Creating the "Authentizotic" Organization:
Corporate Transformation and Its Vicissitudes—A
Rejoinder

Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries* & Katharina Balazs**

* Raoul de Vitry d'Avaucourt Professor of Human Resource Management, INSEAD,
Fontainebleau, France.
** Ph.D student, H.E.C., Jouy-en-Josas, France.
ABSTRACT

This article is a rejoinder to the critique by Robert Golembiewski of our article "Transforming the Mind-Set of the Organization: A Clinical Perspective" that appeared in Administration & Society. In that article the processes of individual and organizational change—their characteristics and dynamics—were explored, and the resemblance between personal and organizational change highlighted, using a clinical orientation to organizational diagnosis and change.

As major criticisms to this article, Dr. Golembiewski asserted that 1) there are some serious limitations to our approach to organizational transformation and change, 2) our approach has negative ethical implications, and 3) our estimates of success rates of change processes in general were far too low. To stress the point of our low estimates of success rates of organizational change endeavors, Dr. Golembiewski referred to Quality of Working Life (QWL) and Organizational Development (OD) studies. In this context he listed a survey that produced rather optimistic results.

In our rejoinder, to explain the divergence in success, we emphasize the difference between the usually small-scale change efforts as represented by OD and QWL methods and the major organizational transformation efforts we have been engaged in. We also note that the clinical orientation to organizational change adds an additional dimension to more conventional approaches to change. We point out that our approach may be more appropriate given the present shift in organizational paradigms.

Furthermore, in our rejoinder we clarify our definition of "healthy" organizations as being based on a set of motivational need systems. We introduce the concept of the authentizotic organization, indicating the type of organization representing a set of values that make it an invigorating place to work. These are the kinds of organizations that possess an ambiance where people have a greater sense of self-determination, a greater sense of impact, a greater sense of competence, a greater sense of belonging, a greater sense of enjoyment, and a sense of meaning.
KEYWORDS: Individual and organizational change; clinical orientation; organizational paradigm; transformation; organizational development (OD); Quality of Working Life (QWL); motivational need systems; mental health; flow; authentizotic organization.
We would like to thank Dr. Golembiewski for his thoughtful review of our article. His words made us aware that some of our points, perhaps stated imprecisely, had given rise to misunderstandings and misconceptions. Apparently, our article resulted not in "a small whisper in [Dr. Golembiewski's] analytic ear" (to quote him directly: p. 17 in MS) but in full-blown earache. We are sorry to have caused discomfort and would like to contribute to the cure: it appears that Dr. Golembiewski misread a number of critical observations of our presentation, and we are grateful for the opportunity given by the editor of Administration & Society to restate these observations more clearly.

We would like to note, however, that Dr. Golembiewski could have been more helpful in his critique of our paper if he would have clearly articulated his specific way of differentiating the Organizational Development (OD) and Quality of Working Life (QWL) approaches to planned change. To us, OD is much more directed to smaller scale organizational dysfunctionalities (usually of an interpersonal nature), while QWL has a somewhat wider mandate as it addresses issues such as work design and improved management-union relationships. To bundle these two approaches to planned change together, unfortunately, muddles his commentary.

Before going into detail, however, we would like to clarify the most important misinterpretation—one that seems to have aroused in Dr. Golembiewski a strong emotional reaction. Contrary to Dr. Golembiewski’s interpretation, the criticism leveled by our article at the change efforts that have taken place all around us in the

—Max Beerbohm—
corporate world was not intended as criticism of the practices of OD or QWL. On the contrary, we have always appreciated the value of these interventions.

Because Dr. Golembiewski has a vested interest in this matter—being an “investigator and intervenor in the change domains identified as QWL and OD” (p. 2 in MS)—he reacted with understandable sensitivity to what he perceived as a challenge to the effectiveness of these intervention methods. We want to make it clear from the beginning, however, that our article was directed against unsuccessful change practices in general; it was not our intent to single out any particular orientation—his or any other. We do not assert, as Dr. Golembiewski’s reaction seems to suggest, the preeminence of the clinical paradigm over more traditional OD methods. We are not engaged in “a procrustean effort to establish the superiority of any level over another” (p. 5 in MS). We simply want change agents to supplement bare-bones behavioral or humanistic models of the mind with information on such intrapsychic issues as underlying motivation, the inner world of the individual (including fantasies, wishes, desires, and needs, and their effects), unconscious processes, defense mechanisms, resistance, and the role of character.

In contrast to our perceived narrow-mindedness in (as he sees it) giving preeminence to the clinical approach to change, Dr. Golembiewski highlights the openness of OD specialists to consider other conceptual frameworks, mentioning that "OD was tuned-in to Bion (1959) and his emotionalities from the earliest days." Unfortunately, it appears that OD was not "tuned in" enough to take advantage of the insights provided by Bion; nor was Bion sufficiently interested in organizations to provide truly effective guidance for people interested in dealing successfully with organizational transformation. It is precisely because of these "ships passing in the night" that we are building on the work of Bion and other clinical theoreticians to provide assistance to agents of change. Dr. Golembiewski is right, however, that the importance of the work of Bion is exactly in the context of "emotionalities." As we learned the hard way (and made very clear in our article), change efforts succeed only when both cognitive and emotional dimensions of the change process are included in the equation. When change agents fail to take account of the emotional dimension—as is often the case—change remains at a superficial level and is (at best) temporary.
Dr. Golembiewski does not seem to understand that we see our clinical model as enriching the understanding of change processes by adding an additional dimension to the subject matter without decreasing the merit of other specific approaches. However, since Dr. Golembiewski has given our general clinical point of view a particular angle—one focused on OD (an intervention methodology particularly popular in the 1960s and 1970s) and QWL (an intervention methodology originating from Scandinavia, and popularized in the late 1970s and early 1980s)—we would like to make a few comments on those methodologies. It is our contention that the more piecemeal approaches advocated by OD and QWL specialists may not be as appropriate in this world of discontinuous change as they were in their heyday.

**A Shift in Organizational Paradigms**

In the late 1980s and 1990s, the corporate world witnessed a major paradigm shift—a shift from continuous small changes to discontinuous change—and this paradigm shift has affected the modus operandi of many organizations. We have moved to this state of discontinuous changes because of such factors as major demographic movements, the explosion in information and communication technology, and the coming of the Euro as a monetary unit; the fall of the Iron Curtain and the resulting dramatic changes in Eastern Europe and Russia; the diverse and considerable changes taking place in Africa, and the Asia-Pacific region; and deregulation of many industries in many countries.

All of these contributors to the process of accelerated change have led to an increasing “globalization” of management. To prepare for these new challenges we have seen a movement in the business world toward consolidation through strategic alliances and global-scale mergers and acquisitions. The extensive restructuring and downsizing efforts that abound in today’s corporate world can also be seen in the light of accommodation to discontinuous change. These developments have brought about major shifts in organizational practices, necessitating a change of mind-set for all participants.
Life in organizations, formerly stable (perhaps even staid), has become increasingly unstable. The typical national orientation has become global; the favored technology-driven approach has been supplanted by a greater customer orientation; tall, hierarchical organizations have become flatter. The organizations that last in this age of discontinuity will be those that have learned the new art of “networking”—that is, where upward, lateral, relationship building with stakeholders external to the organization will be of greater importance. The traditional psychological contract that guaranteed employment and steady promotion in exchange for loyalty has largely been voided. Employability—"We offer you the opportunities; you manage your own career”—has replaced tenure. Thus dependency is out and interdependency is in. That fact, along with the knowledge revolution, means that autocratic leadership practices are increasingly inappropriate. The organizations that survive in this new global world will be those that feature a more authoritative form of leadership—that is, whose leaders lead by example.

While traditional OD methods were effective in times of stability, the changing organizational paradigm requires an adapted (more comprehensive and less detail-focused) approach. The focus of most OD specialists—intervention in small-scale transformations (an appropriate practice in yesterday’s corporate climate)—has lost some of its efficacy in the face of the mega-problems presented by the organizational paradigm shift. People interested in corporate transformation these days have to be jugglers, able to handle both major and minor change efforts, both discontinuous and continuous change.

We strongly believe that the clinical approach presented in our article is better adapted than the typical OD approach to major, large-scale change operations. In the clinically oriented transformation process, a crucial part is played by the CEO, the dominant coalition (i.e., the existing power-network), and external stakeholders. This stands in contrast to other, more traditional approaches—such as OD—which (1) are preoccupied with changes at a lower level and (2) frequently center on behavior modification of middle-management and lower-level employees. Usually such change efforts are conducted on a small scale, involving intra- or inter-departmental issues rather than the overall organization. As Dunphy (quoted also by Dr. Golembiewski) says, "It is also evident that few theoretical approaches cover change initiatives that
extend from the executive level to the level of the general workforce and that reconcile the need for corporate strategic initiatives and commitment of the general workforce" (Dunphy, 1996, p. 551). Dunphy’s orientation is exactly ours. What we suggested in our article was that meaningful change is more likely to occur if all these various constituencies are involved.

Further developing this theme of scale of intervention, we note that Nicholas (1982), in his assessment of the impact of OD interventions, lists three types of intervention: human processual approaches (i.e., structured laboratory training, team building, and survey feedback), technostructural approaches (i.e., job design and job enlargement, job enrichment, and sociotechnical system design), and multifaceted approaches (i.e., interventions that apply multiple techniques). Despite these classifications, however, the review gives us no sense of the level of change involved in each case—micro versus macro intervention with major strategic implications. We learn, though, that of the 65 studies reviewed, only six were directed at both blue- and white-collar workers.

Likewise, Dr. Golembiewski (1998), in his review of success rates of organizational change efforts (as mentioned in his critique to our article), pays little attention to level of analysis (pp. 30–31). We are given no precise information about how many of the sixteen separate surveys listed involved major strategic transformation efforts as opposed to small-scale OD or QWL interventions. We do not get a sense of what percentage of the total workforce was involved in the change effort. We expect, however, that it concerns a rather small percentage. Most of these intervention efforts apparently do not follow the "strategic change model" type described by Dunphy—a term used to describe a change effort that takes into account the larger industrial and societal context to arrive at a "winning competitive business strategy (1996, p. 544).

According to Dr. Golembiewski’s results, many of the interventions listed had a positive effect; but given their limited outlook, the question becomes, for what purpose and (more important) for how long? Moreover, if we were real nit-pickers we could raise serious questions about how reliable his literature review really is given the lack of standardization of evaluation methods. It would not surprise us at all if many of the reports of positive outcomes turned out to be purely anecdotal.
Let it be known, however, that we do not question the general effectiveness of OD approaches in small-scale change efforts; indeed, it is quite possible that OD success rates on the micro scale are as high as Dr. Golembiewski asserts. This, however, was not the focus of our presentation. The scope of our transformation programs was quite different. Our focus has been large systems change efforts. Thus in our dialogue, it appears that Dr. Golembiewski is often addressing an entirely different issue. We seem not to be talking to one another but past one another.

We also would like to take strong exception to Dr. Golembiewski’s assertion that our “clinical approach seems to hang by an ever-slimmer thread of experience and theory” (p. 8 in MS) and that "a collection of interviews" is all that underlies that approach. On the contrary, a vast array of literature supports the clinical paradigm and serves as the theoretical underpinning of our paper (see, for example, Baum, 1987; Diamond, 1993; Hirschhorn, 1990; Jacques, 1974; Kets de Vries, 1993; Kets de Vries, 1995; Kets de Vries, 1999; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984; Levinson, 1972; Schwartz, 1990; Zaleznik, 1989). In addition to building on this literature (and on a substantial amount of theoretical management literature on organizational change processes), we have also—contrary to the belief expressed by Dr. Golembiewski—been involved hands-on in numerous large-scale corporate restructuring efforts of multinational companies. Action research and action learning is a crucial part of the mandate at INSEAD, the business school we are connected with. Thus our paper is built both on our own experience and on other people's research; and those two sources confirm univocally the dismal overall success rates of downsizing efforts and the high failure rates of mergers and acquisitions.

Lies, Damned Lies, and Statistics

Thus, while Dr. Golembiewski takes exception to our negative perspective on the success of many organizational change practices, the facts (if we can regard statistics as such, remembering Mark Twain’s alleged quip that there are three kinds of lies: lies, damn lies, and statistics) support our point of view. Though Dr. Golembiewski expressed doubts in his critique about the foundations of our paper (questioning "the specific success rates of … organizational change"; p. 1 in MS), we did indeed do our
"homework" on the matter. Since this did not come across well in the paper, as Dr. Golembiewski rightly pointed out, we are only too happy to go into more detail on the facts and figures we built our work on. (Again, though, readers should keep in mind that we are looking at major organizational transformation, not at small, piecemeal change efforts).

Let us start by mentioning some figures concerning downsizing and restructuring—one of the subjects that we have studied extensively in the recent past (Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997). According to a survey done by the Society for Human Resource Management, more than 50 percent of the 1,468 restructured firms surveyed reported that productivity had either remained stagnant or had deteriorated after downsizing (Henkoff, 1990). A study by an outplacement firm reported that 74 percent of executives in the restructured companies represented had experienced problems with morale, trust, and productivity (Henkoff, 1990). Another survey, profiled in the *Wall Street Journal*, found that of the 1,500 downsized firms questioned, only 46 percent had actually cut expenses, 32 percent had increased profits, 22 percent had increased productivity, and 22 percent had reduced bureaucracy (Bennett, 1991). Some researchers have concluded that many organizations enjoy an initial upsurge in productivity immediately after downsizing but then become depressed and lethargic (Appelbaum, Simpson, & Shapiro, 1987). One consulting firm reported that the share price of firms that downsized during the 1980s actually lagged behind the industry average in the 1990s (Baumohl, 1993). Symptomatic of the mixed results of downsizing is the fact that most firms do not succeed in the original effort and end up downsizing again a year later (Pearlstein, 1994). Thus downsizing leads to more downsizing, with each round becoming more detrimental to the company’s functioning (Kets de Vries & Balazs, 1997).

Another practice of organizational transformation that has been much used in the recent past—a practice fueled by the trend toward globalization—is what we might call *consolidation*. A mergers and acquisitions wave has washed over the corporate world (and is likely to continue flowing into the foreseeable future). Yet empirical studies on the effects of mergers and acquisitions have repeatedly demonstrated that these means of consolidation have an unfavorable impact on profitability (Hovers, 1971; Kitching, 1967). Overall success rates have been estimated in a range from a
discouraging 23 percent (Marks, 1988) to a somewhat more optimistic, but still low, 50 percent (Hunt, 1988).

The American Management Association examined 54 big mergers in the late eighties and found that about half of them led to decreased productivity, decreased profits, or both (Fisher, 1994). In a similar vein, reports about joint-venture failures in the UK and the US (Killing, 1982; Kogut, 1988) suggest that even when such ventures have an adequate financial basis, they are highly unstable. Furthermore, statistics from the London Business School indicate that 50 percent of all acquisitions fail (Kransdorff, 1993). Judged by any financial yardstick—combining earnings, sales, or growth rates—between two-thirds and three-fourths of all corporate mergers and acquisitions failed (Kransdorff, 1993; Marks & Mirvis, 1992). Kogut (1988), in a study of US joint ventures, found that over 24 percent were terminated within the first three years. Indeed, rather than producing increased profitability, mergers and joint ventures have come to be associated with job dissatisfaction, low morale, employee sabotage and violence, increased turnover and absenteeism, unproductive behavior, and high strike and accident rates (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993; Haspeslagh & Jemison, 1991; Sinetar, 1981).

As for the human costs of mergers and joint ventures, they have generally been neglected in the change equation, as researchers have repeatedly noted, though retrospective understanding of merger failure has been greatly facilitated by attending to those costs (Cartwright & Cooper, 1993). According to McKinsey and Co., the human side—often the crucial determinant for success—is neglected in most cases (Main, 1990). This is cited as the reason that one-half to two-thirds of all mergers fail (Fulmer & Gilkey, 1988). Much of the early research on mergers and acquisitions has focused on the strategic and financial fit between the partners (Newman & Krystofiak, 1993). It is only recently that management scholars have begun to study the impact such practices have on employees. Their research indicates that mergers and acquisitions have a potentially destructive human impact, mainly in terms of increased turnover and attitudinal changes. Mergers can cause depression, job insecurity, loss of control, and general feelings of uncertainty and anxiety (Newman & Krystofiak, 1993).
The same gloomy figures apply to strategic alliances. Many of them fail, and others end up in takeover (with the new partner swallowing up the joint venture) (Main, 1990). Various studies cite a failure rate of 60 to 70 percent (Harrigan, 1988). McKinsey and Co., in a survey of 150 companies involved in alliances that had been terminated, found that 75 percent of them had been taken over by Japanese partners. A review of nine studies conducted on strategic alliances found that 34 to 61 percent of executives surveyed were dissatisfied with their alliance (Main, 1990). The costs of such change efforts on human capital is well documented by a recent study of 150 large mergers and acquisitions; this study found that almost 75 percent of the senior executives in the acquired company left within three years (Fulmer & Gilkey, 1988).

Thus, while the criteria for the gains of corporate restructuring and change may vary along with the gains themselves, it is clear from the vast array of literature on the subject that these change efforts have a generally unfavorable impact on both the human side of the equation and on profitability and shareholder value. What the above studies indicate is that the success rate for such change efforts is much lower than Dr. Golembiewski's optimistic forecasts.

Beyond the Quick Fix

Dr. Golembiewski states that we "promise" that the use of the clinical paradigm in organizational change leads to more effectiveness through time-saving (p. 1 in MS). (What he means by mentioning that we are interested in "spiritedly change" [p. 6 in MS] is still not clear to us.) In fact, we question how Dr. Golembiewski reached this conclusion, since nowhere in our article do we allege that the clinical model of change is a quick-fix method whose merits include time-saving. On the contrary, our article stresses the complexity of the change process and argues that the effectiveness of the clinical paradigm lies in its understanding of human nature, of character, of the “inner theatre” of a person, of one’s CCRT (core conflictual relationship theme) (Luborsky, 1984; Luborsky & Crits-Cristophe, 1998). The fact that character patterns are persistent and not easily changed makes any change effort an arduous task. Yet if the human side of the change process is taken into consideration, the costs in human capital of any change effort can be reduced and the effectiveness gains increased.
As we pointed out in our article, the presence of a degree of “emotional intelligence” (what we call the "teddy bear factor") in the main actors in the change process has been identified as crucial to the success of any transformation effort (Goleman, 1995; Goleman, 1998). Much of the previously cited research suggests that the chances of success for the change process hinge on the treatment of the human side of the equation. Consequently, attention paid to the people and their inner world is the most important determinant of the effectiveness of the process. This, we are sure, Dr. Golembiewski must agree with, since he claims that OD has been attuned to individual and group processes since the beginning of the practice (p. 5 in MS).

**Mental Health in Organizations**

In this context of emotional intelligence, we appreciate Dr. Golembiewski’s having brought up the critical issue of normative and ethical considerations. His concern about “healthy” organizations—those in which people make "responsible choices"—is very much to the point (p. 15 in MS). Dr. Golembiewski draws attention to an issue that is one of our major concerns in organizational transformation and change—a concern that obviously did not come across clearly enough in our article. In both our practical and our theoretical work on organizational transformation, the creation of healthy organizations with well-functioning individuals is one of our main preoccupations. Dr. Golembiewski’s critique of what we see as people “redefining” themselves (p. 15 in MS) would be eminently appropriate, had he not misunderstood our meaning. We certainly do not propose to "reprogram" people in an Orwellian way. What we mean by *redefinition* is what has been the major goal of psychotherapists, psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts all along: to help people gain new insights into their goals and motivations; to help them better understand their strengths and weaknesses; to prevent them from engaging in self-destructive activities. The emphasis is on widening people’s area of choice and thus enabling them to choose freely rather than being led by forces outside of their awareness. The end-goal is the same one that Dr. Golembiewski claims for OD and QWL: education that leads to responsible choice. Thus, while our aspirations may not be as humble as those of OD, they do not lack its human dimension.
Motivational Need Systems

Since the question of choice is essential, we would like to elaborate on that issue as a means of helping Dr. Golembiewski understand our way of looking at the inner world of people. Anyone who explores the inner theatre of an individual comes inevitably to the motivational need systems on which choice is grounded. Here again our outlook is based on contributions from domains such as dynamic psychiatry, developmental psychology, ethology, neurophysiology, cognitive theory, psychoanalytic psychology, family systems theory, and individual and group psychotherapy. What we have learned from studies in these various areas is that the satisfaction of five basic motivational need systems is critical for healthy functioning (Lichtenberg, 1991; Lichtenberg, Lackmann, & Forshage, 1992).

We view motivational need systems as the driving forces that make people behave the way they do. These need systems become operational in infancy and continue throughout the life cycle, altered by the forces of age, learning, and maturation. Each system self-organizes or self-stabilizes as motivational need gratification is moved forward by symbolic events recorded in the episodic memory. System instability—evidenced in excessive emotional reactions (strong feelings of anger, fear, or loneliness, for example)—indicates a shift in motivational need dominance. Developmental “resolutions”—self-stabilizing responses to emotional reactions based on motivational needs—determine the content of the inner script of each individual.

One motivational need system regulates a person’s physiological needs—needs for food, water, elimination, sleep, and breathing. Another system handles an individual’s needs for sensual enjoyment and (later) sexual excitement. Another deals with the need to respond to specific situations perceived as threatening through antagonism and withdrawal. Although there is always an influencing process between these three systems and the work situation, it is the other two motivational need systems that are of particular interest for life in organizations: the attachment/affiliation need system and the exploration/assertion need system.

Among humans there exists an innately unfolding experience of human relatedness. Humankind’s essential humanness is found in seeking relationships with other people,
in being part of something. The need for attachment concerns the process of engagement with another human being, the universal experience of wanting to be close to others. It also relates to the pleasure of sharing and affirmation. When this need for intimate engagement is extrapolated to groups, the desire to enjoy intimacy can be described as a need for affiliation. Both attachment and affiliation serve an emotional balancing role by confirming the individual’s self-worth and contributing to his or her sense of self-esteem.

The need for exploration, closely associated with cognition and learning, affects one’s ability to play and to work. This need is manifested soon after birth: child observation has shown that novelty, as well as the discovery of the effects of certain actions, causes a prolonged state of attentive arousal in infants. Similar reactions to opportunities for exploration continue into adulthood. Closely tied to the need for exploration is the need for self-assertion, the need to be able to choose what one will do. Playful exploration and manipulation of the environment in response to exploratory-assertive motivation produces a sense of effectiveness and competency, of autonomy, initiative, and industry. Because striving, competing, and seeking mastery are fundamental motivational forces of the human personality, exercising assertiveness—following our preferences, acting in a determined manner—serves as a form of affirmation.

The Organizational Culture—Personal Need Interface
In our work with organizations—given our understanding of motivational need systems (particularly those relating to exploration and attachment/affiliation), character formation, and defensive structures—we try to provide people with greater insight into their behavior and actions. Our hope is that increased self-awareness will lead the men and women of these organizations to a greater sense of self-determination (that is, a feeling of control over their lives); a greater sense of impact (a belief that their actions will make a difference in their organization); a greater sense of competence (a feeling of personal growth and development); a greater sense of belonging (a feeling of community that comes from being part of the organization, addressing attachment and affiliation needs); and a greater sense of enjoyment in what they are doing, and sense of meaning about the activities they are engaged in (factors identified as crucial in our research into what makes for well-functioning individuals:
When these conditions are met, individuals will work in what the first author has described as the "authentizotic organization"—a description that is a compilation of the Greek words "avthenteekos" (authentic) and zoteekos (vital to life)—indicating the type of organization representing the kinds of values that make it invigorating places to work; where people feel a sense of wholeness; where they feel complete and alive.

We desire to create authentizotic organizations, places of work that respond to important human motivational needs and provide a sense of community and enjoyment to the people they employ. We like to work with organizations that see the importance of providing meaning. Organizations that honor these human factors are able to get the best out of their people. In such organizations people put their imagination and creativity to work and therefore experience a sense of "flow"—a feeling of total involvement and commitment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990); they experience a deep sense of meaning about the work they do. As one CEO once told us, "People work for money but die for a cause."

Based on a recent article in *Fortune* entitled "The 100 Best Companies to Work for in America" (Levering & Moskowitz, 1998) we did a content analysis of the practices that make—companies such as Southwest Airlines, W. L. Gore, Microsoft, Merck, Hewlett-Packard, Corning, and Harley-Davidson so special. Using their database of more than 1,000 companies, we identified the following primary values: a feeling of community, enjoyment at work, continuous learning, and the creation of a sense of meaning.

Because these values are at the heart of what we strive for in our work with organizations, we attempt to collaborate with firms that seek to help their people reach their full potential. We try to avoid organizations that have a more Orwellian outlook.

### A Quixotic Hunt for Ethical Lacunae

One of the points taken up by Dr. Golembiewski concerns the ethics of personnel selection. He raises this issue in response to our discussion of hardiness and locus of
control, both admittedly simplified ways of looking at personality. But, like Don Quixote, Dr. Golembiewski seems to be tilting at windmills. All typologies, regardless of what they categorize, are by definition simplifications: they are attempts to create order in a very disordered world, to clarify so that informed choice is possible.

No employer hires just anybody. Reasonable employers hire those applicants that they think will best fit their organization's needs. Certain people are suitable for certain jobs and others are not, depending on their personal abilities characteristics, and skills (and the match of those abilities and characteristics with the organization's corporate culture). The degree of sophistication of the hiring procedures varies, of course. Some organizational leaders hire people on intuition only, while others rely most heavily on a person’s previous track record. Some go through elaborate interview protocols to better understand what each applicant is all about, while others seek further information through the widespread practice of psychological testing.

This is not the place to argue about the usefulness and/or abuse of psychological tests (though we have seen instances of both), nor is it the place to argue about the validity and reliability of the instruments used. Over the years we have encountered a bewildering collection of systems to assess applicants, varying from horoscopes, to graphological interventions, to sophisticated projective tests, to required visits to assessment centers. But regardless of the method used, selection is inevitable. Some of the most sought-after companies to work for—Southwest Airlines, Microsoft, Nokia, and Virgin, for example—are extremely selective, looking for those specific cognitive and emotional competencies that they feel will best fit each position.

While we are not experts on the matter of testing or other specific means of selection, we do not know of any US law that forbids such activities specifically. There will always be some form of selection. Every responsible organization must strive to hire the person best qualified for the job. Thus our suggestion that organizations take certain personality characteristics into account when choosing people to carry out a change process is clearly not so monstrous as to “tak[e] [Dr. Golembiewski’s] breath away” (p. 15 in MS). People in organizations have to make choices, with all the normative and ethical implications that choice entails.
Looking for Derrida

There are a number of final odds and ends worth commenting on, though Dr. Golembiewski goes off on so many tangents that it is impossible to deal with all of them here. Furthermore, he draws inferences on other "misdeeds" attributed to us that have no basis in reality. The "small whispers [Dr. Golembiewski] hears in his analytical ear" seem on occasion to lead him to unexplained free association and—horror of horrors of what psychoanalysts call—"wild analysis": interpretations that are quite detached from the information provided by the individual in question. Some of his comments conjure the image of a blind man in a dark room looking for a black hat that is not there. We will try, however, to deal with what we see as some of his more relevant critical comments.

Locus of Control and Hardiness as Determinants of Character

Dr. Golembiewski strongly attacks our comments on locus of control and hardiness (with a dose of irony whose purpose escapes our understanding), assigning them far more importance than we do. Frankly, we are more interested in character structure and personality types, particularly as presented in the *DSM-IV* (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). However, not wanting to embark in our article on a lengthy discussion of how different character types react toward change, we decided (for the purpose of simplification) to employ the concepts of locus of control and hardiness, which can be considered personality constructs but are better known than character types to a managerial audience. (For a discussion of various character types and their organizational repercussions, see Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984; Kets de Vries & Perzow, 1991.)

What we claim in our discussion of locus of control and hardiness is that character, to a certain extent, is "destiny"; that because character is not easily changeable, there are limits to personal (and therefore also organizational) change. We are not as optimistic as Dr. Golembiewski (in his comments about what he perceives to be long-lasting effects of hardiness training) about the malleability of character. Our experience with and research into many large-scale change efforts suggests that a large number of the original employees of the company leave by the time such a process is completed.
This is not surprising, in light of the fact that it is easier to (ex)change people than to change personality traits in existing personnel to create a better fit with the renewed organization. (Our theory on the stability of character is built on the extensive empirical work of Luborsky and collaborators [Luborsky, 1984; Luborsky & Crits-Cristophe, 1998].)

Dr. Golembiewski's criticism of our point of view is probably motivated by the fact that our realistic outlook on personality goes against the grain of "positive thinking" that some OD specialists prefer to employ. (We do agree with Seligman [1998], however, that optimism has a therapeutic purpose.) Dr. Golembiewski's concept of character seems to be much more malleable than can be inferred from the substantial literature on the subject, whose general conclusion is that only modest character modification is possible. (Can a histrionic character type magically transform into a passive-aggressive? Not likely!)

In the context of character, we are rather concerned by Dr. Golembiewski's excitement about our statement that "the origin of a person's general attitude toward the environment—whether hardy or unhardy—can be traced back to the kind of childrearing patterns he or she was subjected to. We can assume that the primary caretakers of hardy individuals exposed them to age-appropriate frustration…" (p. x of our article). He views this as a major assumption and then confuses us by going on a wild-goose chase about its relationship to a "redefined self" (p. 17 in MS). We agree that there are many ameliorating factors that can influence a person's modus operandi during the life course, but to discount the dramatic impact of early life experiences goes against all research findings of developmental psychologists (Kagan, 1994; Kagan & Moss, 1983; Mahler, Pine, & Bergman, 1975). But perhaps Dr. Golembiewski is not familiar with the term "age-appropriate frustration," which implies that the child is not over- or understimulated but is exposed to a "good enough" holding environment and adequate "containment" (Kagan, 1994; Kagan & Moss, 1983; Kohut, 1971; Winnicott, 1975).

Stages of Change
Dr. Golembiewski asserts that he "not convinced" that individual and organizational change stages are relatively invariable. Starting with the classical work of Bowlby
(1969, 1973, 1980) on individual change, we mentioned in our article a large number of studies that have looked at the way people deal with change. If Dr. Golembiewski believes, as we do, that organizations are made up of individuals, then individual change processes must be seen as relevant on an organizational level as well. This does not mean that there are no exceptions to the rule. Just as people can suffer from developmental arrest, so can organizations. “Arrested” organizations, however, are not those that will last.

Levels of Analysis
Dr. Golembiewski also wonders at what levels of analysis we are operating, given the options he sees of "individual, group, intra-organizational networks, organizational, inter-organizational, and social" (p. 6 in MS). He concludes that we "oversimplify … assume that only two levels of analysis need to be considered" (p. 9 in MS). It is unfortunate that we made that impression. We thought it was quite clear from our presentation that, although our outlook is grounded in the individual, we are very concerned about networks of power and influence, the role of groups, and the importance of overall organizational processes within an industry and societal context. We include both micro- and macro-levels of analysis. What may have confused Dr. Golembiewski is that we emphasize a degree of parallelism between individual and organizational processes. Perhaps that obscured our perspective on other levels of analysis.

Case Study Deficiency
In his criticism of the case study, Dr. Golembiewski has a point. Unfortunately, space constraints forced us to use an abbreviated form rather than including the whole case. We had no choice but to present a short vignette. For a comprehensive and rather exhaustive description of the complete change process, we referred in the article to the original case study, which appeared in the INSEAD Case Studies series. (The teaching note that accompanies the full case gives even more information [Balazs & Kets de Vries, 1997].) Though Dr. Golembiewski was quick to point out what he saw as weaknesses in the case, he did not refer to the original, which does include the points he felt were missing. This seems somewhat like judging a book by its cover.

Odds and Ends
Apart from these issues, we also take exception to a few minor comments made by Dr. Golembiewski. For example, we question the appropriateness of his comment on our style of argument. We fervently hope that there is more than one way of making a point. We did not mean to engage in psychobabble but tried to present our case as clearly as possible.

Concerning style, we could give Dr. Golembiewski some of his own medicine: clarity of argumentation is not always his strong suit. However, because we live in France—a country influenced by Derrida and his followers—we are used to stylistic constructions that are hard to decipher. Though the enigmatic nature of some of Dr. Golembiewski's arguments made interpretation difficult, we must compliment him on his imaginative use of metaphors. There is, for example, something appealing about our comments on change being labeled "Armageddon-like."

Like Mr. Knutsen, the president of Bang & Olufsen, Dr. Golembiewski certainly possesses the dramatic flair to facilitate a "focal event." As for his derogatory comments about the "troubling" (p. 17 in MS) nature of the focal event, like it or not an essential part of leadership is impression management, which includes the leader's "staging" of certain events at critical junctures of the company's history. Those of us who have worked closely with organizations and their leaders are familiar with the importance of "staged" interventions for the purpose of clarification of issues of significance.

When all is said and done, we are left to wonder whether Dr. Golembiewski was able to suspend his sense of disbelief while reading the article, or whether his mind was already made up. Indeed, some of his comments made us wonder how carefully he read our argument. We are reminded of a remark attributed to Benjamin Disraeli concerning people who sent him unsolicited manuscripts: "Thank you for the manuscript; I shall lose no time reading it." However, humor aside, we would like to thank Dr. Golembiewski once more for giving us a second chance to be better communicators.
References


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