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Is there any «industrial democracy» within the workplace and under the US management conception ?

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Abstract

The author reviews the basic (implicit or explicit) tenets of the so-called management of excellence (which is derived from Peter's and Waterman's now famous In Search of Excellence) in order to demonstrate that the growing cult of the leader and manager is accompanied by a corresponding depersonalization of the employee in current management practices and in the literature.

The author draws on the results of his own empirical research as well as on the works of a number of theoretical researchers in the area of power and leadership to illustrate how the power of the corporate leader is at times comparable to the absolute power of the monarch. Specifically, the author submits that the dilemmas of the Kings in the Shakespearian tragedies allow us to understand how organizations are managed on the basis of often destructive omnipotence phantasies.

You delight in laying down laws,
Yet you delight more in breaking them.

They see only their shadows, and their shadows are their laws.
And what is to acknowledge the laws but to stoop down and trace their shadows upon the earth?

Only then shall you know that the erect and the fallen are but one man standing in twilight between the night of his pigmy-self and the day of his god-self...

Khalil Gibran, *Le Prophète*

My attention was first drawn to the links between the power position of the manager, his self-deification, his phantasies of omnipotence and his illusions of immortality by the very strong language used by numerous employees of the organizations in which I carried out my research during the 1980's (Aktouf, 1985, 1989, 1990). In reference to their bosses, they used derisive words such as "pharaohs", "god on earth" and people who "think they are descended from extra-terrestrials"... Several years later, the works of authors such as Becker (1973), Berle (1957), Sievers (1986), Ketz de Vries and Miller (1985), and Enriquez (1983, 1989, 1990) have led me to a more systematic theoretical investigation of this phenomenon.

Over and above the numerous references to Greek mythology, to philosophy, (ontology), metaphysics, and, particularly, psychoanalysis and existentialism, which are inevitably derived from these studies, I would like to explore a particular form of so-called archetypical power: that of being king (Berle, 1957). From the absolute power of the tyrant to constitutional monarchy to the republican form of government, the status of king has been the epitome of human greatness and misery throughout history. In addition this "archetypical power" has had a marked influence on another form of power which is on the way to becoming archetypical nowadays: that of the manager, of the corporate leader in a world increasingly dominated by organizations (Perrow, 1970). Perhaps unconsciously, our business leaders at times tend to behave as organizational "monarchs." All forms of power lead to the temptation of absolute power, as is abundantly clear in the organizational world. Howard Hughes, Harold Geneen, Alfred Krupp and Henry Ford I are all patent cases of this monstrous and compulsive quest for omnipotence in which the organization is primarily used to "support phantasies" rather than as a "production tool" (Ketz de Vries and Miller, 1985; Enriquez, 1983; Pagès, 1979; Miller, 1992). Moreover, the management literature is replete with examples of the total and rapid bankruptcy of small organizations which were not able to survive their owner's obsessive need for power and control beyond the now famous three-to-five year horizon (although these bankruptcies could obviously be attributed to a large number of other factors in addition to the behavior of their managers.)

How can power lead to such suicidal acts, to ignoring such obvious and deadly perils? This type of behavior, best exemplified by Louis XVI of France, can be found in all of the dynasties of human history. Could this behavior be akin to the blindness of so many managers of huge Western organizations (such as those in the automotive or electronic industries...) facing the deadly threat posed by Asian competitors (Morgan, 1986)? On a more modest scale, could it also be akin to the apparently irresistible drive towards "organizational republicanism" in which the corporation tries to bridge the gap between the "king" and his "subjects" through "participatory management," "semi-autonomous work groups" and "total quality"; and in which the "human capital" willingly contributes its intelligence to increase productivity? Why, then, are there so many failures, so much ill will and so much resistance to change? Why are there so many delays and so many problems in the attempt to make the manager and the employee act as partners in what is increasingly called a common endeavor? In this paper, I intend to explore the paradoxes, perils and dilemmas of the archetypical absolute power of king in order to reach a better understanding of the underlying reasons for the prevailing situation in the vast majority of modern Western organizations. I shall draw upon the works of one of the timeless masters of the human condition, William Shakespeare (although the Bard himself would presumably be somewhat surprised), in order to better understand the hidden aspects of modern organizational power through his meticulous and masterly dissection of royal power in several of the historical plays. I shall begin by analyzing the bases and dilemmas of the archetypical existential condition of royal power in reference to some of Shakespeare's most famous plays. In the second stage, I will attempt to highlight the hazards and the major issues associated with all power positions (and particularly that of the corporate manager) in which absolutism is a risk: deification, omnipotence, illusions of immortality... etc. Finally, in the third section, I shall attempt to

advance solutions to the apparent impasse of the current management of excellence (Pagès, 1970; Aubert and de Gaulejac, 1991), based on the examination of a number of different systems of actual "republican management" (which draw on the "human capital" through effective partnerships that go beyond the jargon of excellence of the past decade.)

Royal Divinity and the Corporate Manager

Throughout the last decade, in theory as well as in practice, the "management of excellence" has, perhaps unintentionally, led to a new form of deification and "heroization" of the manager (for instance see Autrement "Otherwise", 1988) and to a commensurate depersonalization of the employee (Aubert and de Gaulejac, 1991; Linhart, 1991). This in turn raises the basic question of the relation of the "Being" of man to this deification phenomenon and to its concomitant alienation of the employee (Pagès et al, 1979). I am obviously not attempting to open up anything which might remotely resemble the timeless philosophical or metaphysical debate on the eternal question of "Being" and of existence per se. I will, however, have to make a few quick, abstract and speculative references to existential questions in order to better define the existential paradox of man, before discussing one of its historically favored means of escape: power, its exercise, and its phantasies.

This paradox is rooted in the fact that man is a peculiar creature, condemned to live with the permanent and inescapable knowledge of His own mortality. I will first quote a few historically famous formulas to illustrate this permanent dilemma: "man is a God with an anus" (Becker, 1973); "the future is the make up of life as the vacuum is the make-up of matter" (Sartre,1945); "Man doesn't have an essence, his essence is his action" (Hegel, 1966)... Ancient philosophers, (not to mention theologians, and philosopher-theologians) have repeatedly insisted on the fact that man would be nothing but a "fallen God" banned "in time" to better underscore his expulsion from eternity, or from deity and immortality. This summarizes the whole question of "contingency" and of the non-necessity of the Being of man in front of the Absolute Being which man cannot really apprehend; or of the notion that - by accepting his own negation as a Being, the non-being of man would support the idea of an Absolute Being which transcends time and individuals (be it only by "contrast" or by reference).

One of Hegel's (1966) major concerns was that of alienation which he expressed as, "the loss of man in the world of objects." This reification is obviously the ultimate downfall since the last attribute of the last trace of transcendence in man is his "free will" as a "subject" which is then destroyed in a process of "self-estrangement". His own degradation then relegates man to the status of a "quasi-object" or to that of an object bound by external determinism, and subject to the laws of objects. Without going into tedious details, we could refer to the famous parable of the master and the slave in which alienation and "the loss of man" set in unless the slave achieves the "negation of the negation" of his generic being (this "negation" is temporarily imposed by the necessity of submitting to the order of objects) through the "self-creative" act of work which allows him to "contemplate" the reflection of his "own rationality" in the work which he has "created". This, in (the obviously simplified) Hegelian philosophy, is in a sense the very heart of existential anxiety which man has always tried to alleviate in a manner appropriate to his nature as a thinking being: magical, mythical, metaphysical or phantasmal.

Until the triumph of the scientific rationalism and positivistic materialism of the 19th century, the preferred manner of dealing with this anxiety was essentially religious in nature, at least in the Western world. Man set out to accomplish rites and rituals (concrete acts) in appropriate places and at appropriate (and equally concrete) times which allowed him to participate in the life of the founding myth (in reference to the Absolute Being); this granted him access to part of his own "sacredness," and hence, on a symbolic level, to his own timeless and transcendent dimension. This was the price to be paid for the illusion of participating in eternity: man devoted a great deal of his life to "learning to die." In the case of kings, however, the claim to the throne can rightfully only be based on the claim of being above the common human condition, which makes it difficult to reconcile the king's "humanness" with the necessary transcendence of the common condition. This supra-humanity is difficult to live with as a human being. The perennality of the royal person, and hence of its participation in the Absolute Being, can only be justified by the timeless permanence of the royal institution regardless of the individuals involved. The Chinese dynasties claimed to have a mandate from "heaven"; the Egyptian pharaohs were human gods; the kings of France ruled by "divine rights"... However the gold medal of this legal-metaphysical game probably goes to the legal scholars of the British monarchy under the Tudors who, from the 15th century onwards, developed what came to be known as "the fiction of the two bodies of the king." (Kantorowicz, 1989)

This example is unique in the history of Western monarchies; this "fiction" conferred upon the British monarch the exceptional quality of having two bodies: that of the royal political monarchy, which transcended the physical person of the king, and that of the "natural" individual who lived and died as a man although he had been king. This "celestial-immortal" body had the property of being "transmitted" to another physical individual (the successor) when the king's human earthly incarnation died. In fact, scholars talked of "dismissal" rather than "death": the fallible body (which was subject to the flaws, suffering and death of mere mortals) was "dismissed" from his infallible, eternal royal and divine body. As long as the king lived, these two bodies were "merged" and united in his person; depending upon the circumstances, his behavior would alternatively emanate from his earthly body or from his "political-celestial" one (which, as we have seen, never "died" since it was transmitted after its "dismissal" to another body). Hence, the monarchy accomplished and legitimized the super-humanity of the royal institution through its "political angelic body" whose "members" were "subjects" of the realm... As a king, the individual thus acquired "royal immortality."

The main interest of these notions is of course the narrow and inescapable link which they created with power, its nature, its legitimacy, its practice and its consequences. In this respect, Shakespeare's meticulous autopsy of a number of royal tragedies offers particularly rich and accurate insights into the rending, intolerable existential ubiquity of kings who are forever torn between their "human ego" and their "divine ego." The pathetic destiny of King Lear or Richard II offers a wrenching testimony of the unavoidable and painful interdependence between power, and phantasies of omnipotent deification on the one side, as well as mortality and earthly relations with one's self and with one's fellow men on the other. King Richard II, who suffered defeat at the hands of the nephew whom he had unjustly despoiled and banished, had to his own despair realized the extreme vanity of the "royal name and body" as he had to personally shed the "trappings" (the crown, the scepter...) of his apparent immortal royal condition. As he remembered the tragic fate of his ancestors, King Henry V lamented the fact that the king was deprived of the makings of the simple and happy life of his humblest subject: the clear and peaceful knowledge of being only a "natural body," sheltered from the illusions of remoteness of a "divine body" which is in fact vulnerable to the "breath of every fool." For his part, King Lear naively believed that he would be able to live the life of a "simple" father under the benevolent hospitality of all of his children after he had given them the wealth and the material means of the royal condition; but Lear also intended to retain the signs and the trappings of his "royal body": he believed he would still be treated as a king with his court and courtiers! After he had been rejected and abandoned to the fury of a devastating storm, he realized that his royal-celestial body would have been much better treated if he had retained the material instruments and the power that would have allowed him to redress the wrongs which his ungrateful daughters had inflicted upon him; this would have allowed him to render "justice" and to deserve the love and the respect he would have "earned" through the accomplishment of his royal duties.

Berle (1957) proposes an interesting parallel between the absolute power of the Norman and British kings, and that of the leaders of modern corporations (owners and managers alike) who, as sovereign lords and masters, are free to make whatever decision it "pleases" them to make (particularly so in the current context of neo-liberalism and government non-interference). This new absolute power linked to the right of ownership is used in ways which are very close to its archetypical model; it is then subject to conditions, uncertainties, and risks which are very similar if not identical to that of the original model. Briefly, Berle's hypothesis, which I also support, is that all forms of absolute power be they royal or corporate, are threatened with self-destruction if they are not protected by a system of "checks and balances" to counteract their absolutism, impose a degree of moderation, and make them more humane. Absolute power must therefore be tempered by a system of accountability, such as the obligation to deliver justice or to account for one's stewardship which forces the individual to behave according to a certain notion of common good and to redress injuries (caused by the king himself or some other powerful person). Justice then goes hand in hand with power. Otherwise, totalitarianism sets in and paves the way for conspiracy, rebellions, riots and ultimately, chaos. In fact this had already been noted by the great and largely unknown 14th century North-African historian and sociologist Ibn Khaldoun (1978) who noted a three-generation "cycle" which inevitably led to the downfall of the Arabo-Bedouin dynasty: after the first generation had conquered and consolidated its power, the second and the third generations set out to live in the lap of luxury, thus dilapidating the wealth of the realm before robbing their own subjects... This initiated a process of rebellion and destruction which in turn led to the arrival of a new dynasty.

The way to salvation, according to Ibn Khaldoun, is strikingly close to what emerges from Shakespearean plays and from Berle's analysis: the king must take care of using power along with the material means at his disposal to provide for a minimum of justice and equity, for the redistribution of wealth and for the security of his subjects... This, in turn, implies a modicum of ethical behavior and concern on the part of the king who must look after the welfare of his weakest and humblest subjects. Long before Jean Rostand, Ibn Khaldoun understood and advocated the claim that the degree of advancement and stability of a civilization is, "a

function of the way in which it treats its weakest elements." For the sovereign (or the holder of power) to truly accomplish his duties in the area of justice and equity, he must make himself available, and he must implement a system which will enable him to hear the unbiased requests, criticisms and complaints of his humblest "charges". In this respect, Chinese emperors were "watched over" by a group of "censors" who were responsible for the just interpretation and implementation of their "heavenly mandate"... In our own medieval history, Berle demonstrated how the Norman and English kings provided a form of direct justice in which every subject could petition the king through the expression "Haro!" (which is derived from "Ah! Rollo!", in reference to the name of the Norman duke and then king Rollo, the predecessor of William the Conqueror). Berle traces the origin of English Common Law to this custom, which he also believes to be at the origin of the Curia Regis (king's court). The possibility of petitioning the king is probably one of the indirect explanations for the famous fiction of the "two bodies." At the beginning of the 13th century, it became necessary to establish a specific location in which the subjects could appeal to the "king's conscience"; until then, it followed the Curia Regis as it travelled along with the king. The first English courts were established at Westminster in order to provide the material means of appealing to the king's conscience. Through their continued presence at Westminster, the King's Court and the Lord Chancellor (who was the bearer and the repository of the king's "conscience") are probably at the origins of the permanence and transcendence of the institution of royal justice which could function without the physical presence of the King because it represented what was to become its political and celestial body.

The tragedy of Shakespearian kings, however, illustrates the painful renunciation which goes along the possession of this celestial body: kings are banned from the simplicity of the human condition expressed in reciprocal relationships with one's fellow men; they therefore lose the essential "mirrors" of their human condition. This is what troubled Henry V as he cried:

O hard condition, twin-born with greatness!
Subject to the breath of every fool (...)
What infinite heart's-ease must kings neglect
That private men enjoy! (...)
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more
of mortal griefs than do thy worshippers?
(Henry V, act IV, sc. I)

This, according to Kantorowicz (1989, p.35), "constitutes the human tragedy of the twin condition of the monarchy which Shakespeare highlighted," in the sorrow of Henry V as he brooded over the destiny of Richard II, or in Richard's despair in front of his own treacherousness as a natural body toward the political body of the king:

Mine eyes are full of tears, I cannot see; (...)
But they can see a sort of traitors here,
I find myself a traitor with the rest;
For I have given here my soul's consent
To undeck the pompous body of a king
(Richard II, act IV, sc. I)

In an earlier passage, Richard evokes the long tragedy of kings who are tormented by their own destiny:

For God's sake, let us sit upon the ground,
And tell the sad story of the death of kings
(...) for within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court (...)
Infusing him with self and vain conceit, -
As if this flesh which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable...
(Richard II. act III, sc. II)

As Kantorowicz explains, this passage clearly illustrates the fact that Richard II has come to the painful realization that:

"It is not only that the king's human nature triumphs over the divine nature of his crown and that mortality succeeds over immortality, but even worse (... the king suffers an even more cruel death than do other mortals."
(Kantorowicz, p.39-40)

This brings us back to the anxiety of being versus non-being which is, of necessity, part of our existence mode as human beings. However, it also highlights the tragedy of the dual condition of kings: the blatant illusion of their immortal, sacred body, and the immense downfall which accompanies the realization of this illusion cause kings to suffer "a more cruel death than do other mortals". This is all the more tragic for King Lear who deliberately unleashed the forces now harnessed against him. The power instruments of his political body had been entrusted into hands that are now using them to kill this same political body. In addition, he also had the illusion of retaining the symbols, trappings and privileges of this political body in a sense in abstracto.

In his detailed analysis of Hamlet and King Lear, Bonnefoy (1978) rightly draws our attention to two words which Shakespeare uses in the most intense moment of these plays: readiness and ripeness. For instance, as Hamlet is preparing to fight Laertes, he declares: "readiness is all"; or Edgar, the son of the duke of Gloucester, who declares toward the end of the King Lear tragedy: "ripeness is all." Bonnefoy argues (p.20) that readiness and ripeness are unequivocal references to the idea of preparing and or of ripening for the acceptance of death. This is the fate of mankind which man in his wisdom must accept. However, the process of gradually achieving readiness and ripeness is inordinately wrenching and painful for the king as an archetype of the human god. Moreover, there are also other conditions which man must accept in order to achieve this lucidity and wisdom. Basically, these could be described as the need to accept a modicum of obligation toward one's fellow men who then become the preferred method of confirming one's existence and identity. For kings as well as for those who hold absolute or near absolute power, this condition is expressed as the obligation of using power for noble purposes and of being accountable for their power by providing for justice and fairness. Omnipotence and absolute power are only viable when they are applied for humanistic purposes, or when those who hold such power are closely attuned to the voice of their conscience, when they are aware of the concerns of their lowly fellow men, and when they are devoted to making life under their stewardship fair and equitable. We shall return to these notions, but the point to be made here is that these checks and balances or this counterpower, this constant questioning of established authority is the first condition of its capacity to endure as well as the best guarantee of the humanness, wisdom and disalienation of its holders. As we shall see later on, it is also at the basis of the recovered productivity of contemporary organizations. Indeed, the relationship between the dual condition of kings and their two bodies with the current situation of corporate leaders and managers is far from evident, but, as Berle rightly submits: "From the Norman dukes and kings to the managers of modern corporations... [there is] a form of power [which] is a permanent phenomenon [and which], in spite of its limitations, is essentially absolute." This proposal is hard to dispute in the face of the boundless power of the leaders of some of our enormous corporations and institutions, not to mention the "owner-manager" who enjoys the "inalienable right" to manage "his property" as he sees fit, regardless of its size. Indeed, the Geneens, Fords, Morgans, Hughes, Hoovers, and Krupps are not the only examples of boundless power, of the illusion of

immortal omnipotence, and of the archetypal dilemma of kings (Ketz de Vries and Miller, 1985; Morgan, 1989; Miller, 1992). This is precisely what I intend to cover in the second part of this paper: how do CEO's and managers in general live with the explosive mix of the existential anxiety common to all men and their absolute or near absolute power, and what are the consequences of this process?

The Phantasies of Omnipotence and The Fundamental Myth of the Manager: The Structural Obstacles to the Personification of the Employee and to the Establishment of Partnerships

I use the word "structural" in reference to the concepts discussed in this section because I believe (as in the economic sense of the word) that these phenomena are inherent to the diachrony and the fundamental relationships between the actors involved in the intra as well as the inter-organizational relations. In addition, the choice of this word deliberately refers to the notion that these phenomena are deeply rooted in the mentalities and in the "structures" of the organization (physical premises, social systems, and interpersonal relations within the organization). They are also durable phenomena so that they cannot be adequately understood or even discussed within a framework which would be limited to the apparent *modus operandi* or to the existing situation at any one point in time: we are discussing basic principles and fundamental concepts. I will try to illustrate how (obviously, on a phantasmal rather than on a political and legal level) corporate managers are trapped in the same deeply-rooted illusion of omnipotence, immortality and corporal duality as the English kings of old. We must first consider the historical and diachronic reasons whose consequences are still felt in the sociocultural foundations of our management systems. We should bear in mind that the largely dominant (not to say monopolistic) "Anglo-Saxon" management model during the first seven decades of the 20th century was materially born in Great Britain, and that it prospered theoretically and doctrinally in the United States. Its founding principles are central to our discussion: the modern manager and the current theories of management are heir to the principles which drove and justified the Anglo-American "industrial barons" of the 18th and 19th centuries. In a nutshell, let us say that it is a very smart and very appropriate mix of various elements of Calvinist Puritanism, Adam Smith's "invisible hand," Darwinism and Spencerism. The adoption of The Prayer Book, the dogmatic foundation of the Anglican Church, became the Calvinistic nest of the future "Protestant ethic" which Weber (1964) later described. It represents a very convenient amalgamation of the concepts of calling, predestination, and individual achievement in which the individual receives concrete signs of his predestination and election through the success of his "earthly vocation"... (Braudel, 1980, 1985; Weber, 1964). This current effectively legitimizes individualism as a "value," whereas it had been regarded as a sin until then! (It is still seen as a sin, or a near sin in Confucianism as well as in Lutheranism and Catholicism, although less clearly so.) From then on, nascent individualism was no longer regarded as a flaw or sin, but was about to be justified, reinforced, and even glorified through the successive ideological sedimentation which derived from specific elements of the works of Calvin, Smith, Darwin and Spencer. Calvin advanced the notion that material success and wealth were signs of divine election; Adam Smith, through his concept of the "invisible hand" provided the near divine absolution for all injustices inequities, inequalities and human miseries; Darwin's works were used to advance the very appealing notion that "natural selection" would complement "divine election"; finally, Spencer postulated that personal election-cum-selection contributed to the advancement of the most evolved societies.

This, in itself, would be quite sufficient to kindle the megalomaniac inflation of many egos and to generate countless hagiographic and glorifying theories of "leadership" and "entrepreneurship"... A substantial part, if not all of the traditional managerial literature is nothing but the cult of the "exceptional individual," of the "hero" (etymologically, the demi-god!) the "creator," and the "builder" of organizations of all ilks (who have now become media stars after they were business school stars). This literature also offers abundant examples of the deeply-rooted notion that mankind is blessed with a few exceptional individuals who are (virtually innately) the incarnation of "entrepreneurial" phenomenon. They are presented as privileged beings who embody the entire organization, along with its attributes and modes of operation. These attributes are then actualized and materialized through the "creation" followed by the "launching" and the "management" of organizations. This is the "fundamental managerial myth" (Sievers, 1986) which presents the manager as a kind of god-like creator-organizer (a god) who alone knows how to "manage"... This "hero worship" of the manager is far from a mere figure of style and even less an exaggeration. One only needs to look at the expression "self-made man" which is so dear to the entrepreneurial mind. What could be more deifying than this "self-creation" followed by the "creation" of an organization, of jobs and wealth? What follows is almost too good to be true. I would refer the reader to an article published in The Wall Street Journal (March 22, 1993) in which the following comparisons were made: Henry V would come back as Lee Iacocca at the head of Chrysler Corporation; Agamemnon as James Duth at Beatrice Foods; Karl Von Clausewitz as Michael Quinlan at the head of McDonald's; Cordelia, the heroic daughter of King Lear, as Christie Heftner at the head of Playboy Enterprises; and, finally, Ulysses as Kenneth Olsen at the head of Digital Equipment Corporation! These somewhat incongruous but highly

revealing parallels were developed at Hartwick College. They were then presented as case studies (complete with guest speakers and professional moderators) in universities and businesses throughout the United States! The article also indicates that institutions such as Harvard or Stanford business schools are also considering "the introduction of classics in management courses." (Although I would enthusiastically support the teaching of "classics" in business schools, I sincerely hope that it will not be done according to the Hartwick model...). Nevertheless, the reader will agree, this provides an extremely eloquent illustration of our main argument: the deep and durable "hero worship" of managers, particularly in the place where modern management was born and bred: the United States. As we have seen, the primeval "stew" is made up of the amalgamation of Calvin, Spencer, Smith and Darwin. This deification also rests on other foundations which I will list very succinctly here, be it at the risk of theoretical simplification or of an unwarranted epistemological jump. In any event, I will take the plunge!

First of all, I would submit that there is indeed a parallel to be drawn between the immortal political body of the English King and the identification-incarnation of the manager (particularly of the owner) within "his" organization which becomes immortally immanent by transcending its members. (In fact, all management textbooks draw profusely on Fayol's famous analogy in which the manager is the "brain" of the "social body" of the organization, while employees are its "limbs" and "organs"...). Thus, according to Sievers (1986) managers endow themselves with this transcendence and immortality through their identification with the organization, and particularly with the actors who have the power and the knowledge to manage it, because the "organization" and its "omnipotent management actors" both transcend the humble condition of the mortal human being who "is managed." This phantasmal construction of omnipotence and immortality is to be found in the immortal and demiurgic character of the inseparable duo of "organization-management." As we all know, however, there is no identification without projection; the leader can therefore only "be the organization" and the "hands-on manager" if there are others who from the start cannot be the organization and cannot manage themselves. This, of course, refers to "subordinates" particularly the employees, who are there to be organized and managed, as passive, obedient, and interchangeable objects. Ultimately, they come to be seen as mobile cultural vacuums, devoid of (the correct) values and beliefs, since the management of excellence repeats ad nauseam that, over and above managing and organizing, one of the main tasks of the "manager-leader" is to build, change, remodel, and transmit the symbols, beliefs, values and culture of the organization (Deal and Kennedy, 1982; Peters and Waterman, 1983; Schein, 1985...).

It seems as though the omnipotence-immortality of the leader (and his phantasmal participation in the Absolute Being) must be matched by the necessary reification, by the existential vacuum, and the "non-being/non-person" of the employee. The employee surrenders his time and his own control over time (hence, all of his significant "capacity of being" in reference to the organization) to the leader who will organize and manage him. In so doing, he gives up his freedom, his free will as a subject, and, by extension, his own faith in the generic mode of being of mankind: work as the ultimate creative and self-creative act which shapes both the environment and the self. In addition, the self-deifying demiurgic phantasy of omnipotence of the manager will also be magnified because he has now been invested (through Calvin's, Smith's, and Darwin's heritage) by the management of excellence with an even more grandiose role, that of the creator of all which is "sacred" in the organization: myths, symbols, beliefs, values, cultures, credos...etc.

As we delve more deeply into this process, we must come to the conclusion that for the manager, the identification with the organization will necessarily take place in a mode in which the "object," of the organization will be phantasmized as a "good object," or, as much as possible, as a systematically gratifying object (I would add, without any mandatory reference to any particular "school," or to any particular psychoanalytic dispute...) otherwise, what good is it to be the leader? Self-gratification through the organization generates and maintains the whole array of concrete facts, gestures and signs which allow for the reification and the "actualization" of the phantasy of omnipotence and immortality, all of which concretely casts the leader as the one who "plans, organizes, decides and controls." From the leader's point of view, the organization cannot be seen as a frustrating or disappointing object (even if it is only a subdivision of the whole organization such as a subsidiary, a department, or a unit). The dangers and the dysfunctions of this type of process immediately come to mind: collusion, cleavage, reactionary formation, transformation of reality, censorship and self censorship, the systematic search for scapegoats... etc. The "boss" will be less and less tolerant as his phantasies take root, as "his" organization fails to behave according to his "visions" and desires; he will then seek to eliminate all that he sees as opposition to or disappointment with his leadership, and even all which does not glorify his leadership. The process is well known: the megalomania of the leader is reinforced until it degenerates into collective delirium, madness and meticulous self-destruction. There is no shortage of examples, from Napoleon and Hitler, to Hoover, Geneen, Henry Ford I and Howard Hughes... (Ketz de Vries and Miller, 1985; Miller, 1992; Mitroff and Pauchant, 1990). Along these lines, Morgan (1989) proposed that the deep-rooted reasons for the

longstanding blindness of American automakers vis à vis the Japanese threat: their "organizations" could not stop being gratifying by providing them with concrete evidence that the cars which they produced were increasingly outdated and shunned by consumers. If we add into the picture the unquestionable "anality" of organizational life and of most of its leaders, we come across another worrisome (and hidden) aspect of the work of most managers-organizers: they tend to actualize in their daily lives a form of relationship to others based almost exclusively on the notion of give-and-take, accounting, controlling, classifying, supervising, ordering, dominating, standardizing, filing, and keeping... (as we look at the symptoms of the anal-obsessive characters described by Abraham (1970) we cannot fail to be impressed by the similarity - if not the total concordance - of these symptoms with what many management textbooks describe as the ideal personality traits of a leader!) The list is virtually complete, including self-sufficiency, obsession with time and order, numbers, control, written communications, predictability, dominance, authoritarianism, and compulsive possessiveness! This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that one of the founding fathers of modern management, Frederick W. Taylor, was a particularly striking case of obsessive anal-neurosis (Kakar, 1970). This would ultimately be amusing if it were not for the considerable pain and damage which these mechanisms inflict in the workplace. In fact, they often result in the destruction of entire organizations, or even of whole industrial sectors, geographical areas, local economies and communities... (Pauchant and Mitroff, 1992).

In the course of my field research, I have had the opportunity to meet and "observe" the manager of a group of factories who was deeply convinced and who claimed - erroneously as it were - that he spent a couple of hours every morning in "his" shops in order to "get a feel for the morale of his troops," and to "look into everyone's problems!" Nobody among his immediate colleagues, his secretary, or the shop managers had ever dared to make him realize that as a rule, he hardly ever met anyone and that he never listened! As several of his colleagues told me: "you just didn't contradict him." But the fact remains that the boss, probably in all good faith, believed that he, "knew his employees, his shops and his machines very well..." The negative consequences of this type of belief are not difficult to imagine when comes the time to make decisions, manage and to decide on trade-offs, in sum, to direct what's happening on the production floor.

From this perspective, the situation is in fact rather gloomy: demiurgic phantasies, omnipotence and immortality, focus of the leader's status on the pleasure principle and of the organization as a gratifying object, anal obsessiveness, collusion, transformed reality, collective and mutually reinforced rationalizations (the famous "group-think" which Janis (1972) emphasized so much). As Berle, Sievers, Ketz de Vries, Miller and Morgan, among others, have indicated, this is unfortunately the price to be paid for the continued growth of the organizational "universe" of Western industrialized societies. Modern Western organizations have become hotbeds of absolute power and have given birth to a race of demi-gods and to a "system" which contributes to their ever growing glorification and deification (perhaps with the exception of Scandinavian and German organizations). Ultimately, we reach a situation which is the mirror image of the pleasant harmony portrayed and frenetically called for by the bards of "corporate excellence." Now more than ever, our organizations are cleft and polarized universes in which employees are simultaneously mellowed with a flowery discourse (the "priceless human capital which will provide total quality") while being treated as objects of management to be adjusted according to anticipated short-term profit or deficit levels.

In other words, the "employee-ambassadors" which Peters and Waterman (1983) so ardently called for ten years ago are still far from being treated as "ministers with full powers," but are in fact more than ever regarded as "profit fodder": in most "advanced" countries, the GDP per capita productivity and production are on the rise (because of new technologies) while employees and mid-managers are forever more vulnerable to unemployment and poverty. The employee as a variable cost (as a factor to be adjusted according to the needs of production and financial requirements) is still the necessary condition to the continued position of the leaders as "fixed costs" (who are not even considered in production costs as in the case of so-called "direct labor costs"). This results in the protection of their positions and privileges, regardless of the situation, and also affords top managers a truly royal form of treatment: in the United States, executive "salaries" at times can go as high as 80 million dollars, and are in the vicinity of 50 million dollars for the CEO's of the most "prestigious" corporations (Le Monde, May 7, 1991). Of course, when they are questioned about this, members of the American establishment inevitably answer that these "great leaders" are "talents," "geniuses," "stars," and "number-ones"... whose remuneration must be commensurate with their worth... (although this issue is beginning to raise a certain level of concern in the American media; for instance, in its March 30, 1992 edition, Business Week published an article entitled "Executive Pay: Compensation At The Top Is Out Of Control" (p.52-58).

The increasing deification of the manager, symbolically as well as materially, is matched by the growing relegation of the employee as an "input" and a "production factor"; workers, in other words, are regarded as totally expendable. During a prolonged recession, for instance, a CEO may be paid an exorbitant

salary of 80 million dollars while swelling the ever growing ranks of the unemployed through his rationalizations and compressions. This represents a glaring contradiction which the management of excellence has vainly tried to solve over the past ten years through its pseudo-humanist gymnastics (Aktouf, 1992). This view depicts the worker as the (necessary) object to be valorized by the leader-champion-hero-living legend, and simultaneously as the dedicated and enthusiastic partner of the "excellent" corporation in which he will constantly demonstrate his "correct" acculturation to the "values" of those who are only "fixed cost" (immortals) because workers are "variable costs" (mortal). This "input" (or "human resource" as the current expression so aptly puts it) can never really be admitted in the sanctum sanctorum of the immortals precisely because his status as an expendable interchangeable variable cost is the very foundation of the attributes and existence of the members of this sanctum sanctorum. The worker is then not only a mere mortal, virtually sub-human, (because he lacks vision, conception, reflection, ideas, knowledge, decision, (the correct) culture, values, credos, and so on...), from a managerial point of view, he is also a non-person and a non-entity, because he is only a "cost/resource," which necessarily makes him a passive, heteronomous, if not inert "object to be managed." In hard economic times, this worker even becomes the most "strategic" of all management objects: the manager will be all the more "heroic" because he will have to "rationalize," "cut expenses," "cut the fat," "make hard decisions," and "produce more with fewer resources." In the management of excellence, however, these same resources are also invited to "participate," to contribute to innovation, to "total quality" and to be mobilized within the framework of objectives, strategies, vision-mission, culture and values... all of which are defined elsewhere by omnipotent and omniscient leaders! From an existential point of view, this situation is even more intolerable than that of the silent employee who only had to contribute his energy and his obedience. The employee is now asked to participate, to echo and parrot what "the boss wants to hear" while being fully aware that whatever they do or say, "decisions will be made at the top." (Linhart, 1991; Aktouf, 1991 and 1992)

If we agree that man's status as a subject and as a person is articulated through the "I" who is allowed to define himself and speak as an "I," it is easy to realize the glaring depersonalization which the employee suffers in the workplace. Historically, the assembly line employee had only been asked to be quiet and obey, or to act as if he wasn't aware of the pseudoparticipation in which his role is limited to trivial details (according to Morgan (1989), 87 % of American service and industrial workers have to deal with more complexity in order to get to work than at work itself.) This is not only alienation, but also the obligation of acting as if one was not aware of this alienation! (a number of authors such as Ronald Laing (1970) have clearly illustrated the psychic damage caused by "collusion" and "double constraint" situations in which the individual is requested to "act as if he wasn't aware that he was playing a role"...). This, in a nutshell, is the silly game called for by the management of excellence. In order to survive, the omnipotent deification of the hero-manager needs to maintain armies of "impotent" non-subjects in a childlike dependence condition; because of their very "impotence," these people will then refer all the difficult issues and decisions (strategic, critical, etc.) to the "top." This is the only way for the "people at the top" to use the organization as a base for their permanent status as overworked, harried "heroes"....; in sum, to live in a state of non-lucidity. (For instance, see Mintzberg's (1984) description of these "exceptional people" who are constantly on the move dealing with different problems, roles, decisions, tasks, telephone calls, and meetings... to see that such managers are in a constant condition of "Brownian agitation" and of myopic non-lucidity with respect to the situation at hand... (also see Mitroff and Pauchant (1990) who refer to this situation as "busyness" instead of "business"). I intentionally use the phrase "non-lucidity" because, as the English expression "workaholism" clearly indicates, the process is akin to the artificially-induced escape mechanism common to all forms of drug abuse. In addition, the mountainous piles of papers, the overflowing "in" and "out" trays and bulging attaché cases, as well as the countless meetings and telephone calls are so many signs of one's omnipotence (or of its "reification" in Sievers' words), of one's status as a demiurgic hero; all of which is particularly useful in the sublimation of existential anxiety.

And the infernal vicious circle goes on: the manager of excellence can only be a super-person (hero, demi-god, immortal...) if the members of the organization, particularly the rank and file employees, become non-persons. Just as the torturer needs a victim or the colonizer needs a colonial subject, the sub-human creates the superman. Of course, the discourse of excellence claims to make supermen out of everyone. I have personally seen disciples of Peters and Waterman who attempted to apply these "principles" by trying to convince a receptionist that she was "the most important member of the entire organization because she was the first point of contact with the customer..." Apparently, those who use this type of discourse are not even embarrassed by its incredible naivety or by the daily contradictions of its soothing rhetoric (such as the astronomical differences in salaries and privileges, the massive layoffs, precarious working conditions, widespread rationalizations...etc.) The most pernicious aspect of this vicious circle however, is its effect on rank and file employees who must face their own existential anxiety and who are also confronted with the profound absurdities of human destiny. These employees then have no choice but to contribute to their own reification by behaving and by asking to be treated as objects; this is the only escape from their own anxiety because the other one, admittance to the sanctum

sanctorum of thinking subjects is "structurally" closed (as we have seen above). Hence, as "objects," they no longer have to ponder the meaning of their own destiny or of their death; a non-person does not have to live the metaphysical torments of a person; in such circumstances, the status of an object becomes a life preserver. In my field research, many employees expressed similar feelings in response to the question of whether they would like to be promoted: "no, [because] we want to sleep at night,...[because] I don't want to be on the spot...[because] I don't want to do the boss' dirty work..." Linhart (1991) came across the same reaction in a context of so-called "team management" when some team members told her: "we're here to work not to manage. They manage." (p. 174)

The concept of participation and mobilization also meets with the same unambiguous answers: "let those who get paid for that manage the problems of the organization... Just leave me alone with my job, and at five o'clock, I'm out of here... Anyway, they just pretend to listen to you... It's all been planned and decided ahead of time... You never get to talk to the real bosses... So just leave us alone..." (Aktouf, 1986 and 1990). From Simone Weil (1964) to Robert Linhart (1972) to Beynon (1973) and Terkel (1976), the literature of industrial field studies is replete with such examples. I would submit that they all refer to the same basic suffering: in a large majority of cases, there is no room at the bottom of the organizational pyramid for people to be treated and to act as people. To add insult to injury, this situation is then used to support the idea that part of mankind (rank and file employees) "is not prepared to face any challenges... or doesn't like to participate..." (Laurin, 1973). In addition, there is also a current (still in vogue in certain quarters, for instance see Simon 1973 a and b) that argues that the self-fulfilment of the worker must take place "outside the firm" because what the firm needs is his "productive capacity"... Well, this is now done and well done! The individual, of the non-demiurgic and non-heroic variety, is increasingly attempting to escape from the organization and its concomitant in order to come to terms with himself, as best he can, "elsewhere," a process which Mintzberg himself described with surprising candor in his most recent book (1989).

Where then will the management of excellence lead us? Its depredations and human costs are already formidable (Aubert and de Gaulejac, 1992), and its attempts to create a working partnership between managers and employees, between capital and labor, has met with dismal failure. Why then is the ostrich's policy still the order of the day in management circles? Is there a way out of this dilemma? These are the issues which I intend to discuss in the concluding section. I will also present a number of hypotheses and possibilities, along with a few concrete examples of "renewed management."

Conclusion: Negotiated Finalities, Empowering Actions, And Shared Benefits

It is highly significant to note that whenever the question of bringing radical changes to Western organizations is raised, it is immediately met with sceptical and peremptory cries of utopia, day-dreaming, and accusations of cultural genocide treacherously fomented by the invasion of the "Japanese model"... In fact, now more than ever, the proponents of the management of excellence are calling for a revolution without revolutionary changes. How else could we explain this incredible flight into rituals and symbolism which is constantly advocated by the ideology of excellence; this is an outright refusal to see the productivity problem (in the United States in particular) for what it really is: a gigantic and growing material gap between managers and employees (for instance, apart from the Business Week article which was quoted above, Fortune Magazine of December 4, 1989 referred to the "motivational gap" as it explained that in the United States, the income of managers had grown by about 200 % over the past 20 years while those of employees had only increased by 20 to 50 %).

The situation is even worse if we consider that "rival models" (particularly in Germany and Japan) provide constant training in the work place, for an annual average of 240 hours per employee (versus 2 hours in the United States!); or when we consider that one German CEO out of four began his career as a rank and file worker, or when we consider that nepotism is not a factor in the Japanese promotion system; or that a Japanese 45 year-old worker and father of three can be paid three times as much as a young single manager (even one who graduated at the top of his class from one of the major universities!). When these factors are taken into consideration, the true nature and importance of the gap between the American management model and its German and Japanese counterparts becomes readily apparent. Why then do organizations devote so much attention to the symbolic and cultural levels, why do they try to foster the pipe-dream of attachment to the organization through the fanciful, magical and disembodied quest for the fusion of the self into the organizational ideal (Pagès et al., 1979)! Let us be clear on this point, the issue at stake is nothing less than the preservation of the status quo at all cost; in other words, the organization is attempting to change the attitudes and behavior of employees without changing the established order, the mode of production, and, above all, the redistribution of the wealth which is so produced.

The employee is still treated as an input and a production cost, the only difference being that with the ideology of excellence, he will "whip himself" as a production tool and strive for his own compression as a financial cost. When it comes to employees, the management of excellence obdurately refuses to see them as an investment rather than a cost, or to train and valorize them instead of cutting and rationalizing them, which would have an adverse effect on the pursuit of maximum profits in the short run!

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Hence, we are faced with an increasingly anxious, frustrated, suffering, and undertrained workforce; one, moreover, which is on the receiving end of an ever growing form of double-speak. Such employees will never become enthusiastic partners who are ready to be mobilized in the cause of greater productivity... Moreover, they are also fully aware that the new technologies allow the organization to produce on an ever greater scale with fewer and fewer employees (for instance see *Le Monde Diplomatique's* edition of March 1993 on work sharing). The problem, however, is that this workforce is the only source of constant innovation and improvement (the famous "Kaizen" system), which is at the root of improved productivity and quality, and ultimately, which is essential to the prosperity and survival of modern organizations. It is therefore just as essential to allow individual workers to become enthusiastic and committed partners with a personal interest in the success of the organization... This transformation, however, must be accompanied by conditions which managers refuse to recognize because they are threatening the status quo: corporate leaders, regardless of their "high" position, must henceforth accept their status as mere mortals among mortals! The absolute power whose attributes and "trappings" they would like to keep puts them in the same dilemma as Richard II or King Lear: if they want to secure the commitment of their employees and the survival of their organizations, they must accept transparency, personal examples, profit-sharing, accountability, fairness, ethics, a commitment to the common good, as well as the possibility of permanently appealing to their conscience... This obviously represents a radical change, even worse, a revolution; the battle will involve the transformation of statuses and identities, which implies that from now on, the worker must be treated as a person instead of as an object. There are several ways of achieving this objective: first, managers must agree to step down, symbolically and materially, from their pedestals as supermen who "manage" others. Second, they must try to embody the actual attributes of the hero according to Greek mythology: that is, transgressing for one's fellow men and at the peril of one's life the taboos which mere mortals cannot transgress; accepting in full lucidity the idea of one's death and demonstrating one's status by performing actual "heroic" acts; and, finally, as Jupiter in the guise of Amphytrion, they must realize that in order to deserve the love and devotion of human beings, (as Alcmena), they must also accept their mortal condition. That, however, is a form of leadership and heroism which is quite different, if not totally opposed, to that advocated by the management of excellence and the cult of individualism which has been inherited from the amalgamation of Calvin and Darwin... Now more than ever, the organization must become a collective adventure whose leaders have as many, if not more, duties than rights. In particular, they must be seen as providers of justice, fairness and security in a framework in which the individual's place is secured in collaboration with his colleagues rather than against them. In other words, we must evolve from an organizational universe dominated by obsessive anality, selfishness, elitism, omnipotence, demiurgic phantasies, order, and control... to one dominated by orality (quality circles are nothing but enlarged speech forums), concern for others, reciprocity and symmetry in interpersonal relationships, generalized accountability, "noise," as well as respect for each and every individual as a person. These, I believe are the common foundations of the most efficient management systems (German, Japanese, Scandinavian, and Quebecer (with companies such as Cascades, Desjardins and others): the respect and the satisfaction of the employee and of the customer must come before the payment of dividends to the shareholders. Hence, this approach calls for a total change in the organizational perspective and logic; the soundness of the argument is unassailable: satisfied, respected and confident clients and employees are the best guaranty of longevity for the organization and of satisfaction for the shareholders!

The management of excellence must stop portraying its leaders as stars and supermen and must start fostering the collective appropriation of the organization and a new form of sharing in which all members of the organization enjoy the attributes and the status of the acting subject: thinking, expressing one's self, reflecting, deciding, managing, exercising one's free will and freedom of speech...etc, all of which can never be the result of the monstrous cohabitation between supermen and sub-humans. Putting an end to the deification of the manager and repersonalizing the employee within the framework of negotiated, understood and accepted finalities and strategies supported on a daily basis by empowered, decentralized and autonomous actions: this is the order of the day: Implementing the fair, open and transparent sharing of all management acts as well as of the results of common efforts: this the non-negotiable condition.

The famous "ownership-obligation" and the joint management aspect of the German model as well as the "Wâ, ringi," and "Ie-amae" of the "Japanese model" are essentially nothing but effective manners of curbing

the temptation of demiurgic and omnipotent behavior, and of fostering within the work place the emergence of solidarity, of shared "human condition," of freely consented, accepted and benevolent authority... whose main role is that of providing for material as well as existential fairness. I personally believe that these methods are largely responsible for the success and the originality of new forms of management - notably in Quebec - where numerous organizations are successfully implementing a more humane and a more "attractive" form of management marked by transparency and sharing in all aspects of organizational life (some of these are large corporations such as Cascades which now employs 80 000 employees in 65 subsidiaries on three continents, or smaller firms such as the dynamic small-and-medium sized businesses of the Beauce and Eastern Township regions...). In a sense, we are now witnessing a certain resurgence of Aristotelian and Thomistic values which tend to downplay the individualism and mythical omnipotence of the "entrepreneur" and to foster the common and shared appropriation of the work place in which all members enjoy the freedom of speech in which they are all regarded as mere fallible mortals, who are aware of their condition, from the CEO on down (Aktouf, 1991b; Aktouf, Bédard and Chanlat, 1992).

This being said, however, we must obviously realize that such an evolution cannot be "imposed" from above. Corporate leaders will not forsake their phantasies of immortality for the wise acceptance of their own mortality and will not modify their behavior accordingly, no matter how intensely we may desire such changes. I would submit that there are two preferred places in which to remind business leaders of their mortal condition so as to free them from their phantasies: the organization itself, and the business schools that train future "leaders." In the organization, "bosses" must realize that they cannot achieve anything without the cooperation and willing participation of all those involved (the cases of Cascades, Tembec, or the Johnsonville Sausage Company... provide eloquent examples of this, for instance see Aktouf, 1992). This realization leads to more humble behavior and to a more respectful attitude toward others in order to secure their cooperation. This humility and respect are expressed in every aspect of daily life. For instance, leaders such as Lemaire at Cascades or Stayer at the Johnsonville Sausage Company will readily admit that they don't know everything and that the lowliest employee can also express his opinion on the management of the organization, be it only on what he is asked to do. Renouncing phantasies of omnipotence and immortality cannot be achieved through a logical and rational process, it rather entails a painful "relinquishing" process, a reexamination of the self in which privileges and other "trappings" of the "divine body" are given up, as in the case of the Shakespearian kings who were dramatically reminded of their own humanness. For business leaders, the road back to mortality first involves a series of concrete and material renunciations: their exclusive information, their secrecy, their exclusive privileges, their unwarranted luxury, their astronomic salaries and bonuses, their countless benefits, and their monopoly on decision making... This is how the Shakespearian kings such as Richard II, King Lear, and Henry V learned to live with the intolerable dilemma of their twin bodies: the painful "undecking" (in Shakespearian terms) of the external trappings of the "royal body," as well as the "readiness-ripeness" combination which accompanies the imprescriptible duties of any legitimate and non-destructive power. This, in effect, entails the obligation of providing for common good and justice or, of assuming an apparent and temporary form of transcendence towards mere mortals in order to better serve them! The dilemma of the Shakespearian kings of old can only be solved at that price: the double body is only viable on a human scale if the royal body serves the cause of justice and harmony among mortals to whom he must be permanently available and accountable (Haro! and Curia Regis) even if that means being challenged.

In business schools, moreover, it is high time to put an end to the implausible cult and glorification of the manager, the entrepreneur, and the leader as exceptional individuals far above the hoi polloi. The example of Hartwick is a case in point, but the same phenomenon is present at several other schools, even among the most prestigious ones. This overdose of the case method causes students and future business leaders to act on a daily basis as if they were Agamemnon, Cordelia, Ulysses, Wellington, Napoleon or Rockefeller... In the MBA programs, this goes on for two full years... In addition, while these case studies devote a great deal of attention to the attributes, qualities, talents and rites of managers, their flaws, eccentricities and most of all their duties receive far too little attention.

Hence, our organizations must follow the same roads as the states that evolved from monarchies to republics: just as the city-state of old, the organization must become a "public thing" for its members. This, in fact, is the main characteristic of today's "efficient models" in which a certain type of "republicanism" prevails in the form of joint decision processes, across-the-board consultation, be it as "ringi," advisory boards, management committees, or joint management. The survival of our organizations, of our economies, and ultimately of our societies is contingent upon this evolution.