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"Strange as it sounds, great leaders gain authority by giving it away." Admiral James B. Stockdale. Discuss in relation to leadership and authority in the modern organisation.

Explorations in Authority and Sustainable Leadership

For an explanation of some psychoanalytic terms used in this paper, see page 10

Summary

This paper explores some aspects of authority, power and leadership from psychoanalytic, systemic and social construction perspectives, with examples drawn from my coaching, training and leadership development work in the corporate sector. It argues that current economic, social and environmental crises combine with workplace developments to critically affect the legitimate exercise of authority in organisations with a greater emphasis on personal authority, often expressed in the use and abuse of personal power. With the falling away of organisational containment, since boundaries are fluid and change is constant, and operating in a global climate of high risk, alternative containers are needed for the anxieties these circumstances arouse, if organisational creativity, effectiveness and cohesion are not to be overtaken by anti-task behaviours. Building in particular on the ideas of Hirschhorn, Western, Huffington and Miller plus my own experience, the paper concludes with some early ideas for a model of rotated, shared leadership. Offering an alternative paradigm to our pre-Oedipal hunger for 'great leaders' it suggests we might cultivate teams of 'good-enough' leaders who can both contain anxiety and promote creativity and collaboration at work.

Introduction: our World-in-the-Mind

In most cultures the accepted model of leadership is still that of the lone strong man; both male and female leaders tend to seek to embody this phallic principle. Current themes in leadership discourse are followership, distributed and values-based leadership, focusing on explorations of authenticity and integrity, on the power of vulnerability, and our interdependence with our environment. (Hirschhorn 1997; Campbell 2000; Heifetz & Linsky 2002; Huffington 2004; Goffee & Jones 2005; Western 2008; Parkin 2010) However despite deep and widespread changes to society, family structures, work and organisations since the 1960s the idea of the single leader with vertical relationships based on the parental model has only recently started to be challenged in psychoanalytic literature with examinations of the vulnerable, open and relational leader (Hirschhorn 1998 pp17-25) of the facilitative paternal mode (Western 1999), of ways women lead (Huffington 2004 pp49-66) and of lateral 'sibling' relationships (Huffington and Miller 2008).

Society's psychological landscape is radically altered today by a confluence of factors, colouring our world-in-the-mind (Armstrong 2005 p4) and affecting our capacity to exercise legitimate authority. The pace of change is now relentless, corporate corruption is now openly acknowledged, and the institutions of church, state and education have been fatally wounded by abuse (Long 2002 p187). Downsizing and cuts are the norm (Miller 1993 p308; Cooper & Dartington 2004 p132). Globalisation, technology, the demise of job security and the spread of flexible and part time working have led to the downgrading of professional expertise and corrosion of professional

identity (Sennett 1998 pp26-27). Workplace inequalities continue to rise¹. Our post-industrial world is a 'networked' one, with the reach of media and digital technology extending and intertwining work and home lives (Cooper & Dartington 2004 pp128-129) bringing new excitements but also invasion of boundaries. These factors interact with the world 'outside' the organisation. Collectively we are experiencing major environmental, social and economic crises: the mortal shocks of 9/11 and 7/7, the degradation of our natural world, climate change, Enron, the recent banking collapse, bail-out and economic recession with its swingeing cuts. Most recently the Japanese earthquake and tsunami entered our lives intimately – global disasters are now visible in real time. This participation in terror is new. It heightens awareness and compassion but also our anxieties, creating a survivalist mentality (Cooper & Dartington 2004 p131). We live in a perceived landscape of threat and imminent catastrophe (Cooper & Lousada 2005 p181). Widespread reversion to the false security of pre-Oedipal splitting and projection (Foster 2006 p8) evokes a primitive hunger for saviour leaders (eg. Mandela; Obama) but at the same time institutional and business leaders have been found seriously wanting. Our mistrust forces us to rely more on personal authority, (Obholzer 1994 p41; Goffee & Jones 2005 p3; George et al 2007 pp2-4) but this can make us feel 'naked' (Cooper & Lousada 2005 p176-7), and fear and damaged hope in a future do not promote clarity or confidence.

While Miller believes that this climate signals 'the demolition of the myth of authority' (1993 p309), Hirschhorn is optimistic about the contemporary workplace: '...such a climate of fear does not quash new working relationships completely. Instead, it creates a "force field" in which the constraining forces of fear and dislocation are intertwined dynamically with the enabling forces of shared decision making and the authorization of people at all levels of the hierarchy.' (1998 p6). The development of inner authority is an essential component in these new working relationships and point to the need for new forms of leadership, which can meet the needs for dependence, independence and interdependence in the workplace and beyond.

Holding Authority in the Perverse Organisation: the abuse of power

'Every aspect of personal life is radically affected by the quality of general life, and yet the general life is seen at its most important in completely personal terms.'
(Raymond Williams 1961)

In order to give authority away one has to hold it in the first place. Holding authority and exercising it effectively depends on three interrelated domains: our inner world (our sense of personal authority); the structure and culture of the organisation, and the society we live in (who holds power, who does not and how this is enacted by our public institutions).

Issues of leading, authority and power speak to the heart of our primal relationships with our parents – ever present in the form of our in-the-mind authority figures (Obholzer 1994 p41) and they are core to our roles in the workplace. Authority – the 'right to make ultimate decisions...which are binding on others' – is seen as pertaining to role, while power is an attribute. Interconnected, both are fundamental to our sense of identity and agency. (Obholzer 1994 p39 & p42) Exercise of personal authority depends on the interplay of many factors: how well we have navigated the Oedipal transition and internalised inner authority, on whether we are sanctioned by our role to take up authority, on being authorised by others (followership), on our sense of personal power and how that is used, how we manage boundaries, relationships, task, ethical issues, and our sense of meaning and purpose and their alignment or otherwise with the purpose of the organisation.

¹ In 1965 American CEOs made 24 times that of their workers, in 2005 it was 262 times (Mishel, Economic Policy Institute 2006) while on child welfare the US ranks 20th out of 21 rich countries (Unicef 2007). UK business inequalities are comparable and the UK occupies 21st place in the Unicef rankings.

Individual, organisation and society are interdependent, creating mutually reinforcing feedback loops of meaning and behaviours (Campbell et al 1994 pp13-14). One reaction to the climate of risk is a sense of personal impotence, leading to depression, denial and a narcissistic retreat from public life into a range of distractions. Stanley Cohen's classic work, based on his observations of South Africa under apartheid, defines several states of denial, from personal to institutionally embedded. (Cohen 2001 pp7-14). Long from a psychoanalytic perspective and Parkin from a socio-political one describe our current society as 'perverse': the consumerism and exploitation of our narcissistic culture leads to denial and ultimately perversion. The perverse position is one of "denial of reality...and is persistent in its error" (Long 2002 p180) '...against the evidence; turned aside from right or truth' (Parkin 2010 p1). The global corporation is both a symbol and manifestation of this, enacting our grandiose omnipotence, split off from the realities of society. (Bakan 2004 p113). Long emphasises the organisational corruption that results from perversion, as opposed to the psychoanalytic focus on neuroses which imply healing (Long 2002 pp191-192). In response to a 'perverse world' Parkin suggests a leader must be a 'positive deviant': '...who does the right thing for sustainability despite being surrounded by the wrong institutional structures...' (Parkin 2010 p1). Both see the organisation not as pathological but accountable.

This vignette illustrates some of the prevalent dynamics in the perverse organisation, where authentic authority is replaced by personal power.

We delivered a 9-month leadership programme² in English to high-level managers of a French global luxury perfume-cosmetics brand. HR recognised that more distributed leadership was necessary to enable the regions to capitalise on emerging markets (especially India, China and Russia). Issues of personal authority, followership, anxieties, boundaries, change and empowering others are addressed. The company is hierarchical, dominated by the president, an omnipotent 'emperor' who is both aloof and keeps a close eye on everything with the final say on new developments. The company is bound in traditions of which it is proud. Despite its prominence in the field there is no creative director due to insoluble rivalry; instead product development is done by the Marketing Team, which creates high anxiety. The pervasive myth is: we are creative, special, guardians of French culture. In counterpoint to this grandiosity the continued ascendancy of their major rival is a constant referent: they live in permanent fight-flight mode (Bion 1961 pp64-65), which undermines collective self-confidence. Mirroring their products many 'put on a brave face' and the 'mask' of authority. There is climate of sexualised power, those in authority wear sharp suits, and aggression and bullying of women and younger men is common (during a development meeting of key stakeholders the male CEO leapt up, shouting across the table at my female colleague: "Are you telling me my people are not happy here?!"). During the programme and in the 1:1 coaching sessions we witness a variety of social defences: cynical conformity, disaffection, and basic assumption Me-ness (Lawrence et al 1996 pp36-38). Empowered by their experience, programme participants exercise personal authority and take steps for change. While those operating in the factory or other countries are making effective changes to more collaborative styles of leading and seeing results in increased employee motivation, creativity and responsibility, those in the central Paris office often experience envious attacks especially from those reluctant to give up power (Stein 1997 p 454): projects may be 'killed' after months of costly development, people may be held back from promotion or moved with minimal consultation. Disruption of the status quo is threatening. Depression, anger, sarcasm, obsessive anti-task focus on the internal machinations of the company and turning a blind eye (Steiner 1985 pp161-171) are some of the evident behaviours.

² Three x 3-day modules focus on Awareness & Responsibility; Developing Potential; Vision & Change Management. Individuals develop trust and openness with each other, an understanding of interdependence, teams and followership, and develop creative ideas together.

Narcissism and denial have led to corrupt power relations at the heart of this company making it almost impossible to exercise real authority and authentic leadership (Long 2002 p 179). A central feature of the perverse position is the fear of 'not knowing'. So the introduction of coaching – based on *not* giving, or even needing to know, the answers, but instead raising awareness and responsibility through listening, questioning and reflecting – is revolutionary and anxiety provoking. In a culture where being right is essential for survival the programme is set up to fail, especially given the abdication from the programme of those with real power to action change: the CEO and managing directors. This unconsciously engineered catch-22 is captured in Obholzer's observation: 'Authority without power leads to a weakened, demoralised management. Power without authority leads to an authoritarian regime.' (Obholzer 1994 p42).³

Giving authority away: distributing, delegating and negotiating

"...We are tired of leaders we fear, tired of leaders we love, and tired of leaders who let us take liberties with them..." (Admiral Stockdale, unsourced)

The challenges of dispersed, cross-functional and project teams, and of the diversity of countries that corporates operate in, have led to the exploration of distributed models of leadership and devolved decision-making, driving the demand for coaching and leadership programmes, which in turn have highlighted and encouraged new ways of relating. Huffington and colleagues' comprehensive account of distributed leadership counts its emotional costs: especially the increased vulnerability of all concerned. (Huffington et al 2004 pp67-82). A key element of distributed leadership is the recognition and valuing of difference: the leader must let go of their own way of operating and allow for different methods with different results. This involves managing shame (re. our internal racist) and anxiety within a strong container and 'a common understanding or purpose' (Foster 2006 p20)

More permeable and flexible workplace boundaries have dispersed authority with consequent concerns regarding accountability (Cooper & Lousada 2005 pp60-61). In the corporate sector inflated grandiosity, removal of checks and balances in the pursuit of profit and consequent financial catastrophes, have led to a renewed emphasis on accountability, but a confusion as to how this can be encouraged and blended with distributed authority. For example, the leadership behaviours set by the new CEO of a US multi-national – '*empowerment and accountability*', '*thoughtful risk taking*' and '*a sense of urgency*' – seek to address this problem but only 5 per cent of managers' time is designated for managing people. This contradiction leads to 'drive-by management': delegation meant "being dumped on, bye-bye, see you in three weeks" as a program participant graphically put it. We see an anxiety-driven abdication of responsibility and absence of authentic relationships. 'It is as if distributed leadership both exacerbates and in turn fails to contain anxieties arising from the exercise of one's roles' (Huffington et al 2004 p74).

Two important developments help move us on from our love affair with the lone male leader. Women are now in leadership positions in sufficient numbers to suggest trends. Their ways of working create flexible, collaborative, people-centred and values driven cultures (Huffington 2004 pp53-55). They enable and empower others and tend to privilege emergent creativity over the heroic: nurturing the seeds in the organisation over the grand gesture (Einzig 2009 p36-39). This also contributes to emphasising laterality and downplaying vertical paternal authority. Exploring 'sibling' relationships in the workplace Huffington and Miller describe the intense rivalries and negotiation for power when authority is dispersed. (2008 pp23-24)

³ There is no direct translation of 'assertive' in French and aggression, combined with a sexualised, coercive and status-conscious style, is still associated with strong, potent leaders in France (Germain 2011, Williams 2011).

Examination of siblings also highlights the complexity of power dynamics within the family and that contemporary variety in family structures (single parent, multi-parent, extended and re-ordered families) imply more varied relationships. The child's needs lead the parents' response as much as the parent controls the child, siblings gang up against parental power just as much as they fight each other for position, the parent cedes authority as the child steps into her own. Dependence, independence and interdependence are not fixed positions but fluid and constantly negotiated dynamics. But flexible roles and increased openness come at a price 'Individuals question their own competence and their ability to act autonomously...Just when they need to build a more sophisticated psychological culture they inadvertently create a more primitive one.' (Hirschhorn 1998 p27)

From Leaders to Leading: sharing leadership, authority and power

"To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing"
Raymond Williams (unsourced)

Western proposes a new consultancy approach integrating a refreshed model of the paternal (providing structure, enabling, facilitative and linking to action) with the maternal metaphor central to the Tavistock approach (Western 1999 pp6 & 11). He suggests we cannot risk openness and exposure of dependency needs (which when unmet engender intense shame; Hirschhorn 1998 p25), unless held securely by the paternal container. Today's organisation no longer provides this containing function, so the consultant must. His description of moving fluidly back and forth between both modalities as needed offers the same possibility for today's leaders. Just as the child defines the parent, so the follower makes the leader. Comparing the organisation to a family system we see that followers can 'learn to lead as followers' (Hirschhorn 1998 p27) and perhaps leaders can become followers.

Bringing these streams of thought together – authentic authority, vulnerability, laterality, paternal and maternal containment, fluidity of modes – with the need to address the paralysing impact of high-anxiety and develop integrity and sustainability in a perverse and crumbling world I suggest a new paradigm of leadership: one that sees leadership as belonging to the group, team or organisation not vested in an individual.

The workplace today is not fixed yet workplace structures and language are still rigid with job titles and hierarchies. Language shapes meaning, how we see ourselves and our organisations; this is a social process (Campbell 2000 pp12-18) so by using the verb rather than the noun we avoid reification and the omnipotence vested in 'leadership' emphasising instead 'leading' as a dynamic activity, likewise following and collaborating. Conceiving of the three activities as a dynamic whole addresses the isolation and burden of responsibility the lone leader carries.

The three dynamics parallel the developmental stages of dependence (following/child), independence (leading/youth) and interdependence (collaborating/adult) (cf. Schutz 1995) and breaks the bi-polar split of leader/follower, carer/patient, parent/child, management/staff by creating a triangular model (Foster 1999 p65). These three abiding psychological needs could be met by this model of shared and rotated roles of leading-following-collaborating based around a central 'space to think and space to act' (Campbell 2000 pp54-55) a container for reverie (Bion 1962a p36). Thus the individual would be sanctioned and expected to occupy each position in turn, experiencing different types of authority, relationships and approaches to the task: learning, acting, envisioning, supporting (Cooper & Lousada 2005 p192). Rotation would enable and model a deliberate stepping back 'onto the balcony' to gain perspective and reflection (Heifetz & Linsky 2002 pp51-74) the opportunity to observe, occupying the 'third position' and develop '...the capacity for...entertaining another point of view whilst retaining our own...' (Britton 1989 p87). See *Appendix for draft model*.

How might we foster such a model within organisations? One way is through play and experimentation. Critical to linking (Bion 1962a p72) and recognised as an element in creativity and innovation (Halton 2004 p112) play in sibling relations points to possibilities of a 'different kind of containment...that can communicate the pleasures of self-discovery and discovery of the world and encouragement for exploration and curiosity' (Huffington 2004 p66). This is linked to libido, to Lacanian 'jouissance' and to flow (Csikszentmihalyi 1997 pp66-67).

Play is traditionally taken outside the organisation – golf, the pub, a celebration dinner – perhaps since the primal emotions released in play are a direct threat to hierarchical leadership. However without creativity the organisation becomes a lifeless and closed system. The use of play to promote a dynamic and reparative interaction between paternal, maternal and sibling positions, containing vulnerability and co-creating a new facilitative language, is demonstrated in this example.

A large UK mutual building society with over 200 local branches nationwide and over 5000 staff was the major employer in its head office in a small town in the north. Our invitation came from the new CEO, a modest, uncharismatic man who presented two primary concerns: accountability and risk taking were non-existent since neighbours and relatives over many years and several generations colluded to keep the workplace safe from envy and competition; secondly communication between the Group Executive Board (GEB) and Business Leaders (BLs) was moribund. We designed a '*Journey into Leadership*' to dovetail with their off-sites held every 2 months where GEB and BLs (35-40 total) came together for an evening plus 1 day to look at key organisational issues and strategic planning⁴. The evening dinner was fortuitous: staff felt valued and it injected a note of relaxed camaraderie that carried over to the next day. From the outset we established coaching 'buddies': fixed sessions at every off-site to share real issues. These were prized: the continuity and boundary of the sessions contained vulnerability promoting reflection, confidence and care. Through small group, pair and triad interactions, exercises, presentations and 'games' we encouraged open, respectful peer relationships. Authenticity and accountability grew. The off-site was balanced between introducing new ways of working and a focus on tackling real business issues *using* these new techniques and language. Increasingly BLs volunteered to co-design the day finding creative ways to address strategic and operational issues. The CEO joined in, occasionally setting tone and direction, while behind the scenes instigating robust processes to support accountability derived from mutual respect rather than fear of consequences.

Three months after we began the new culture was put to the test. The company acquired a smaller building society and set themselves an ambitious 7-month target for integration. The whole company now rallied round this overarching purpose, visibly enacting the positions they had been experimenting with: listening, supporting, setting vision and action, collaborating. I was asked to run 'change and transition' workshops for the acquired company to allow feelings to be expressed freely and safely; these 'maternal containers' were introduced by BLs from the 'parent company' who deliberately lowered anxiety at the outset by declaring there would be no redundancies; they explained the integration timetable (paternal containing) and listened to understand (maternal). The values of the parent company were clearly conveyed. All this instilled enthusiasm and trust and the 7-month target was met with exhilaration and pride.

The workshop, actually and symbolically, and the modelling of the facilitators, provided the

⁴ Our programme had 4 threads: developing coaching skills (listening, questioning, reflection, giving and receiving feedback); emotional intelligence (encouragement of self-awareness, vulnerability and managing emotions), becoming a leader (being comfortable leading change rather than maintaining the status quo); Appreciative Inquiry (focussing on strengths and building on positive energy).

paternal/maternal container enabling participants to move from pre-Oedipal splitting to post-Oedipal mature relationships and reparative work through the media of experimentation, play and structured collaboration. Leaders stepped out of the comfort zone of role-authority to participate as equal players in the games and exercises enacting instead 3 dynamic roles: follower, collaborator, leader. Despite large numbers, we always sat in a circle – members became attached to this representation of equality and the space-to-think, space-to-act at its centre (Campbell 2000 p54-55).

Values play a critical role in organisations today alongside the need for meaning and purpose (Campbell 2000 pp66-68; Huffington 2004 p60). Where roles are unclear, goals and products change, the task of the organisation shifts and targets move, personal and organisational values provide a foundation for integrity, meaning through connection and purpose as a compass for direction (Heifetz and Linsky 2002 pp207-236). The CEO above was what has been dubbed a Level 5 leader: combining extreme personal humility and intense professional will (Collins 2001 p36-38). He stressed the company's core values at every opportunity. Parkin offers us four values or 'habits of thought' for the 'deviant leader' to challenge perversity, shape more sustainable lives and businesses: *Resilience* (based on diversity, connections, an ecological systemic approach), *Relationships* (good, many and right), *Reflection* (thinking, deriving learning and imagining other solutions together) *Reverence* (for the power and beauty of the natural world, protecting us from omnipotent phantasy, hubris and abuse) (Parkin 2010 pp9-10)

Given our context today, the idea of the Great Leader, far from satisfying our dependency needs, is like the monolithic organisations they represent, narcissistic symbol of our perverse world. 'One of the most damaging trends in recent history is the tendency to select dazzling, celebrity leaders...' – they do not create great organisations (Collins 2001 p39). The extreme complexity and entanglement of the challenges we collectively face demands a model of leadership that echoes their systemic nature.

The unravelling of Oedipus's omnipotent delusion was triggered by the arrival of the plague in Thebes, so it may be the very severity and agglomeration of crises today that is stimulating our engagement with the painful work of awakening (of 'seeing') and reparation. This involves leading beyond role-authority (Middleton 2007 pp7-9). Constructing new realities is a social activity: signs of the growth of more healthy creative illusions (Segal 1974 p139) lie in the *collective* nature of activities at the margins of power, direct challenges to monolithic authority: youth activist groups, UK Uncut, 10:10, Transition Towns, and, more dramatically, the Arab Spring – all supported by social networking, relationships of trust and fluidity of roles around a forum for debate.

Shared power points to a way of *sustaining* leadership in a perverse world: a model of 'post-heroic' leadership. This means the sanction to move between paternal, maternal, child and sibling modes: to be dependent, independent and interdependent. The non-profit Be the Change has been experimenting with a structured model of shared leadership with reflection, vulnerability and imagination at the centre; all individuals, including the Director, step in and out of leading on specific projects and task, equally declaring their wish to take up a supportive or collaborative role. The other-as-supporter is as important as the one-who-acts (Sampson 1993 p68, cit Campbell 2000 p1). Many questions remain – not least managing boundaries, envy, competition, libido and the death instinct – but I hope these ideas indicate fruitful ground for exploration.

Conclusion: from Great to Good-Enough Leaders

Impressed with Admiral Stockdale's accounts of how he survived 8 years of torture in a Vietnamese prisoner of war camp, Jim Collins coined the term *The Stockdale Paradox*. This refers to the capacity

to 'retain faith that you will prevail in the end, regardless of the difficulties AND at the same time, confront the most brutal facts of your current reality' (Collins 2001 p86). *The Stockdale Paradox* may well provide both summary and rationale for a model of shared leadership: rather than a Great Leader we need communities of 'good-enough' leaders who, like Winnicott's mother, model compassion, curiosity and integrity – 'open hearted' as Stockdale described them, who co-create cultures of honest reflection and the 'capacity for emotional toleration of the experience of extreme complexity and anxiety' (Cooper & Lousada 2005 p203). They do this by seeing the organisation as a system, by 'acting from' different types of authority and at times deliberately stepping aside from leading to 'stand beside' or behind, thereby enabling our *collective* capacity to look the most perverse and dispiriting aspects of our current workplaces/societies firmly in the face and yet keep hope alive.

APPENDIX

Dynamic-Systemic Model of Leadership

FOLLOWING

Child energy

Dependent

Learning
Listening and observing
Reflection and dreams
Playful
Joyful
Tactical
Questioning
Sustaining
Exploring
Understanding
Mirroring

**Challenges/blockers:
passive, frustration,
passenger, waiting, fearful,
hopeful, procrastinates, no
action**

LEADING

Youth/sibling energy

Independent

Creative
Ideas and ideals
Single focus
Action oriented
Optimistic
Hopeful
Visionary
Challenging
Tactical
Enrolling
Galvanizing

**Challenges/blockers: over
active, no reflection,
aggression, competitive to
win/lose, lack of
consideration for others**

COLLABORATING

Adult/parental energy

Inter-dependent

Co-creative
Flexible
Supporting and receiving
Team player
Seeks a win-win-win-win
(self-team-wider
organization-society)
Grounded values
Practical and Strategic
Realistic
Building

**Challenges/blockers:
group-think, comfortable,
less open to change,
depression, oceanic
merging**

This is an ideal model. It could be used for a project team, a department, a senior management team or as fractals of the whole organisation. Leadership is composed of all three dynamics and belongs to the group as a whole. There is no leading without following and collaborating – all are seen as vital parts of a systemic whole; mandated authority is vested in each position.

These three positions could correspond structurally and organisationally to sanctioned roles. Members of a team / organisation must fulfil each role at some point in their working cycle, preferably at regular intervals. Rotation can be driven by project, task, personal need, set periods of time according to the needs, type and style of the organisation.

Methodology for decision-making will vary from organisation to organisation – from consensus to whoever is in the leading role for that period. The organisational symbol is of equals positioned around a circle of leadership. Actually sitting in a circle at meetings reinforces that equality of value. The empty space at the centre is as important as the group encircling it: this is literally the space to think, for reverie, for considered action, for shared thoughtful risk-taking. This is a maternal container with paternal containment represented by this organisational structure, by the meeting, decision-making procedures and rules of accountability.

Meetings are divided into the 'how' (we work together) and the 'what' (we do – our task and actions) with designated time given to personal and interpersonal dynamics. Vulnerability, doubt, competitiveness, envy and anxiety are legitimately addressed within the circle helping to reduce the likelihood of them undermining the organisation's wellbeing. Likewise creativity and collaboration are encouraged as part of collective endeavour as well as individual effort. Thanatos is welcomed alongside libido as part of the cycle of life.

Glossary of Psychoanalytic Terms used in this paper

Containment: The capacity of any entity to keep within its own boundaries parts that arouse anxiety. An aspect of resilience, effective containment allows an increased ability to tolerate and explore feelings, building self-esteem and self-confidence.

Oedipal phase: The period during a child's development characterised by erotic attachment to the parent of the opposite sex, repressed because of fear of the parent of the same sex; usually occurring between the ages of 3 and 6 years. Navigated well, it facilitates transition from narcissistic self-centeredness to the capacity to develop relational social bonds, to empathize and see things from the point of view of another.

Narcissistic: Seeking personal gratification over achievement of social goals and conformance to social values – pathological when the narcissist lacks normal empathy and uses others ruthlessly to their own ends.

Grandiose omnipotent delusion: One aspect of an Oedipal narcissism is a failure to move from a grandiose perception of self to a cohesive self, capable of empathic 'third position' (see below). Without this process of 'disillusionment', delusions of omnipotence persist, including megalomania, fantasies of special powers etc. In study of group behaviour and leadership.

Basic assumption Me (BaM): In observing group behaviour, the analyst Wilfred Bion describes how groups operate as if all were making the same assumption: defending against an outside threat; dependent on a leader; waiting for a saviour, or saving idea. This 'basic assumption' was a subsequent addition to his model by Lawrence et al. It describes when group members deny (to themselves or to the group) that they are members or that the group has any reality or potency. This results in them being unable to effectively engage with each other or the group's task.

Paternal metaphor: a way of describing the actions of providing structure, task, boundaries, authority, reality testing in an organisation.

Maternal metaphor: a way of describing the caring, containing, empathic, holding, reflecting, sustaining actions within organisations.

Third position: describes our capacity to be outside and observe relationships as a witness not as a participant. Britton uses this concept to describe a turning point in development achieved when the relationship between the 2 parents – which does not include him/her – can be tolerated in the child's mind.

Reparation: A term used by Klein to indicate a psychological process, something more than the making of amends. In this framework, the child's guilt and shame (for his/her angry and envious feelings towards their parent) can be seen as potentially positive drivers, by leading to healing through creative and other behaviours driven by reparative urges.

Jouissance: Concept used by Lacan - the experience of too much pleasure.

Psychological projection: a psychological defense mechanism where a person subconsciously denies his or her own attributes, thoughts, and emotions, which are then split off and ascribed to the outside world, usually to other people.

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