

Walking Into The Winds of Change



Crisis mitigation
Organisational Learning
Nurturing communities

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Produced by the
Central Coast Community Shed Inc

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Prologue

Where to from here ...?

A conversation, mitigating crisis, a sharing of thoughts

This is a book about re-imagining our communities, relationships and the development of a media which supports and nurtures people in crisis.

It is said a man's life is fleeting,
But we must find time to make that change,
In the way man thinks or does things,
Or how he should play the game.

It is said man's life is a duty,
To make sense of the way things are done,
We should look to the past for our future,
As if our future is there preordained.

It is said man's life is a struggle,
But that one should never complain,
We should stand tall and be counted,
Amongst all that look just the same.

It is said man's life is wasted,
If he shies from money or fame,
When he runs away from danger,
Or says no to playing the game.

It is said man's life is his alone,
But this makes us all a bit lame,
For man doesn't write his own epitaph,
Because life is never that tame.

By now you would have an inkling that this is a cross over textbook where the following pages will speak of many things in a manner which I hope is conversational rather than tutorial. But times are strange and so in the shadow of fake news and manufactured dissent I suspect you, my reader, may be wary of a conversation that might appear to politicise or critique contemporary thinking without offering the source of the basis to such critique. So, if you were to flick to the back pages you will find both a Glossary and Referencing, just in case you require these details. Although I write this in Australia, I believe our conversation to be universal as I am trying to discuss and critique the ways of thinking and the language used to progress ideology, rather than the belief structure the ideology rests upon, by utilising a global canvass.

There are occasions however where my personal beliefs will intrude and for this I make no apology for the book will argue such intrusion is what makes conversation itself vital to

humanity and the expression of democratic ideals amongst people. I started this book in 2018, when my companions requested I share some of my experiences and training with them. We planned that we, together, would be able to mitigate some communal crisis that was concerning our community. However, our world, as was yours, was changed, firstly by some terrible bush fires and then by a growing recognition of political incompetence. It was, of course, this incompetence which was to eventually exasperate the efforts to mitigate Covid19 and its unfolding horrors. I decided therefore, as times became much darker, to make our conversation ongoing and so, with this book as a primer, we will discuss the ways communities can enable new pathways to social and emotional wellbeing within individuals.

Our purpose from here is to explore how we can encourage communities to reconnect to the skills and talents that enable folk to celebrate those impulses of a deeper birth. And how these arts, once blended, nurtured and shared, allow for self-determination and resilience to grow within individuals to enable communities to walk confidently into the perplexing winds of change.

Part One

An introduction

Crisis, companionship and conversations.

The interesting thing about a mistake is that there is no mistake until the person who has stepped in something smelly, belatedly recognises that things may have gone more than a little pear shaped due to the odour emanating from somewhere apparently quite close by. Unfortunately, by this time, the revelation is usually being pre-empted simply because people who are near about are now starting to look from whence a strange odour seems to be originating. The endeavour one faces thereafter is to rid the offending shoe of the muck as surreptitiously as possible so one can re-join the throng cleansed of any approbation or offending olfactory distress. Of course, the irony inherent within the story thus far is that the actual mistake being made lies not in stepping in the manure in the first place, for it is simply not owning up to the source of the smell and apologizing when the air about one ripens. But herein is the rub, while one could just apologise, make a bit of fun out of the situation or basically own up, why is it so difficult to own up to a simple mistake? Every day mistakes seem to get a life of their own simply because someone who has trodden in some muck, rather than employing a strategic (or principled) reaction, chooses to set in motion a series of tactics to avoid embarrassment or blame and from this point onwards the subterfuge becomes increasingly farcical until eventually, they belatedly recognise they now face a crisis of their own making.

But before we get to really examine the smelly bits and the crisis portended, a bit of backgrounding is needed. Although the dangers of modern vaccines had not been identified, as they were still to be developed, I was born into my very own autistic world in the very early 1950s. I mention this because being Autistic makes people like myself 'different' and as such we can never truly see ourselves as being part of the 'mainstream'. Although it was to take many years for autism to be recognised as a spectrum, that hosted many different conditions and behaviours, I was to recognise somewhat sooner than the rest of the world that the outside world was usually not autistic and it was this revelation that led me to require that it was to be other people (usually people who were to try to 'teach' me) who were to struggle to understand the gifts and challenges that were daily exposed to me via the lenses of the autistic spectrum. Such hubris therefore was to leave me blissfully unaware that people who tried to converse with me were often left rather frustrated for, as they were viewing the world through very different lenses, the worlds we were exploring were often opaque to one another. And so, one of the many gifts I would discover quite early in life was that my world was to be populated by stories which I had to describe in some detail so people could examine what I was seeing simply because, to me, mere conversation was fleeting and so often without depth. This was because it seemed conversation had to have something which was called 'the point', as in "for all that is Holy, get to 'the point' boy". So although people veered from conversation with me, for I could rarely 'see' what 'point' it was they wanted me to get to, I was to find, thanks to my Gran, that if I sat quietly this silence would usually inspire the telling of stories. Such stories would be listened to avidly for I was, thanks to a

freak of memory able to retain the stories even though any social contact through them was to remain mystifying.

So, while my freakish memory meant I was able to retain, decipher and deconstruct pictures, patterns and stories at my leisure, even over a period of years, my constant challenge was that the ever evolving social worlds of family or friends as such were not to be so easily examined nor deconstructed. And as these social worlds were not to be shared I was doomed to universally hold myself as being outside of the shop peering through its window at a kaleidoscope of shifting colours, patterns and shapes. However, the stories I was to gather, though mostly fantasy and science fiction, were to later become inspirational for in the early 60s my world was to evolve as I watched via a snowy black and white television as the young people of the world began to define their voices, their music and their arts and I was to begin to understand how I was to be able to draw the shifting colours, patterns and shapes of language and cultures into new stories. It came to pass these 'new' stories allowed me to celebrate and sustain 'difference' in very much in the same way as the suffragettes and feminists had some 80 or so years before. So, although my exploration or insights of autism can still be difficult to explain. I would add that it was revelatory when at thirteen an elderly optometrist provided me with my first pair of spectacles to correct my short sightedness. As I followed my mother from the surgery, I immediately discovered the blurred, indistinct haze that previously existed beyond my nose was in fact much sharper and the world far more defined than I had ever experienced. Although this revelation, that what we don't feel or see, we often do not miss, was startling. The immediate downside was, to my disappointment, that this sharper, much clearer vision was not to extend to, nor was it to alleviate, the blurring, indistinctness of the social connections that continued to limit my explorations of communal life.

I was destined therefore to have to delve much deeper into my immature psyche before I was to understand the more personal incapability's which had to be addressed before I would be able to come to grips with what I came to perceive as an increasingly confused world. So, while I had recognised as a callow youth that if one had never felt nor observed a phenomena, they were often destined to never know what it was that was absent in their life. There were still many years to pass before I was astute, or maybe mature enough, to understand that learning to face disability or crisis in life is actually the act of opening oneself to experiences that challenge the forms of blindness and deafness that apply shutters and shadows to our eyes, ears and ultimately our mind. For it is only when we refuse to own our incompetence that the hubris of this narcissism is what prevents us from openly admitting to our mistakes. So, as we converse via this narrative of history, language, cultures, hopes and fears, I will attempt to address some of the shutters which today combine to define and confine our contemporary realities and I do so in order to shine a glimmer of light into those darkened corners which I believe actually give birth to the winds of change that come to swirl about us and buffet our steps as we struggle onwards to face whatever our Fates have demanded. I am going to argue we need to stand tall, stand proud within these winds of change for when one looks beyond change, that nether world where doubt and ignorance is given naissance, we find that empathy and resolve can give birth to principles and strategies which, when grasped, can be expounded in a way that brings people together in companionship.

Therefore, dear reader, please accept that this cannot be my story alone. The personal, perpendicular pronoun 'I' can only exist in this narrative as an amalgam of characters, mentors and friends plus quite a few enemies (for I've always kept them close) and of course you, for it is you who now brings balance and adds credence to this story which, I hope, will

be read in many different ways. For, as I have explained, the story of 'I' was born within the realization that as I made my way through this world it was evident that one of the most important things in life was that I should always find somebody to talk to, to share stories with and to explore the strategies within these stories which, if we followed them, could improve the human condition. For this is a quest which, as we shall see, demands to be shared. This meant that everywhere I came to wander was to be populated by people who had travelled further than I, often to or from exotic places, or who had worked in far more fascinating jobs, or those who could share with me the stories that had helped them face the demands their worlds had placed upon them. As my world expanded, these stories so freely shared, became blended within me with their strengths, knowledges and wisdom becoming instrumental in feeding an abiding love of stories that celebrated the Arts and their ability to contribute to humanity and its condition.

And so, as shared existences, the stories with their strategies and principles were, over time, blended to form the basis to my phronesis about life and how my views, shaped by the ever gusting winds of change, had to become as diverse as nature itself. And so, it was evidentiary that I was destined to write about conversations and the strategies they expound to simply share with you how our ability to converse can subtly change the substance and character of our audiences. And therefore, how beneficial it can be to focus on the principles within a story rather than to just espouse the artistic and social values of having a good, entertaining natter. Within the 'I' however there also exists an anguish that in the Western world there is perceived diffidence by many, most often males, to engage in serious conversation. It was this perception and the social isolation that it speaks of, that leads me to suspect that the 20th Century's dedication to the teaching and development of rhetorical skills and the methodologies of public speaking and debating has, historically, simply put the cart before the horse. But why should this be so? Well firstly, it should be understood a conversation does not have to be verbal while secondly, I'm suggesting the problem with modern conversation is that we have had it drummed into us from the day that we learned to talk that we needed to have an agenda, in other words we were told to think before we spoke, or if we had nothing 'intelligent' to say then to say nothing. Ah, there's that damned 'point'!

This means agenda trumps social complexity, we learn to use rhetoric and rhetorical devices to advance our political agenda rather than risk the social imperatives of speaking our mind. It thus comes to pass, political correctness becomes the lazy way to steer our conversations and then, later in life, by how we can invoke the upper hand by utilising rhetorical posturing. For example, you, the reader, may note I speak of the male gender more or less exclusively which, today, may give rise to a charge of being politically incorrect. But please remember, as I am autistic, I struggle with empathy and although I can imagine how other men may struggle with conversation and social ineptness. I can only begin to suspect that women who, as we saw earlier, politically dedicated the past hundred or so years to developing the language of Feminism. And achieved many of their social aims by simply and courageously uniting their political voice to prize open social spheres that had been historically controlled by an arrogant, ignorant and apathetic male orientated language.

So, since social conversation is often entered into with trepidation, because to actually converse is to cast oneself adrift in a sea of words and feelings that many of us fear we cannot navigate, polite conversation is often an unknown Other that presents itself as the shoals and reefs of social gaffe and embarrassment. But what might this be saying about the 21st Century male, does he continue to demonstrate an aversion to conversation since surely today's technology has improved conversational skills, while advances in social media mean

our likes and dislikes are today shared freely by conversation conducted via the technology of social media? Although, I tend to believe the underlying fear which drives the marketplace for speaking development may be based in fallacy that doesn't mean the fear of imminent social embarrassment isn't real. It must be pointed out however that people do not talk simply because they need to make a point, for people have a consummate need to join in conversation both as a social lubricant and because face to face conversation is the only communication that truly fosters both trust and empathy. This view therefore sees conversation as a form of Art since, as Tolstoy observes in his essay 'What is art', "*Art is not, as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious idea of beauty or God; it is not, as the aesthetical physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the expression of man's emotions by external signs; it is not the production of pleasing objects; and, above all, it is not pleasure; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress toward well-being of individuals and of humanity*".

So, could we now say that face to face conversation is "indispensable for the life and progress toward well-being of individuals and of humanity"?

I would immediately answer, absolutely, and yet it is within my certainty that I see the basic elements of the philistine rising to the challenge for in the 1930s, it is to be remembered, Art was remade in the European image as Fascism's New Order challenged the messy democratisation of cultural initiatives and cosmopolitan thinking. So, from the politicisation of Art, through to what should constitute Art, the major challenge to art in the 20th Century was to eventuate from the unchallenged acceptance of the Corporatisation of art.

The commodification of art manifested itself as unfettered mass consumerism which then foreshadowed today's popular culture with its ability to turn the artist into a celebrity. Under global Corporatisation the agency of Capitalism was to commodify all 'things' as integral parts of the economic imperative which would underpin the principle that the economic productivity of industrial nations should always continue to grow. An interesting story of how this economic appropriation operates is the how the officially designated Australian Aboriginal Flag came to be controlled by copyright licenses for both its manufacture and marketing by non-Indigenous Corporations. That a national flag can be commoditised can be taken to demonstrate how mass consumerism, as interiorised within Corporatised language, requires that conversations conducted in English, for English is the globally accepted language of business, has come to increasingly exemplify the how the economics of cultural artefacts and image come to eclipse social values or metaphysical principles.

Commodification is a form of social engineering. For example, the phone and the internet were to derive an iconic status due to the advancements they apparently brought to the World as a whole. However, this observation begs the question, was mass consumerism coupled with technology, which initially heralded a global cultural poverty that exasperated a growing functional illiteracy. Due to the cost of the technology or because the global social engineering of the Technocracy had pragmatically marketed and amplified technology's inherent ability to seduce? However, whether price or seduction, neither marketing device would engender nor prompt concerns that would draw attention to technology's ability to socially engineer. And it is this engineering that we shall now explore for it has created an increasing reliance on technology because it seduces the way people think about technology and its abilities as a form of default.

Whatever was the case, people were increasingly forced by this default into seeking refuge in a technological world of illusion where the language of the mass media created its own reality, even though such 'reality' was merely a manufactured chimera. Within the chimera, it can be argued, any altruism at the heart of the media narrative will always be in direct conflict with consumerism. For example, as the Covid19 pandemic advanced globally, the governments of the US, UK and Australia were to implement an ideologically grounded narrative initiating dual paradigms which while emphasising a 'Wealth before Health' imperative, was coupled with a duality that argued for suppression rather than an elimination of the virus. These strategies designed to limit lockdowns, aimed at reducing overall costs to the economy. While the disavowing of facemasks was an attempt to define the pandemic within an economic imperative based within the flawed expectations of herd immunity.

However, such political intransigence was to force any opposing, 'Health before Wealth' narratives to maintain strategies which aimed to eliminate the virus, such as those followed by New Zealand. This default was politically engendered to define Health before Wealth narratives as being undemocratic, 'Communist' or 'Socialist' ideology. Therefore, the 'Health before Wealth' elimination narrative was thus pragmatically and ideologically positioned within the mass media as 'opposing' Democratic 'freedoms'. From this observation we are now able to discern how the ascendancy of positivism and pragmatism within the mass and social medias came to take political ascendancy and precedence over any humanitarian concern or socially based policy. Simply put Corporatised language utilises politically laden binary opposites to linguistically oppose humanist principles by equating them with Communism or Socialist ideals. However, I will be suggesting later in our conversation that Covid19 redefined the corporate capture of language for as the winds of change swept through Global politics an apparent governmental and corporate incompetence, arrogance and hubris revealed deep seated political hypocrisies which fed a prevailing Culture of Avoidance.

Corporatised language, having long been dominated by narcissism, marketing and spin, has been clearly demonstrated to be in no way capable of developing an empathic, Humanitarian language that speaks directly to the people. By August 2020 the mass media chimera, which had historically dominated political narratives, began unravelling globally as the Covid19 pandemic surged past 30 million cases worldwide and public narratives increasingly rejected politically laden economic imperatives of 'Wealth before Health'. This meant however that by the time, "we are all in this together" was heard by the people it was already blindingly obvious to most that the slogan was little more than empty rhetoric. By September 2020 the political and ideologically motivated dual narratives and their binary oppositions had already been exasperated by the exponential spread of the virus. So, as the uncertainties of the Second Wave spread the vacuum of coherent public conversations this mixed messaging gave voice to a number of protest narratives which began to fill the silences. And it was these dissenting voices which were to both challenge and disrupt the Politics of Change globally for many municipal organisations and the Corporatised private/public partnerships that supported them were seen to be failing to mitigate the increasing social hardships and civil unrest.

It is evident today the mass media chimera of Corporate language failed to deliver or maintain a cohesive, inclusive conversation that both lead and supported essential workers and their communities as they worked and walked together to mitigate the pandemic. This dearth of leadership resulted in profound implications for the political stability of many

nations. It is here that I can argue that the crisis of confidence that today faces Western governance has been created by the arrogance, hubris and greed of Corporate neoliberalism. This is because, as its language demonstrates, there is nothing of substance at its heart, which means it is nothing more than a narcissistic dogma. It is therefore this dogma within Corporatism, since it is based within 'group think' or 'group membership', is diametrically opposed to Democracy. This is because, as equality and freedom inherently speak to the nexus within democracy, this recognition merely adds to the paradox within the thinking of the corporate technocracy. Therefore, it is this paradox that exasperates the limitations of group membership because Corporate ideology must inherently demand a calculation be applied to the democratic principle that the team should always be put before the Self, for there is no 'I' in Team.

Within neoliberalism, it is evident the mass media, social media and the marketplace having evolved to resemble and feed upon each other, have today concentrated into a Corporatised language that responds to crisis with anger and prevarication because the paradox puts the Individual outside of the 'mainstream'. This means the mass media, being biased by corporatist pragmatism and managerial in structure, being as it draws its hegemony from technology, only appreciates individuals as being only as powerful as their connections or network. It is this view, in part, which can answer the attraction of 'friends' and 'followers' on social media or, on the other hand, the corporate hatred of unfettered unionism. Here corporate language, as an extension of the ideological and technocratic arguments against the ideals of the social license and its shades of Marxism, has led to global increase in social discontent and a marked resurgence in structural racism.

However, this viewpoint begs the question of why does this spectre of Marxism still reflect so powerfully within contemporary language?

Zephyrs from the past

Pride and prejudice, the rise and rise of Corporatism

As this century unfolded the world's consciousness was drawn increasingly to the vexing question of whether any corporate body could or should be allowed to become 'too big to fail'. Even though in the US economist, Alan Greenspan dismissed the fear by declaring, "if they're too big to fail, they're too big" there was already a dictate that when crisis approached the economic imperative that dictated that the economic productivity of industrial nations must always continue to grow. This imperative would historically and politically assert a 'Culture of Avoidance' to trigger a government and industry sector pre-condition that the health of the economy and national image demanded corporate failure was to be avoided. Of course, Imperialism provided the easy out and governments introduced the 'bailout' which, once interiorised by successive governments this artificial vision of corporate management, in that it was the professional elites of management who were being supported by Government rather than the failure itself, required that government socialise any losses in the marketplace while allowing management to privatise the profits.

A quick look at European history can demonstrate how Imperialism, Industry, Capitalism and Marxism came together in the 18th Century as the modern Europe was forming. Languages, cultures, processes, societal practices and pragmatism came together to blend into a distillation which would eventually divide political arbitration between Capitalism and Socialism. Europe had already spread its influence around the world, while its technological advances were already demonstrating that people everywhere were ill-equipped to face the

technological forces of industrialisation, the political advancement of Capitalisation and a creeping commodification within the workplace. The diffusion of Imperialism by Europe to feed an insatiable industrialisation, had already consumed most of the cheaper and more easily available resources in Africa, the Middle East and the Americas by the time the tentacles of Imperialism were to reach across the world to Australasia/China/Japan and the Pacific. At the forefront of this rape and pillage was the East India Company founded on the 31st December 1600 where by 1803 it had reached the height of its rule in India where it commanded a private army of about 260,000 troops, which was reportedly twice the size of the British Army of the day. For the purposes here, it is notable that the East India Company, being arguably the first truly global corporation, by its successful influencing and challenging of British political thinking for over three hundred years, was to be also instrumental in the pragmatic development of the English language as the globalized language of business. For example, by the early 1800s the British Government, concerned that the increasing amounts of silver the East India Company used to pay for trade goods from Asia was draining Europe economically, encouraged the Company to look for something other than silver to pay for the goods that were flooding into Europe. The East India Company, already growing and shipping opium grown in India had found the drug to be monetarily 'extremely lucrative' and although the uptake of the drug had already become a 'horror' to Europeans the Company became deeply complicit in the smuggling of the drug into China to balance the European trade deficit.

Although the British government abolished the East India Company's trade monopoly in 1834, the smuggling of opium into China thereafter was intensified by European 'private traders' utilising East India Company influences and shipping. After China threatened to use military force against the trade, Britain, defending the principle of so called 'Free Trade', declared war against China firstly in 1839-42 (1st Opium War) and then joining with France in 1856-60 (2nd Opium War). The Opium Wars were a humiliating defeat of the Chinese nation and to the delight of British merchants, the trade treaty which followed ceded the island of Hong Kong to Britain until the year, 1997.

Today, with the benefit of hindsight, it would be easy to declare that the British Government was an active participant in the smuggling of opium into China. However, as has been noted, European merchants trading with China were taking ever increasing amounts of silver out of Europe to pay for Asian trade goods and as the colonial wars between Britain and Spain had previously destabilized the silver markets the European economies had shrunk markedly as a result. But China, able to import silver from Japan to stabilize its money supply, remained robust but, as European goods were to remain in low demand in China, a long-term trade surplus was always going to be the end result. Therefore, today it can be clearly perceived that the conception of Hong Kong as a 'Special Administrative Region' demonstrates how language and strategic principles can be pragmatically utilized by national interest or economic imperatives to allow for separate governance and economic systems to operate in the one country. However, this prompts the question of what other 'horrors' might such pragmatism be hiding?

It is notable that in Britain, by the early 1800s, Humanitarianism having had some success with the abolition of slavery within the British dominions, had already laid the modern political foundations of the Empire's expansion eastward. For example, the principle that any Imperial expansion should have a Duty of Care towards the many subject races who were coming under the British flag had already been carried forward by William Wilberforce, while Stamford Raffles was to bring this principle into actual effect in Java. Thereafter, that

such a policy of a Duty of Care should also transcend the making of business profits was to become a clear demonstration of England's extraordinary hold over global trade, for this humanitarian practice of not seeking an advantage by causing a detriment to others became one of Britain's most valuable assets overseas. But, while being an asset, it was also proven to be a paradox for as the second Anglo/Chinese war loomed the Duke of Wellington was to sum up the flagrant abuses of the Opium trade which had by this time degenerated into outright piracy in his Memorandum to the Government with the famous dictum, "That which we require now is, not to lose the enjoyment of what we have got".[i] (p.274, Collis) We can turn now to the reverse side of the Corporatized coin of the 1800s, America, whose population growing from five million in 1800 to over 23 million people by 1850, were being driven westwards by the promises and mindset of the Manifest Destiny. This drive to the West and the riches there promised had already initiated localised conflicts and outright war with Spain, Mexico and the Indian Nations and the same combination of economic considerations and beliefs that motivated the expansion of territory were, after the American Civil War, to drive the seeking of trade and markets, along with the spread of Protestant Christianity, across the Pacific for many Americans believed theirs was a special responsibility under God to both modernise and civilize the Japanese and Chinese peoples. Following hard on the heels of American expansionism was America's first recognised corporate body, the Boston Manufacturing Company founded in 1813 with a business model that had been imported from the UK[ii].

From this time forward American corporations, due to their easy access to capital, were thus destined to become a controversial element in not only the economic, political and cultural identity of the US but also in all the territories the American doctrine came to touch. Thereafter, even though the dawning of the 20th Century was to bring to an end the period dominated by the 'Robber Barons' there was little to no political will to dampen the scourge of 'rent seeking' or the rise of state assisted industrialisation. An example of Corporate America of the times is the story of Coca-Cola, started in 1886 by pharmacist Dr John S Pemberton, its business plan can now be examined as a case in point. It has been long established that Coca-Cola did, controversially, contain cocaine in varying amounts from 1886 through to 1929. Although at this time the use of cocaine was legal, as it was treated as a medicine, it wasn't until the 1900s that the government broadened taxation to control the spread of medicinal products and their dangers, henceforth pharmaceuticals were to become increasingly legislated. Before this legislative change took effect however Coca-Cola rebranded itself as a 'soft drink' manufacturer and it can be argued that this was in effect an unashamedly pragmatic business decision designed more so to avoid the increasingly punitive taxation regime rather than to protect its consumers. This pragmatism is still utilized today for in a quote from a spokesperson for the Coca-Cola company it is accepted that, "ingredients from the coca leaf are used, but there is no cocaine in it and it is all tightly overseen by regulatory authorities."[iii]

So, these readings taken together could indicate that what we are actually seeing within these stories is the pragmatic arrogance inherent within Corporatism which has developed, promoted and mediated language which, when laced with binary opposites, are utilised by both Government and Industry to both fuel and drive the myths inherent within the economic imperative. Such a reading can also demonstrate how the English language, once reconfigured by the rhetoric of business, would allow for and later excuse the Corporate capture of governance as part of the rebranding of corporate ideology as Corporations became an integral part of the globalization of economic resources. However, it has to be recognised that such commodification of language comes at an extreme cost to humanity

because it demonstrates how pragmatism and positivism in language, when used to emphasize how ‘trade’ trumps social justice, must historically overrule any social agent dimension of resistance. I would argue the immense costs to humanity, as drawn from the stories above, personify how the ‘horror’ of the millions of deaths directly attributed to the corporatisation of drug addiction were for centuries silenced or cancelled by corporate rhetoric which was enabled by the economic imperatives of global trade and its Imperially inspired Culture of Avoidance. We can now return to the “smelly bit” for we can now see how this historically cosy relationship between corporations and governments firstly gave precedence to Management and its Culture of Avoidance thus enabling a toxicity to spread throughout Corporatised governance. This toxicity, enshrined within language, ultimately blames the victim for any malfeasance.

This observation means however we must look much deeper within the Culture of Avoidance to see how the spectre of conscious incompetence, in part, underpins an economic mythology. It is this mythology that perpetuates the belief that the continuing advancement of the service industries, the global aspirations of unfettered financial speculation by management and the managerial upholding of the potential held by the controlling of the interests of governance, communications and media is the one true path to a profitable future. But what is ‘conscious incompetence’?

Conscious incompetence, the second step of Maslow’s ‘Four Stages of Competence’, demonstrates how individuals can become aware that they don’t understand or know how to do something which thus becomes an awareness that such a deficit could be significant. Maslow recognized how this conscious admitting of our lack of understanding which accompanies the making of mistakes is what makes mistakes central to the learning process. So, it is through conscious incompetence that the learner can consciously define and redefine learned skills through practice. However, within the Culture of Avoidance mistakes are accepted as a ‘cost of doing business’ simply because the corporate ‘professional’ as part of a team deems a mistake or admission of a mistake as tantamount to letting the team down. This means that eugenics are being unconsciously valourised in that individual physical or mental ‘differences’ are seized upon as being an undesirable element not only to team commitment but also to the advancement of the corporate mission.

This is an important consideration since team dynamics, being hierarchal, are being managed so the team works as a whole so the conscious incompetency of teamwork is geared to defining the management as equalling ‘doing’, as in doing equals ‘making’. However, the fallacy this metaphor hides is simply that ‘managing’ or management is neither ‘doing’ nor ‘making’ (Saul 1997). Put simply corporate management is a technocracy that deludes itself with an artificial vision of productivity that is propagated by a carefully constructed language of internal referencing that argues that it workers in the front line work are more productive if the management is well funded. Therefore, it is this managerial mythology that has morphed into a positivistic toxicity when greed is allowed to, unconsciously, influence the language of political and cultural practices across the Western world. Within the Culture of Avoidance it can be observed how ethical or Humanitarian concerns are silenced by conscious incompetence simply because Corporate language has been trained by default to an internalisation of team speak and its eugenically biased ideology. As Saul (1997) explains, in the corporate world there is an “*artificial vision of civilisation ... everything is carefully measured, so that [there are always] heartening ‘body counts’ of growth or job creation or whatever can be produced. Truth is not in the world, it is in the measurements made by professionals*”[iv]. However, because equity and fairness are a shared responsibility it must

also be recognised that the social and public interests being silenced globally by corporate ideology is today seriously flawed simply by its lack of empathy.

Humanitarian principles demonstrate that every individual should accept the responsibility to oversee their own interests to ensure they do not impact unfavourably upon others. However, since the Culture of Avoidance shuns such individualism, corporate teamwork internalises a default that bias technological pathways or abilities over humanitarian ethos to either 'fix' or 'socialise' the costs of doing business. Here, the lack of self appraisal flowing from the arrogance of conscious incompetence, means that organisational learning itself is not advanced and neither is the human condition. But what brought about this technocratic disconnection?

Talking about change where can we go in a crisis?

Mediatisation, Political realities or fiction as fact

The work of Harold Innes (1894-1952) contributed to the concept of time, space and media when he writes in 'Empire and Communications': "The concepts of time and space reflect the significance of media to civilization. Media that emphasize time are those durable in character such as parchment, clay and stone. The heavy materials are suited to the development of architecture and sculpture. Media that emphasize space are apt to be less durable and light in character such as papyrus and paper. The latter are suited to wide areas in administration and trade. The conquest of Egypt by Rome gave access to supplies of papyrus, which became the basis of a large administrative empire. Materials that emphasize time favour decentralization and hierarchical types of institutions, while those that emphasize space favour centralization and systems of government less hierarchical in character." (Oxford, Oxford University Press. P.7)

The concepts that Innes apply reflect on how the materials of communication can be applied contextually to a communications medium. While here, I will attempt to address how industrial and corporate conceptualisation of time and space can be applied linguistically to demonstrate how today's electronic media contributed to the detriment of a number of important social imperatives and impairs organizational learning. It is accepted that an industrialised culture values a product not only for its usefulness but also for its ability to reshape society with the reshaping being marked by a widening of cultural acquiescence to technological ascendancy. This means telecommunications, marketed on the basis of immediacy, coverage and economy, will take social precedence over other forms of communication such as letters, face to face meetings or document exchanges. This form of social ascendancy is then mirrored within language whereby the older, slower technology is often referred to disparagingly, as was seen when e-mail ascended over the posting of letters which then became 'snail mail' and whereby, face to face meetings between individuals became 'talk fests' as video conferencing became the norm. For example, the telephone, by its domination of interpersonal communications in the early 20th century was to become even more ubiquitous than the hamburger. However, with its global reach and its promise of instant communication via voice, text and then the internet, the advent of digitalized communication was to concurrently develop into a worrying font of bullying, invasion of privacy and increasingly expensive outlays for its users.

Corporate advocates within the telecommunications industry were very quick to defend their industry against such observations by contending that it was the end user who had to accept and demonstrate responsibility in technological usage rather than for government red or green tape, or even industry self-regulation to mitigate any limitations of usage or expense. However, this argument becomes fallacy when it is acknowledged that in society there exists a Duty of Care which manifests as a shared responsibility between the manufacturer of an artifact, in the first instance, and its user in the second. This Duty of Care means ethically a number of social and governance expectations mandate that artefacts must be produced and marketed in the first instance as suitable and safe for purpose when utilised in accordance with socially responsible guidelines and they are used in a manner consistent with health and safety legislation in the second. However, as already argued, Corporate thinking dismisses many forms of ethical expectations within product compliance as socialist altruism so, in our technological world, ethical concerns are, by default, excised from

language to be replaced by legal jargon derived from the culture of avoidance which asks of itself only, 'can I' rather than 'should I'.

So, having utilised history to demonstrate how language has been used to diminish many of the social and regulatory restraints of corporate power as somehow being counterproductive to the profit margins that drove and controlled the marketplace. I can now argue that the corporations, once freed of the red and green tapes of governance, would target consumers who stripped of ethical product protection or tempted by industry towards overindulgence and its debts would be henceforth blamed for their victimhood as part of the toxicity carried within the myths of the Culture of Avoidance. Although many have argued (including the author) that it was mainly the industrialisation of society that created much of the dependency of overindulgence, as is perceived in the Western World in general, such an argument may not be applicable here. This is because it can be suggested that a deeper reading of the effects of industrialisation demonstrates that it is the way that Time and Space came to be valued economically in the 18th Century which can provide a greater insight into the conceptualisation and usage of modern telecommunications and how mediatisation came to effect both thinking and its language.

As we are talking here about contemporary society we could turn to such as George Harrison (1943-2001) and how he saw his contemporaries perceiving time, "*[i]t's being here now that's important. There's no past and there's no future. Time is a very misleading thing. All there is ever, is the now. We can gain experience from the past, but we can't relive it; and we can hope for the future, but we don't know if there is one.*" Here we see expressed the Now view, as in 'here today, gone tomorrow' the imperative being expressed is that an individual should live for the day as they may not see another. Harrison's observation also demonstrates that contemporary society sees Time as something fleeting as in, "[t]here's no past and there's no future" so he appears to be channelling the modern reading of the adage, 'carpe diem' which can be translated as 'seize the day'. However, we should note that this adage was part of a longer phrase "carpe diem, quam minimum credula postero" which, when literally translated, becomes "pluck the day, trusting as little as possible in the next one." (Horace, Book 1, Odes, 23BC). This famous quote encouraged the reader to use every day and be happy in life so days, like the fruit on a tree, were a gift so every day was to be lived to the fullest. However, in contemporary times the Now view conceptualizes that we "seize the day", as we now see life itself, as linear and as something that cannot be relived, so what changed man's philosophy so radically since Horace?

With the industrialization of Europe, as we have already explored, the advancement of Capitalism was to commodify all cultural artefacts so they could be sold or bartered. Henceforth even Time and Space were to become conceptualised as commodities whereby they could be 'owned', increasingly divided, portioned, sold or bartered. So, as conceptualisations, Time and Space became things that people would value and own economically rather than metaphysically and henceforth language changed to mirror this new value system thereby setting the seeds of political opposition to the feudal ideals of Common Lands, Common Law, Common Rights, Common Wealth or the many forms of Mutualism that had sustained societies throughout the world. Once the division and bartering of Time was established in language the 'Working Week' and the 'Work Day' would henceforth stand opposed to 'Wasted Time', 'Time wasted is time lost' or 'Time and Tide wait for no man'. Contemporary sayings such as, 'Open around the clock', '24/7', 'Just in time' (delivery), 'Buy Now or you may miss out' created an urgency for 'there is no time like the present', because as Harrison noted we can't relive the past. Benjamin Franklin's

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