he was asked to retreat from that final area where he located his self. And there this supple, humorous, unassuming and sophisticated person set like metal, was overtaken by an absolutely primitive rigor, and could no more be budged than a cliff.

Throughout the play, Bolt develops the idea of More's profound sense of his interior self which was inviolable. Consider his remark to his wife, Alice, a good, solid woman of common sense who is utterly baffled by her husband's attitude toward the king. He tells her that in most matters he is perfectly willing to be ruled by his king and then adds: "But there's a little . . . little area, . . . where I must rule myself. It's very little—less to the king than a tennis court." In Henry's vast kingdom, a tennis court does not amount to much, and so in Thomas More's world of politics and religion, there is only a tiny, tiny area within himself that he must guard against all who threaten it.

We are perhaps reminded of Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, a valiant Roman warrior whose friends wanted to make him consul, but he could not bring himself to follow the custom that required military heroes to bare their wounds and scars to the public before they assumed office. Like More, Coriolanus had "an adamant sense of his own self" and simply could not lower himself to what he saw as the indignity of exposing the scars he had from his outstanding service to the state. If you are familiar with the play, you will recall how the refusal to go along with custom led to his tragic downfall.

To return to Thomas More and his sense of self, consider the memorable scene in which he scolds his friend the Duke of Norfolk for failing to grasp why More takes so seriously his moral obligation to resist Henry VIII's claims over the Church. When Norfolk protests that the nobility of England have always been loyal to the Church, More sharply rebukes him. "The nobility of England, my lord, would have snored through the Sermon on the Mount." Charging that the aristocrats care more about their hunting dogs than their religion, he asks Norfolk: "And what would you do with a water spaniel that was afraid of water? You'd hang it! Well, as a spaniel is to water, so is a man to his own self. I will not give in because I oppose it—I do—not my pride, not my spleen, nor any other of my appetites but I do—I. (At this point the stage directions have More go right up to Norfolk and put his hands on Norfolk's chest and then say—) Is there no single sinew in the midst of this that serves no appetite of Norfolk's but is just Norfolk? There is! Give that some exercise, my lord."

Sir Thomas would liberate Norfolk's self from the passions and appetites that imprison him.

After having discovered that the oath King Henry demands of his subjects allows him no room to maneuver, More refuses to take it, knowing this will probably cost him his life. There follows More's final affirmation of his self in what is probably the most famous passage in the play—More's explanation to his daughter why he rejects her suggestion that he merely recite the words of the oath, while denying them in his heart. This, of course, More cannot do. He tells his daughter:

When a man takes an oath, Meg, he's holding his own self in his own hands. Like water. (He cups his hands.) And if he opens his fingers, then he needn't hope to find himself again. Some men aren't capable of this, but I'd be loathe to think your father one of them.

This is a remarkable statement for several reasons. First of all, nothing is said about the consequences of perjury either in this world or in the world to come. It is probably anachronistic for Robert Bolt to attribute so secular a view of an oath to a man of More's time, but it suits admirably his literary purpose of presenting More as a man with that "adamantine sense of his own self." Secondly, More quite clearly states that some men are not capable of taking oaths so seriously. To say that some men are able to live at a higher level of morality than others is an affront to the egalitarian spirit of our age. And just what do we do with this affront? Dismiss it? Despise it? Or maybe—just maybe learn from it?

Jean-Paul Sartre's famous play Dirty Hands offers a fine variation on the existentialist theme of A Man for all Seasons. Instead of developing the notion of self, however, Sartre, a leading twentieth century existentialist, stresses authenticity. Literary critics suggest that Sartre, a fellow traveler of the French Communist Party during World War II, became disillusioned with Stalin's excesses in the immediate aftermath of the war and wrote the play to warn the French Left of the danger of following the line coming from Moscow. The crucial moment in the play comes when Hoederer, a Communist Party boss in a fictitious eastern European country called Illyria, asks Hugo, a young idealistic member of the party, if he thinks it is possible to govern innocently. Before Hugo has a chance to reply, Hoederer assures him that it is not possible. Hoederer knows Hugo admires him, but he wants to be sure he understands the true nature of politics—at least the politics of Eastern Europe during World War II. Hoederer tells him, "I have dirty hands. Right up to the elbows. I've plunged them in filth and blood" Hoederer is telling the truth. He is a ruthless party boss who has no qualms about lying to friend and foe alike both within and outside the Communist Party. His reference to filth and blood is no exaggeration. He has killed political opponents without remorse. In a word, he is a cruel, violent man driven by a single-minded dedication to his party.

And yet in his personal life, Hoederer is an extraordinarily good man. Sartre develops thematically a catalogue of Hoederer's virtues in his personal one-on-one relationships. He perceives the needs of others, defends them against their own weaknesses, takes enormous risks for their welfare and with his dying breath tries to spare his assassin. This last scene is so compelling that one cannot resist the interpretation that Sartre, though a man without religious beliefs, makes a Christ-figure of Hoederer, putting in the mouth of his hero words that recall Jesus' prayer on the cross—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

Sartre's point seems to be that even an extraordinarily virtuous man like Hoederer cannot maintain his innocence in politics and if circumstances require it he will destroy innocent people who get in his way. Thus Sartre's message to the idealistic members of the French Left is to answer the question "can you govern innocently?" with a resounding NO!

In describing Hoederer's many virtues, Sartre, unlike Robert Bolt, says little about the self but instead stresses Hoederer's authenticity. The adjective used most frequently to describe Hoederer is real—the English translation of the French vrai which usually means true. Hoederer is a man who is authentic, real and true to himself. In this he resembles Sir Thomas More even though on specific moral issues, a vast chasm separates the Christian saint from the Communist party boss. Hoederer's quality of being real is captured nicely by Hugo, the idealistic young Communist, who describes him to his wife as follows:

I don't know. This coffee pot seems real when he touches it. Everything he touches seems real. He pours the coffee in the cups. I drink. I watch him drinking and I feel that the taste of the coffee in his mouth is real. That it's the real flavor of coffee, real warmth, the real essence of coffee.

Hugo seems to be saying that Hoederer's person exudes authenticity—his being true to himself—that it spills over into everything he touches—even something as trivial as a cup of coffee. When Hugo is shocked to learn that Hoederer has lied to his comrades in the party, he complains, "But you seem so real, so solid. How can you stand it to lie to your comrades?"

Thomas More's morality is grounded in his profound sense of his own self and Hoederer's morality in his own authenticity. What they have in common is that they both look within themselves to determine right and wrong and not to external rules and principles. As the philosophers would say, they are autonomous rather than heteronomous. They are lawgivers unto themselves. As such, they are both very modern men and can help us understand the great moral debates of our times. The notion of one deriving one's moral sense of right and wrong from oneself is very appealing as long as we focus on a man like Thomas More. But what are we to say of Hoederer whose vices are as apparent as his virtues? If we derive moral principle from within ourselves, if there are no external objective moral rules out there, how can we distinguish his vices from his virtues? Isn't the distinction between vice and virtue swallowed up in the huge vortex of authenticity?

Those who find attractive a morality grounded in the authentic self will surely take comfort in Polonius' advice to his son, Laertes: "This above all. To thine own self be true and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." Those of a more traditional persuasion who still manage to see some remnants of the natural law in our chaotic moral universe will surely point out that Polonius is a shallow, silly, garrulous old fool whose pedestrian comments show him to be master of nothing but the obvious.

Thus far our discussion of A Man for All Seasons has focused almost exclusively on Sir Thomas. Several other characters are also worthy of mention in our quest for moral insight from literature. Consider Cardinal Wolsey, played so unforgettably by the indomitable Orson Welles in the film version of the play. A much older man than Sir Thomas, Cardinal Wolsey recognizes More's ability and tries to get him to support Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn. When More refuses, the Cardinal chides him:

Wolsey: You're a constant regret to me, Thomas. If only you could just see facts flat on, without that horrible moral squint; with just a little common sense, you could have been a statesman."

Unlike Sir Thomas, Wolsey really is a statesman and worries about England's future if Henry should die without a male heir to the throne. The country was but two generations removed from the horrible civil wars that pitted the house of York against the house of Lancaster. Wolsey reminds More that Catherine of Aragon, Henry's lawful wife, is "barren as a brick" and that reasons of state clearly required that the marriage be annulled at once so that Henry could marry Anne Boleyn. As a statesman, Wolsey made no apologies for his unvarnished utilitarianism, a theme we discover in many literary works dealing with politics.

If you have seen the fine Australian film, Breaker Morant, you'll recall the blatant utilitarianism behind General Kitchener's decision to deny a fair trial to three Australian soldiers fighting for the British Army during the Boer War. He used them as scapegoats to avoid a war with Germany over a German civilian who had been killed by British forces operating in South Africa. The play focuses on the moral outrage the viewer feels over the trashing of due process of law, during the corrupt trial of the soldiers. What the viewer is likely to forget is that the scheme worked. The Germans were satisfied when the Australians were executed and a bloody war was avoided, thereby saving thousands of lives.

So also in sixteenth century England, Henry got his divorce, and married Anne Boleyn who, although failing to give him the son he longed for, presented him with a daughter, Elizabeth, who went on to become one of England's greatest monarchs. The end may not justify the means, but persons serious about affairs of state dismiss the importance of wars avoided and monarchies stabilized only at their peril.

More's wife, Alice, is another fascinating character. She was illiterate in sharp contrast to her brilliant daughter, Meg. More's sophisticated plan of simply keeping silent on the marriage was beyond her, but she went right to the heart of the matter when she dismissed as nonsense More's naive belief that Henry would keep his end of the bargain. She calls him a "poor silly man" for thinking the king would respect More's silence and let him alone. Though no student of international affairs, Alice knew full well that her husband's renown throughout Christendom would make it impossible for Henry to abide Thomas' silence--regardless of what he had promised. More put his trust in the word of his king and the rule of law, but Alice knew better and, unfortunately, she was right.

Alice's shrewd common sense and hard-headed realism reminds us of Kathryn, the equally shrewd wife of Dr. Thomas Stockman in Ibsen's play, "An Enemy of the People." She warns her idealistic and naive husband to exercise far more caution in delivering bad news about his city's water supply to the mayor, even though the mayor was Dr. Stockman's own brother. Dr. Stockman ignored Kathryn's wise counsel and plunged headlong into a bitter confrontation armed only with the extremely risky belief that once the people know the truth, they will act in accordance with it.

I believe I am nearing the end of my allotted time, so let me conclude by saying that in touching upon jurisprudence, existentialism, situation ethics, utilitarianism, natural law, and so forth, we have rounded up the usual suspects in our professional interests. To those of you who already make use of literature in your work, I hope my remarks have reinforced this practice. To those who don't, I hope my remarks will encourage you to give it a try. To both groups and to one and all—I say thank you for your thoughtful attention.

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Good, Better, Best

Valerie L. Patterson

How good is your public good?

If you could, would you abandon it, in exchange for a provocative paradigm?

Have you restructured for your public good? Embarking on a scavenger hunt, in search of the “best and the brightest” – thinking you will find them in colleges of business, searching for the bottom line.

How good is your public good? Is your relationship fiduciary? Have you illuminated the dark recesses of the academy? Are your models a-theoretical, heretical, oblique, paradoxical, and/or objectionable?

Is your locomotive re-engineered? Dragging your caboose as it attempts to race toward efficiency, effectiveness, and rationality – as they compete and conflict in the public arena.

Is your performance review national?

Has your welfare been reformed, or is it born again?

How good is your public good? Would it satisfy public choice? Does it have an intellectual foundation? Is it gender specific or gender neutral?

Have you published a perspective on its goodness and mercy? Will it follow you for the rest of your life?

Dr. **Valerie Patterson** is Assistant Professor of Public Administration, Florida International University.

Visionary Voices: Women on Power

Conversations with shamans, activists, teachers, artists and healers

Interviews by Penny Rosenwasser. San Francisco, CA: Aunt Lute Books. 1992. 232 pp.

Reviewed by *Mary R. Hamilton*

Left to my own devices I would not have read this book. I would have caught a whiff of the New Ageist, politically correct, ultra-feminist, anti-war¹, green language and would have given it a pass. It's not that I disagree with the political and philosophical foundations of the beliefs and values underlying the language. It's because I have a low tolerance for clichés. In a world full of shorthand phrases and emotionally loaded words, I long for authentic voices that clarify rather than cloud discussion.

I found several authentic voices in this book. I found women with quiet, clear power, strong purpose and commitment, and optimism in the face of incredible obstacles. I was delighted and awed by most of these women. I wished the interviews had been videotaped. I would like to have seen their eyes, heard their voices as they responded to the questions.

Overview of the Book

Author **Penny Rosenwasser** interviewed 19 women for this book. As the subtitle indicates, these are women from a wide range of non-traditional situations, all activists committed to a significant cause in their communities or in the world. Rosenwasser asked each of them questions about their work, how they came to their work, how they learned to be effective, how they take care of themselves, what they have learned about women and power and how they learned it, and who their heroes/heroines are. The 19 chapters of the book are each devoted to an interview with a different woman.

At the time the book was written, Rosenwasser was² a producer and broadcaster at Pacifica radio station in Berkeley, California, as well as Special Events Coordinator for the Middle East Children's Alliance and a community activist. She is a native of Washington, DC and has organized around a wide range of issues over the years—women's and lesbian rights, international solidarity, peace and justice, labor struggles, antiracism, AIDS research and education, health care, prison reform, childcare reform, safe energy. She is also the author of the book **Voices From A 'Promised Land'**.

There are several major themes that run through most of the interviews, themes that help describe how these women found their own power and are using it to make the world better. There are themes of searching for oneself, dealing with fear, finding one's own work in the world. And there are strong themes of balance and integration.

Search for Self

All of the women interviewed described their struggles to find their own power.

Rachel Bagby, African-American performance artist, teacher, attorney, and activist, talked about how difficult it is in our society to find one's self: "Through school I heard, early on, 'To thine own self be true.' But what I was *fed*, was somebody *else's* self. It would have been more honest for them to say, 'You be true to *me*'" (p. 74).

Fran Peavey, a social activist in San Francisco and India, helping the homeless and cleaning up the Ganges has a similar comment: "... we cannot let the media tell us about ourselves. It's like letting a school teacher tell you you're stupid ..." (p. 189).

Vivienne Verdon-Roe, film producer, director, community and international activist made two helpful comments related to finding oneself: "I've learned that you teach what you need to learn yourself." (p. 137) "So many of us really have that very controlling edge, and it's so nice when you're able to let it go and allow things to manifest. So often things happen that you never dreamt of, and which turn out to be much more positive than the goal that you originally had in mind" (p. 142).

Hi-ah Park, a shaman and the first woman court musician and dancer in the Korean National Classical Music Institute in 1963, also speaks of learning: "When we learn something, we always think we're learning ... from outside. ... Transformation is not difficult because it's too far away; it's because it's so close" (p. 169).

Vicki Noble, a shaman and activist on women's issues, part of Berkeley's Mother Peace Institute, talks about the very positive affirmation of self that many women can assert when they find their power: "We begin to take what I think are political stands really, but it can be one woman in relation to her husband, or her father or her brother. And it's not adversarial—it's '*I am*'. It's really different from '*I am not*'. It's very creative, and so it's like fire. It's not like a fight, it's not war, it's not polarization. ... It's just '*I am*'—this is how it is. ... I don't need anyone's approval. '*I am*.' And that transmits authority, it carries weight" (pp. 50, 51).

Fear

Integrally involved with the search for one's own power is the theme of fear. I found the discussion of fear by four of the women to be very helpful, particularly their determination to embrace fear and not allow it to debilitate them.

Deena Metzger, a visionary, teacher, thinker, therapist, poet, in discussing her greatest challenge said: "To be available to bring the beauty through, or bring the awareness through. My own and then others. To open the eyes, to open the heart. To feel compassion on a regular basis. To strip myself down to wherever I have to go. To suffer what ever it is that I have to suffer, in order to know what I have to know. Not to be afraid of that, even though it hurts a lot. Or to be afraid and not let being afraid stop me. ... If you keep your eye on what you love it's like a mantra; if you keep your eye on what's precious, the fear goes away" (pp. 111, 112).

Hi-ah Park said that the cause of almost all problems is fear. "...the fear comes from the separation from the God in you. ... If you're not honest about fear, it becomes poison" (pp. 167, 168).

Lakota Harden, a Native American mother who conducts workshops on racism and works with battered women, sums up the discussion of fear with these remarks: “. . . the two powers here are love and fear. We’re either acting out of one or the other. . . . A lot of times I ask, ‘What am I afraid of right now? Or what do I passionately *want* right now?’” (p. 224).

My ‘Work’

I have a dear friend who is in the habit of asking people “What is your ‘work’?” And he means, not what is your present employment, or your profession, or your job, but what is it you are in this world to do. A most daunting question. I found a lot of discussion in these interviews about ‘my work’. Each of these women was driven by a strength of purpose and commitment that made words like ‘job’, ‘profession’, ‘career’, irrelevant.

Fran Peavey’s discussion of a concept she called ‘Strategic Questioning’ was the most compelling discussion in the book of finding ‘my work’. Rosenwasser quotes Peavey as saying “. . . at any particular point in life you choose what you think is the most important question for you to answer at that time—and then you find work which will help you address that question.” Peavey elaborates the notion of strategic questioning by saying “. . . we ask ourselves questions that bring forward the most powerful, the most substantive changes that we all long to make” (p. 176).

Balance

The theme of maintaining **balance** is consistent across the interviews. Interviewees talk about maintaining balance with the universe, with each other, within themselves.

Flor Fernandez, director of a transpersonal psychology program and a shaman and psychic healer who works with abused women and children is quoted as saying that her grandmother taught her “. . . we are all in this world to learn from each other . . . that anytime we step outside that concept and become inflated, feeling we are better or more powerful than others, we break that balance and cause ourselves . . . and other people pain” (p. 134).

Winona LaDuke, a Native American who was president of the Indigenous Women’s Network, said about balance, “I think that industrial society is out of order, and that is the essence of the problem. Because the basic value in capitalism . . . is that you take labor and capital and resources and you put them together for the purpose of accumulation. But the essence of accumulation is that you take more than you need—so you cannot have a good relationship with the land because you are, by the construct, being greedy. . . . In an earth-centered era, we have to rearrange the values of the society so that when we take something, we give something back . . . I saw some graffiti during the Persian Gulf war, which said, ‘How did our oil get under their soil?’” (pp. 62, 66).

Commenting on balance, **Ying Lee-Kelley**, a mediator, co-chair of the Oakland-Berkeley Rainbow Coalition and member of the Berkeley City Council, said, “What is *wrong* with so much of what we try to do is that we try to dominate and we try to crush. *Power*” (p. 119).

Integration

Closely related to balance is the dominant theme of integration and wholeness. Different interviewees described it as integration within ourselves, with our ecosystem, with each other. It was also described as a quiet, centeredness, getting in touch with our deepest, clearest selves.

Vicki Noble talked of integration in this way: "It's almost as if there aren't any personal problems anymore. There aren't any personal issues. It's all global. We really are cells in the larger body, and the larger body really is ill. There's a healing crisis happening, and we're just part of it; it's not personal" (p. 48).

Deena Metzger talks of activism in the face of integration, and advocates a change in motivation: "When we talk about being activists . . . we're so often motivated out of terrible concern for what's going on and pain at what's existing in the world. And anger. And hate. And that is no longer motivation that serves us. . . . So the question is, *what would we do if we allowed ourselves to feel enormous, unbearable love for the planet?*" [Italics are mine] (p. 107).

Conclusion

Overall, I found many words of wisdom to live by, several authentic, powerful female voices, and much inspiration in this book. However, I also found a lot of 'victim' language that, as a person who believes I make my own luck and am responsible for how I respond to the world, was disappointing. For example:

- From **Winona LaDuke**, who starts the quote with sentiments about integration that I applaud but ends with what I consider a 'victim' statement: "But from what I can figure out, how one feels good about oneself is about your relationship to the earth, your relationship to other people, and being able to have integrity—which I think one is stripped of in this society" (p. 63).
- **Vicki Noble**: ". . . women's intuition actually hasn't been killed by patriarchal culture. We *know* things, but we're not allowed to *live* from what we know . . ." (p. 46). "After twenty years of active feminism, many women have almost no idea how to actually take back the authority that has been systematically stolen from us and projected onto men, who in every situation are assumed to be experts" (p. 49).

I much prefer **Flor Fernandez'** approach: "The Feminine way is allowing things to happen, with the right time, with the flow of the energies. I believe that she should take responsibility for not becoming the victim. We need to move from a place of passivity—which is different than receptivity—to making our own choices about what we want to be" (p. 132).

Most of the women in this book seem to have embraced the need for balance and integration in the world, found 'their work' after struggling to find themselves, and after coming to terms with their fears. I wish the same for all of us—women and men alike.

Endnotes

¹ This book was published in 1992, shortly after the Gulf War. The author and many of the women interviewed refer to that war and their anger and grief about its occurrence.

² Because this book was published almost 10 years ago, I use the past tense to describe the author and the women interviewed, since I don't have information on what the women are doing now.

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Half Moon Street & Bedford Square

by Anne Perry. New York: Ballantine. 2000 & 1999.

Reviewed by *Dorothy Olshfski*

It is the extraordinary manager who can understand her subordinates and bosses because she can get into their heads. Understanding where the other person is coming from gives the manager a decided advantage when it comes to avoiding conflict, animosity and disagreements, and it makes motivating and rewarding the person so much easier. So how can one nurture this skill? How is it that some people can do it and others cannot?

Practice at incorporating the insights that are gained through experience, both real and vicarious, into the situational analysis helps. Experience really is one great teacher. Vicarious experience comes from thoughtful watching, reading and listening. Novels can provide vicarious experience by taking the reader somewhere else and allowing the reader to experience the situations portrayed in the novel. Once inside the situation, the reader can begin to decipher the environment and the characters' responses to the environment. The experience of seeing through another's eyes leads to an understanding that is more intimate than reason because emotional considerations are included. The thoughtful analysis of vicarious experience provides keen insight into how different elements in a situation influence outcomes, but more than that, it can lead to empathy. And empathy leads to wisdom.

The question of cultural influence on administration is important in an era of globalization. How does culture shape the way we conduct the public's business. If we can immerse ourselves in another culture can we then predict how the public's business will be conducted? The Anne Perry books provide a glimpse of how Victorian culture produced a society that is both very similar and very different from our own. Can immersing oneself in the Victorian era in London help explain their conduct? And if you can understand that culture, will you increase your skills at cultural assessment? Will you be a better global manager?

Before I try to answer I must admit first, before going any further with this review, that Victorian England is an historical time period that I find very hard to comprehend. What is it with those clothes, those complicated rules of behavior, those strange male-female rituals. Did they really think that they could read feelings by noting the person's expression? Could any population be that sensitive to subtle cues? What were they thinking? Well, that was my mission on reading the Perry novels – what were they thinking.

Victorian England illustrates the strong connection between culture and morality. The culture stood as guard, judge, and protector of virtue. Virtue then determined what was valued by society: reputation,

social standing, manners and civility. Perry's characters' actions were constrained by their environment and to make any sense of the story the readers needs to understand what mattered in that environment. And, Perry's description of London under Victoria is palpable, so the actions of the characters are understandable.

Corruption was a high crime, because it meant that society's watchdog had failed. Disgrace resulting from being judged (wrongly or rightly) as violating the norms of the society would mean ostracism for the person and his family. Honor was critically important, and a person's word had real currency. It was both a comforting society because the values and norms were explicit, and a stifling environment because even minor deviations were unacceptable.

So then, what can a public administration student take from reading Perry's novels.

- an organizational culture that is explicit about the values that it espouses is a potent regulator of behavior,
- lines separating groups in society by dress, accent or geographic region will limit communication and cooperation,
- sexism, ageism, and racism are old news, but in earlier times it was even worse because discussions about it were discouraged, and
- afternoon tea is a wonderful ritual.

These are not revolutionary ideas, nor are they novel ideas. But it reinforces the notion that culture plays a significant role in encouraging some behaviors and limiting others. Organizational culture is a source of reliability; behaviors conform to cultural expectations. And in the case of Perry's Victorian England, the culture was so strong and clearly articulated, that it is almost impossible to miss the linkages. Her description of life at that time in history provides the readers with an understanding of what it was like to live then and that the ability to reach that understanding is the important skill.

The performance of governments in a global economy depends on their executives' ability to cope with different cultures, customs, institutions and values. This complex environment demands that the empathetic manager be sensitive to the constraints imposed by culture. Karl Weick (1995) argues that it takes a complex person to deal with complex problems and situations. Complexity comes from gathering wide-ranging experience, but experience can be both real and vicarious. Novels can help nurture complexity by providing the reader with experiences that increase his or her understanding of how the world works.

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