

**Power, Discourse and Practices:**

**Bureaucracy and the Holocaust**

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## **Abstract**

The generational properties of organization theory are an increasing topic for analysis, usually in terms of what is addressed and how it is addressed. Some writers have alerted us to the importance of those social issues that are not addressed. Combining the idea of generational scholarship with the idea of those non-issues that remain unaddressed, this paper highlights how some of the events of the Second World War, which authorities agree was a generational defining and demarcating experience, have been neglected in organization theory. Nowhere is this more clearly demonstrated than in the Holocaust. Strangely, this practical experiment in organizational design and practice seems to have elided almost all interest by organization theorists, whether functionalist or critical. The paper addresses this elision and draws on the work of Goffman, Foucault, Higgins and Bauman to address the very material conditions of organizational power and raise some ethical issues about the commitments of organization scholars.

**Keywords:** power, discourses, practices, total institutions, Holocaust, Goffman, Foucault, Higgins, Bauman

# **Power, Discourse and Practices: Bureaucracy and the Holocaust**

*For organization theorists to focus on their self-centered academic interests while ignoring their environment is wrong. It is wrong because it deprives organization theory of an extrinsic reason to exist, wrong because the issues arising in the environment are both challenging and interesting, and wrong because organization theorists might actually have something to contribute to world affairs.*

***William Starbuck 2003: 442.***

## **Introduction**

A few years ago the distinguished organization theorist, William Starbuck, noted that having “lost its connection to world affairs, today organization theory lacks an external mission. Yet organizations lie at the heart of major conflicts that are shaping the course of the 21st century, and in principle, organization theory could contribute significantly to human welfare” (Starbuck 2003: 439). The connection that he found to world affairs was grounded in “the emotions of everyday life” and their connection to two themes that “characterized writings about organizations. The earliest organizational writings by sociologists and economists focused on the effects of governmental bureaucracies on societies” (Starbuck 2003: 439). He goes on to note that

Following the Second World War, writers began to see bureaucracies outside the governmental context and began complaining about ‘organizations’ rather than just bureaucracies. People had not complained about ‘organizations’ earlier because the word ‘organization’ did not acquire its current meaning until around 1930. By the late 1950s, complaints about organizations had become widespread. One very influential book was Whyte’s (1956) best-selling critique of American corporate society, which asserted that a

troubling 'Social Ethic' gripped America. Many employees, at all levels of management and in technical specialties, were allowing their employing organizations to dominate their lives and the lives of their families. Organizations were shaping employees' personalities, were specifying employees' dress and behavior, and were cutting off employees' roots in communities by moving them and their families frequently. Another influential book was Argyris's (1957) academic critique, which documented how organizations impede employees' development and foster unhealthy personalities ... As organization theory grew larger and gained respectability, it also became more autonomous from external constraints, more organized, and more fragmented. Academics gained freedom to focus on what interested themselves. Research methodology received progressively more respect, almost to the exclusion of validity or relevance. The most prevalent forms of empiricism became stylized types that encouraged observers to remain detached from the situations observed. Subtopics within organization theory proliferated and derived their popularity from their intellectual properties, and theories and methodologies evolved differently in different societies. (Starbuck 2003: 440; 441).

While not dissenting from this account it is noteworthy that the Second World War merely serves as punctuation, as it does for other significant accounts of organization theories' career. James March (2007), for instance, uses that war as an organizational device for anchoring reflection on three generations of punctuated equilibrium in scholarship. The first generation of scholars are introduced thus:

The Second World War changed things. The massive material, intellectual and economic devastation of Europe, including the decimation of the German, Austrian, Italian and Eastern European scholarly communities, made the reconstruction of European scholarly strength a relatively slow process. Although there were significant European scholars working on studies of organizations earlier in the postwar period, it was not until well into the 1970s that European studies of organizations achieved a scale adequate to reassert itself as an important force.

In contrast, economic recovery in North America was relatively fast and contributed to the postwar economic and political expansion of North American institutions. A significant factor both in the recovery of North American scholarship and in the directions that recovery took was the extraordinary immigration of scholars to North America from Germany, Austria and the rest of Central Europe during the 1930s. These scholars, who were born as Jews in Central Europe and came to the United States to escape persecution, included some of the more distinguished subsequent contributors to North American academic concern about organizing ... In many ways, the greatest single benefactor of North American social science and organization studies in the mid-20th century was Adolf Hitler (March 2007: 11-12).

March goes on to discuss the characteristics of a scientific behavioral science in North America that formed this decisive first post-war generation of American, white, male and young scholars: “the conversion of economic theory into a workable mathematical form ... the development of mathematical models in psychology, sociology, economics, geography, political science and anthropology ... an extensive elaboration of techniques for the gathering and multivariate analysis of quantitative data in economics, psychology, political science and sociology” (March 2007: 12). In general, a professionalization project based on the norms of the behavioural sciences was underway, given the widespread criticism of the low-level of business school education that had surfaced in two influential 1959 reports (see the discussion in Khurana 2007). Starbuck (2003: 442) sees this generation’s professionalization as responsible for an increasing lack of relevance of organization theory: “Immersed in their academic milieus, few organization theorists have focused on connections between organizations and social problems, although long-standing social problems persist and new ones appear.” The generational effect was the creation of a professional discourse about organizations but one that was strangely disconnected from social practice and problems.

That this should be the case was especially surprising for the post-war generation; the war itself had produced social problems of the most extreme kind, notably in the ethical choices of how to conduct industrially organized war on a mass scale against non-combatant populations. The relation between these practices and the discourse that analysed organization was rarely constructed. While the post-war era may have characterized the generation demographically the experience of bureaucracy as it connected with 'social problems' which the Second World War generated did not seem to mark its members especially. There were possible exceptions in the shape of some notable contributions to the sociology of military organizations (Lang 1965; Janowitz 1957; 1959; 1960). However, little curiosity seemed to be exercised about how the bureaucracy evident in the systematic organization of death was organized by the combatants, discursively and practically, particularly against non-combatant populations.

In the remainder of the paper I will address the systematic organization of death in the Holocaust, using sociological resources to do so, after first outlining an approach to discourse and practice. I will then outline Goffman's account of 'total institutions' and Foucault's notion of 'the gaze'; this is preparatory to a discussion of how the gaze was organized and imposed by the Nazi's. Next, the paper moves to a discussion of how, after the mechanism of the gaze had created the ghetto, the next organizational step was the transition of bodies from being held captive in the gaze, with all the associated practices that this entailed, to being entrapped within total institutions. Within the total institution of the concentration and death camps a number of technologies of power were evident. These relate to identity and power, expert knowledge, the design of efficient organizations, organizing mass destruction, designing an efficient open system, and organizing to overcome humanism. No

discussion of power is seemingly complete without some discussion of resistance and so a specific case study is provided of resistance in an occupied territory that prevented the formation of a ghetto and the transmission of its inmates to a total institution. In conclusion some ethical lessons for organization theory are drawn and some implications for the analysis of power suggested.

### **Discourse, practices and power**

Discourses are visible in language forms but are also perpetuated through social practices and embedded in institutional structures. For Foucault (1972), discourses are equivalent to a cultural code, a system of thought, or as he pointed out in his earlier work, an *episteme* that a society values. Discourses can be thought of as ‘serious statements’ that organize knowledge and in addition are inseparable from knowledge. They determine the kinds of communicative practices that specific members of specific societies will engage in. Discourses act both to combine and to divide practices.

The formation of certain discourses and the easing of others out of currency is neither a linear nor cumulative process but subject to rules. A strong degree of patterning shapes which discourses are picked up and which are screened out, given the strength of the network of discourses that are created by a wide range of socio-political institutions in which the individual goes about their quotidian activity. Discursively these institutions hold the subject/object accountable in those terms that each counts as ‘normal’. Rules that shape discursive formations (in addition to many other things) permit certain statements to be made and practices to be done while excluding or silencing other possible statements and practices. Such a process of selection and screening occurs at both a conscious and unconscious level.

Discourses provide us with ways to discuss locally situated ‘truth games’ which are both talked into and out of being in specific organizational contexts. In his work on discourse and discursive formations, Foucault describes the mechanisms through which themes of discourse (discursive objects) become established and ‘real’ in public communication. Changes in discourse occur because justifications for organizing activity can be, and indeed are, constantly challenged. From a practical perspective what will be of central interest for empirical researchers is the ability to trace particular instances of discourse, to make connections between these instances, and to identify a particular discursive formation. Additionally, we need to focus on instances where discourses and practices shift, where evidence of a new ‘truth game’ coming into existence.

Practice has many auspices: in philosophy (Heidegger 1962; Wittgenstein 1953; Schutz 1967) in sociological theory, (Turner 1994; Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984, Garfinkel 1967), and, increasingly, in organization studies (Gherardi 2006; Antonacopoulou 2008; Messner, Kornberger, and Clegg 2008; Sousa and Hendriks 2008). Sociologists such as Turner (1994) focuses on *structure* in terms of language, symbols and tools while Bourdieu (1977) focuses on *action*; philosophers such as Wittgenstein (1953) focus on *language*; ethnomethodologists such as Garfinkel (1967) and Sacks (1972; 1992) focus on *conversation*, and more recent exemplars in organization studies have focused on practice as a *mode of knowing* (Nicolini, Gherardi, and Yanow, 2003). All of these may be said to see practice as irrevocably tangled up with discourse – a notion of discursive practice. Discursive practice suggests a conception of language that sees it as materially effective (e.g., Harré and Secord, 1972; Marsh et al., 1974) and post-structuralist (e.g., Henriques et al., 1984; Davies, 2000). Discursive practices may be analysed in terms of how organizational



reality is constructed: how ontological assumptions undergird practices, what techniques are used, discursively, to enact these practices, especially the key imagery used to create crucial categorizations. What categorical discourse produces is politics about membership (Grant, Hardy, Oswick and Putnam 2004: 3; Sacks 1972).

One scholar from that post-war generation charted the emergence of politics connecting discourse and practises in relation to the opportunities that the Second World War allowed. His focus was on how one particular organizational aspect of modernity was capable of making that most liquid of solid matter – life itself – disappear in smoke and ashes on an industrial scale. Zygmunt Bauman's *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989) is a work of great organizational significance.<sup>1</sup> Bauman's argument is that a discourse of bureaucratic rationality was one of the essential factors that made the practice of the Holocaust possible. The usual explanation of the Holocaust is that it was a reversion to barbarism. On the contrary, says Bauman. The mechanics of the Holocaust were made possible by precisely those features of society that made it 'civilized', chief amongst which was the discourse and practice of rational bureaucracy.

### **Organizing extreme power**

During the period of the Second World War rational bureaucracy was used to try and resolve what was referred to as the 'Jewish Question', which flew from a discourse in which Jews were regarded as a contagious plague, a pestilence, the other on whom

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<sup>1</sup> A fact that seems to have escaped the majority of writers and authorities in the field, with exceptions such as Burrell (1997; 1994) and Grey (2005). One should also see Weiss (2000), Adams and Balfour (2001), and Hinings and Mauws (2004).

hatred could be focused. The ultimate answer was to be found in a 'final solution' organized around extermination, the Holocaust.

Over six million people had careers of increasingly intense incarceration that typically began with spatial concentration in a ghetto and ended in organized death in camps. The ghettos and the camps are best thought of, organizationally, as instances of what the sociologist Erving Goffman (1961) referred to as 'total institutions'. Total institutions comprise practices and operating mechanisms which inscribe domination on particular targets, such as those classed as insane, criminal, Jewish, etc. People within total institutions are cut off from the wider society, leading an enclosed and formally administered existence. What these very different types of organizations have in common that make them total institutions are that each member's daily life is carried out in the *immediate presence* of a large number of others. The members are very *visible*; there is no place to hide from the surveillance of others. The members tend to be strictly *regimented* and often wear institutional clothing such as uniforms. Life in a total institution is governed by *strict, formal, rational planning of time*.) Hence, for members of total institutions time is *strictly prescribed*. It is because of this that the members lose a degree of autonomy because of an all-encompassing demand for *conformity to the authoritative interpretation of rules*. In such contexts, the organization has more or less monopoly control of its members' everyday lives.

Goffman's argument is that total institutions demonstrate in heightened and condensed form the underlying organizational processes that can be found, albeit in much less extreme cases, in more normal organizations. Goffman chose extremes because the everyday mechanisms of authority and power were much more evident there than in the world of the corporate 'organization man' (Whyte 1960). Institutions

are total when they surround the person at every turn and cannot be escaped; they produce and reproduce the normalcy of life inside the institution, however abnormal it might seem from outside (Deleuze 1992). For Foucault, the essence of incarceration, rules and surveillance began with organizing 'the gaze'.

### *Discourse organizing categories*

For Foucault, the total institution is a pre-modern device; its corporeality of power belongs to pre-modern times, not the modern age,<sup>2</sup> although the history of his present suggests otherwise; Foucault lived through Vichy and the Nazi period as a teenager. Foucault (1977, p. 177), in stressing that 'the techniques of surveillance, the 'physics' of power, the hold over the body, operate according to the laws of optics and mechanics, according to a whole play of spaces, lines, screens, beams, degrees, and without recourse, in principle, at least, to excess, force or violence' and that it 'is a power that seems all the less 'corporeal' in that it is subtly 'physical'' misses characteristic aspects of power in the twentieth century. Power is overwhelmingly organizational; it has been frequently excessive, forceful and violent, and, at its worst, total in its institutional application.

The practice of power is always tangled up in a precise discourse. Total institutions are first talked into being; they are planned, theorized, strategized and piloted. Crucial to their accomplishment are the construction of categories that serve as devices for dividing a population into those who should be confined and those who should be

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<sup>2</sup> Especially in his work on gender Goffman (1976) was far more attuned to the embodiment of power, as we shall see. Few other writers on organizations stress the embodiment of power, although the anthropologist James Scott (1990) is an exception but one hardly regarded as a contributing author to the organization and management theory canon, despite his analyses of total institutions.

free. There is no doubt that the Nazi's were experts in the selective use of members' categorization devices (Sacks 1992) to construct organizational careers (in the sociological sense of that term). They used the power of the state, promulgating special laws and decrees, targeted on specific categories of identity. Devices, such as the star that all Jews were obliged to wear prominently on their clothing, or the labeling of businesses as Jewish with prominent signage, were used. A discourse of power based on simple significations colonized the everyday life world, making specific categories of persons subjects of a juridical gaze.

The project of Fascism *entailed an ongoing construction of an organizational politics of identity and non-identity*. Identities were established through the use of various stigmatizing 'membership categorization devices' (Sudnow 1972; Sacks 1992).<sup>3</sup> There was no need for any subtlety in interpreting the Nazi's use of membership categorization devices. Terms such as 'Jews,' 'Gypsies,' 'homosexuals,' and 'the feeble', which the Nazi's used, needed no inferential reasoning. They were not 'natural' categories but were produced by a vast organizational apparatus to appear naturalized. A fundamental organizational condition of the Holocaust was the identification of individuals as members of specific categories, and the marking of their membership categorization with devices. In the case of Jews, these were the distinctive devices that all those who were defined as Jews were obliged to wear; in Germany the yellow star, in the Warsaw ghetto a white band with a blue star.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Sacks (1992: 338) showed how analysis of membership categorization devices could be used as a tool of political analysis of organizations with an example from the former Soviet Union. The USSR used to publish the names of 'profiteers'. People could see that these were Jewish names. The Soviet state could thereby continue to deny that it was anti-Semitic (since it did not call these people Jews), while deflecting grievances aimed at its own economic inadequacies. It used members' categorization devices—ordinary language ways of making sense in common currency—from which all could infer the meaning clearly enough.

<sup>4</sup> There is a good discussion of the introduction of the yellow star by the Nazi's at <http://history1900s.about.com/library/holocaust/aa031298.htm>. Interestingly, as the site says, the Nazis

Businesses were also marked: During the boycott upon Jewish stores that the Nazi's declared on April 1, 1933, yellow Stars of David were painted on windows. These markers of identity singled out those who were destined for special categorization and total institutionalization, entailing *concentration of clearly inscribed identities in specific spaces*, initially, in ghettos such as that in Warsaw, and latterly, their spatial segregation in camps<sup>5</sup>. Confined, segregated, and marked, they were much easier to control.

After the gaze came confinement, initially through being rounded up and herded into ghettos, where began a career inside the total institution. For many millions it was to end, after transportation jammed in cattle-trucks on the rail systems of Europe, in some unknown place in Eastern Europe that the world ought never to forget. The final experience might last no longer than it took to strip and have a communal shower. For many, the final destination of the gas chambers was the end of what had been a long and slow career in settings of increasing intensity, while for a few the struggles to survive continued in the work camps associated with the whole business. And business it was, as we shall see.

### *The Jew as the categorical subject/object of the gaze*

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merely intensified, magnified, and institutionalized an age-old method of persecution with this labeling: the practices of total institutions are not something substantively different to normal organization practices. In 807 Abbassid caliph Haroun al-Raschid ordered all Jews to wear a yellow belt and a tall, cone-like hat. But it was in 1215 that the Fourth Lateran Council, presided over by Pope Innocent III, made its infamous decree, Canon 68, which declared that 'Jews and Saracens [Muslims] of both sexes in every Christian province and at all times shall be marked off in the eyes of the public from other peoples through the character of their dress.' This Council represented all of Christendom and thus this decree was to be enforced throughout all of the Christian countries. While the star is usually represented as being yellow, it was not always. It varied with local practice. In the Warsaw ghetto it was blue, as Janina Bauman explains –see <http://www.war-experience.org/history/keyaspects/wghetto0443/default.asp>. The practice of using a badge to single out and identify Jews was instituted in the fifteenth century in Germany and Austria. The practice was not new. Indeed, like much else associated with the Holocaust, there was tradition associated with it.

<sup>5</sup> Again, the existence of camps was not new: the British first used concentration camps in the nineteenth century Boer War against the Afrikaners in Southern Africa; prior to this time camps were a common device for holding those captured and about to be sold into slavery in other parts of Africa.

Under National Socialism the total institution became a particular device for organizing relations between Germans and selected others in the territories that Germany controlled and conquered. Why should this be so? Higgins (2004: 89) suggests that the Prussian elite had constructed the German project of modernity exclusively in terms of a discourse of ethnic nationalism. It was a nationalism that demanded its own strangers, outsiders, and enemies to be viable, a role which Jews had been playing for centuries. They were shortly to be cast the starring role in the horror that Fascism was to orchestrate. And orchestrate is an apt verb. The Nazi state was a despotism that relied on stage-management, propaganda, and spectacle as its major organizational devices for creating unity, coherence, and support to eliminate those estranged by the discourse.

The Third Reich was a state developed on the basis of power and myth. Power came from National Socialists command of the state apparatuses after 1933. German history provided the myth it orchestrated. The myth was that of the German *volk* and its supremacy, which provided ‘values and meaning and ideas and plans and stratagems and alternative forms of social organization ... an oversimplified representation of a more complex reality’ (Bailey 1977: 7). The signifier of the myth, the ascendant Reich, presented itself as belonging to a history of the German people. In this way its meaning was already complete and projected into the future; it postulated a past, a memory, and comparative ordering of facts, ideas and decisions, a destiny denied by the 1919 Treaty of Versailles but made insistent (Barthes 1957). When this destiny assumed a form that captured the state, it rapidly assumed the form of caricature, pastiche, and elaborate stage managed symbols that did ‘away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, ... a world which is without

contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open ... wallowing in the evident' (from *Mythologies*).<sup>6</sup>

The consequences of authoritarian populism and aborted modernization meeting the naturalized myth of the *Volk* were alarming. The defeat of the First World War had aborted that project of German nationalism that had been achieved and imposed from above by elites, positioning the German nation, discursively, as a people of manifest destiny, a positioning that the First World War stopped in its tracks. When it was revived by Hitler the Nazi's changed the nationalist project from one that was defined by elites to one that was to be defined in more popular ways. It became a popular project in a context where, after the collapse of the Weimar Republic, there were few state or civil society resources and few national or civic sources of moral values, education, or authority outside of the National Socialist Party. Moreover, there was little in the way of 'constitutionalism, the rule of law, democracy, civil society, the institutions to negotiate cultural and racial diversity ... There was nothing to prevent the normalization of discrimination and oppression' (Higgins 2004: 90)<sup>7</sup>.

### *Organizing the Final Solution*

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<sup>6</sup> Accessed on March 29, 2005, from [http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc\\_data/barthes/myth\\_today.html](http://carbon.cudenver.edu/~mryder/itc_data/barthes/myth_today.html)

<sup>7</sup> The project of normalization fused several rationalities, not just the rationality of modernity as Bauman (1989) sees it, but also elements that in themselves were hardly remarkable, as they could be found in comparable polities elsewhere. The Swedish social democrats of the inter-war period, for instance, were as keen on eugenic projects and no less statist. However, what the Nazi's had in addition was a much stronger degree of racism and a very clear category of the Other, through which they could define their German self, using the category of the Jew in this role. Moreover, at the level of micro-politics, the Nazi's sought to implement their myths—based on blood, race and territory—in all the spheres of everyday life, such as the family, the youth group, and the neighborhood, through capillaries of power such as the Hitler Youth (see Rose 1999: 25-16).

It was sometime between the June 1941 offensive against the Soviet Union and January 1942 that the decision was made to exterminate the Jews of Europe (see Mosse 1978), although something of the idea was already evident in speeches by Hitler in 1919 and in *Mein Kampf* (1924). It was not a sudden decision. The pressure against the Jews built up steam after the Nazis came to power on 30 January 1933. Judicial harassment intensified in the period leading up to war with 'bans on employment, on practicing professions, on owning a car or a phone, on going to the theatre, on marrying or having sexual relations with gentiles' (Higgins 2004: 86). At the same time, various options were sought to deal with the 'Jewish Question', including forced resettlement, with Madagascar even being suggested as a destination. The question of what to do with Jewish fugitives from Nazism was raised at the 1938 Evian conference on refugees, although only the Dominican Republic agreed to accept such refugees (with agricultural skills) into its fold. There was no evident place to flee for refuge.

Not able to export the categories of deviance that they had created, extermination was adopted as a solution to the problem posed by the Jewish Question. The top management team deployed the rule of anticipated reaction : as Higgins (2004: 87) notes, in the disorderly and crony-ridden world of Nazi politics, much as in any organization where to succeed means impressing the boss, Senior Nazis who were 'rivals tried to outshine each other in Hitler's eyes through their bold initiatives in carrying out what they often had to second-guess as his intentions. Massacring the Jews in one's jurisdiction offered a sure-fire way to impress the boss. Once one crony hit on it the rest followed suit.'



It is not clear who decided that extermination was the appropriate solution, or when they decided. It was certainly the case that it was formally communicated to the top management team of the Nazi project who met on January 20, 1942, in Wannsee, to plan the extermination of Europe's Jews. Adolf Eichmann, Head of the Department for Jewish Affairs, led the Reich's effort for the Final Solution, efficiently organizing the roundup and transportation of millions of Jews to their deaths at infamous camps such as Auschwitz<sup>8</sup>. Two thirds of all victims were liquidated in just 18 months, from 22 June 1941 to 31 December 1942, according to the Third Reich's chief statistician, Richard Koherr (Higgins 2004: 98).

Six million bodies disappeared from the face of the earth as a result of the Holocaust, including one and half million children. The ultimate goal would have seen the extermination of 11 million Jews; the war's end saw about 50% of the target achieved, given that the six million also included other categories constituted as deviant, such as the feeble, homosexual, communists, gypsies and so on. By any calculus the efficient dispatch of millions of state-stigmatized people to their deaths by the German state during World War II was an enormous organizational achievement.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, Rose (1999: 26) suggests that the actual power of Nazism 'was

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<sup>8</sup> After World War II, Eichmann escaped capture and lived in Germany for five years before moving to Argentina, where he lived under an alias for another ten years. Israeli agents finally captured him in 1960, and Eichmann was subsequently tried in Israel for crimes against humanity. Eichmann's defense was that he was a bureaucrat who had to just follow orders (An account of his trial was written by Hannah Arendt [1994], who coined the memorable phrase 'the banality of evil' to register interpretation of the events reported there.) Although Eichmann was subsequently found guilty and executed, his defense was important because it posed the question of the extent to which a person who is obedient to organizationally legitimate authority can be held accountable as an individual for his or her actions. It is a point that has a contemporary salience. In relation to recent corporate scandals in the US and elsewhere the guilty managers often say that they were simply following orders

<sup>9</sup> If the growth of western modernity is a story of organization it is also a story of death and destruction wreaked by these same organizational capabilities. The conquest that followed the 'discovery' of the Americas or the Antipodes, for instance, was another enterprise requiring enormous organizational achievements of ship building, navigation, occupation, extraction and exploration. Of course, in the case of the Americas it was military and religious bureaucracy that played the main role. This historical event, considered by scholars such as Dussel (1992) as the beginning of modernity, needs to be

its capacity to render itself technical, to connect itself up with all manner of technologies capable of implementing its nightmarish dreams into everyday existence.’ There were quite specific rationalities, techniques, one might say, behind the technologies. We shall now turn to these.

## **Technologies of total institutional power**

### *Timetabling*

The *orderly and efficient marshalling of bodies* was required. These bodies were transported across Europe in cattle-trucks and efficiently scheduled as inputs into the death camps. If the trains had not run on time, the points not been set up correctly, the machinery of death would have been interrupted. One historian, Goldhagen (1996), argues controversially that order and efficiency depended on hundreds and thousands of small acts of organized goal-orientation by civilian German citizens and collaborators in the occupied territories.<sup>10</sup> By this calculus, making the trains run on time, switching the tracks, and being indifferent to the cargo being transported were equally acts of complicity with the machinery of death.<sup>11</sup>

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reevaluated in organizational terms. What was unique about the Holocaust was that it was much more spatially and temporally concentrated and confined and the other that it constituted dwelt in the midst of the categories of reason, not outside, not as something constituted as savage, wild and alien. The European other was, in fact, at the heart of some of its most celebrated cultural achievements.

<sup>10</sup> There are not only all these *small acts of commission*, agency and responsibility to consider. There are also the *small acts of omission* by the allies: the news about Auschwitz did get out—the Vatican and the western allies were informed by one of the four escapees from Auschwitz, Rudolf Vrba. One consequence was that the USAF bombed the synthetic fuel and rubber plant that formed a part of the complex—as Higgins (2004) suggests, it was a target enjoying strategic significance.

<sup>11</sup> The question of collective guilt has been raised by Karl Jaspers (2001), who sees the generation of Germans who lived through the Third Reich and served as active participants in Hitler's world as jointly responsible for what happened there and then, in a political, moral, and metaphysical sense. I would want to extend this sense of responsibility to the use that was made of rational organization technologies of power in the camps. These technologies are in themselves political, moral and metaphysical practices for which organization leaders have an ethical responsibility: they are not

### *Expert knowledge*

When the trains arrived at the camp, doctors made a 'selection' using *expert knowledge* to decide which of the new arrivals were fit to be worked to death. Life for the slave laborers was often unbearable and many would die of overwork, starvation and disease. Less than 10% were chosen to be slave laborers; most were dispatched straight to the 'showers', after first disrobing. Those who were selected for the gas chambers *had all markers of identity removed*, by being stripped, shorn, with personal items, such as jewelry taken. Such denial and degradation of identity is typical of total institutional practice, even if its extermination is not.

*Efficient power means that systematic attention has to be paid to its means.* By 1944, when the Jews from Hungary were deported to Auschwitz, the death factory was unable to absorb the mass numbers. It was estimated that in the spring of 1944, 46,000 Jews were killed in one day. Such efficiency requires a dedicated organizational apparatus. Crude organizational technologies assisted in this huge project. The Hollerith machine was used 'to track the Jewish populations and accumulate information regarding the 'success' of the Genocide' (Leventhal, 1995). The machine was 'a primitive calculating engine and precursor of the modern computer developed by the statistician and census taker, Herman Hollerith,' and manufactured by the IBM subsidiary DEHOMAG (*Deutsche Hollerith Maschinen Gesellschaft*) (Leventhal, 1995).

The destruction of those collected and defined in their identity as Jews and other stigmatized categories would not have been possible without application of *an*

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merely a neutral instrument waiting to have value poured into them in application. The technologies of power discussed in this paper have a metaphysics of domination embedded in them.

*intrinsically instrumental and value-free science.* It is, of course, this kind of science that lies behind the conception of the organization as an open system. It is this abstraction that enables one to conjure up an organization science in which the specificities and particularities of concrete practices can be reduced to the mechanism of variation, selection and retention, the resolution of equivocality in an open system fed by inputs, organized around a central workflow that defines the throughput, producing outputs. The inputs were live bodies; the transformation process one of chemically induced death; the outputs corpses with the value stripped out of them. *An efficient total institution premised on the efficient transformation of its raw material inputs required a factory system for its flows of power, with efficiencies of scale in processing inputs and creating outputs,* that could, literally, reduce something to nothing (Ritzer 2004), people to ashes, dust and detritus. In so doing it not only created efficiencies but also destroyed futures by dividing societies, families, friends, communities, workers, creating a vacuum where the foundational identity of generations yet unborn should have made its mark, inducing guilt and shame about surviving for those that remained.

### *Organizing mass destruction*

Bauman (1989: 8) referred to Feingold's (1983: 399-400) argument to establish that Auschwitz was an extension of the value rationality of the modern factory system, whose 'raw material was human beings and ... end-product ... death'. In the early stages, bullets delivered death, but these were needed for the front line. Anyway, they were slow and inefficient; it would have taken hundreds of years to shoot every Jew in Europe. Initially, there were many concentration camps, in which death was an incidental cost of confinement in horrific conditions, while originally there were only

four death camps (Chelmno, Belzec, Sobibór and Treblinka which were all in rural Poland). These resembled a cottage industry of killing compared to the two conglomerates (combining slave labor with extermination) that the Nazis established. Majdanek and Auschwitz, of which Auschwitz was the largest and most developed. In pursuit of their key performance indicator, the extermination of the Jews, the Nazis organized for economies of scale. Estimates are that 1,500,000 people, most of whom were Jews, died at Auschwitz. Others who died at Auschwitz included Soviet prisoners of war, Gypsies or Roma, Poles, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, and political opponents of the Nazi regime.

Auschwitz was designed so that two transports per day, each with 6,000 Jews, could be 'processed'. These 12,000 Jews would have their heads shaved, clothing collected and stored, be gassed and cremated all within a 24 hour period. Within 24 hours, all traces of their bodily existence were obliterated from the face of the earth, apart from their hair, skin, gold fillings, prosthetics, dentures and anything else that could be recycled, because, short of a budget for the killing machine, a user-pays philosophy prevailed as the victims funded their own deaths through their corpses being made a source of value. The SS ran profitable industries dealing in what it re-cycled from the dead and produced through slave labor. It also got kickbacks from Krupp, Volkswagen and IG Farben, amongst others, for the labor it supplied (Leventhal 1995; see also Borkin, 1978; Hayes, 1991).

There were willing accomplices in power-networks elsewhere. Vincent (1997) demonstrates how the Nazis were able to use the secrecy associated with Swiss banking to bank the assets realized (also see Bower 1977; Levin 1999). These were not isolated crimes by a few evil people but required considerable networks of

expertise and involvement (Raab 2003). In this way, the Holocaust can be seen as a bureaucratic regime of power with many capillaries and considerable expertise in its service.

On the whole, the process that was adopted was a simple system of *mass destruction*, of flows, throughputs, and outputs. It wasn't designed like this from the outset. The Auschwitz complex included three main camps and 39 smaller camps 40 miles southwest of Krakow. As Higgins (2004: 133) tells it, Auschwitz grew from a barracks left over from the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, which was initially equipped with a small gas chamber and crematorium. Innovation was concentrated on Auschwitz II, a satellite camp adjacent to the village of Birkenau. Most of the 1.5 million were killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the second of the main camps. It was here that the railway ran right into the camp, beneath the sign reading 'Work makes us free' (*Arbeit macht frei*). Initially, it too was run on pre-industrial lines. There was a 30 meter run from the undressing sheds to the gas chambers and the corpses were bundled into pits and burnt after dispatch. However, in March 1943 a modernized, integrated high capacity infrastructure was established as a greenfield development, with four separate plants, each with its own crematorium and gas chamber.

The actual chemical agent of death, Zyklon B, was initially used as an insecticide (for delousing clothing) in WW I but was subsequently developed as an agent for human extermination during WW II by the German chemical multinational, IG Farben. Many experiments and refinements were involved, with great scientific rationality being devoted to the topic of extermination by chemists and their co-workers over several years, to establish the appropriate level of concentration, temperature, and time of application to suit the new purpose (Dworkf and Peltz 1996). The gas was a cheap

means of destruction: that was its attraction for the economic rationalists running the camps. Other economic efficiencies of the day involved practicing sustainable recycling for profits, minimizing service intervals to contain running costs, and externalizing the costs of side products, such as tailings. The management was exemplary in its technical and economic efficiency. As a business it used the best practice principles of its day; ashes and tailings were dumped in the nearest river as an externality with no cost; energy was powered somewhat more sustainably – human fat from the victims fired the furnaces.

### *Designing an efficient open system*

The death camps were a simple open system in which the inputs were living bodies that were subject to an initial selection, variation and retention. Those selected were gassed and burnt, although at times of peak throughput, those who could not be accommodated in the gas chambers and crematorium were shot and burned in mass pits in the grounds of Birkenau. Variation was simple as those able-bodied enough were retained and worked until death. The outputs were the elimination of the great uncertainty that stalked Nazi Europe, seen as the possibility of contagion of Aryan purity by Jewish bodies. The equivocality was resolved by the death of the contagious bodies.

How was such a system possible? First, it was highly authorized. The highest authority sanctioned this organizational action. That a strong leader tells followers to do things, management scholars might think, could be a good reason actually to do them, because they are the leader and their will is usually fulfilled. A strong leader is assumed to have good reasons, so the person follows in good faith. In addition, the leader commands a mighty organizational apparatus, which, in this case, had a

monopoly over the means of violence. Eichmann's commitment to Hitler as a strong authority figure shaped his behavior. The SS themselves were an authoritative elite; most 'of the leaders of the *Einsatzgruppen*, the mass-shooting squads who murdered up to a third of all the Holocaust victims, held PhDs or Doctors of Laws. They were the principal bearers of German civilization, not low-lifers, misfits or retards' (Higgins 2004: 98). Many careers were advanced in academia, science, philosophy, economics, genetics, geography, education, social work, and history in the service of the Holocaust. And their authority and actions were minutely documented in memoranda, data, statistics, and reports.

Second, it was highly routinized. Routines eliminate the need or the space for reflection. When actions that enact the organizational action in question are routinized, the acts in question become easier to enact. Routine is important because it facilitates action without reflection (and responsibility), as an automatic response to a stimulus. Individuals become merely a cog in the big machinery that turns them around. One sees only a small part of the whole organizational machinery when accomplishing a task; one cannot see where and how the task fits into the big picture, nor can one see its consequences as an outcome of the task or organization. This may seem an absurd point—for are not all modern organizations premised on routines and routinization—but the point is not that this, on its own, makes horror possible, but that in the appropriate context it can do so when other conditions are present.

Routinization, we might say, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. For instance, Reserve Police Battalion 101, 500 middle-aged reservists who were active in Poland, was engaged in the task of shooting defenseless civilians. They 'ended up murdering 38,000 individuals and consigning another 44,200 to the maw of the



Treblinka death camp. 500 ordinary men with a combined body count of 83,000 civilians ... as it carried out more massacres, the majority of the men fell into a matter-of-fact routine, whilst a minority began to enjoy their work, embellishing it with gratuitous humiliation of and cruelty towards their victims' (Higgins 2004: 100).

Third, in exercising total institutional power it is much easier to act with extreme prejudice towards those who are the victims of the action, or the subjects of power, when they are dehumanized. When a discourse provides ideological definitions and indoctrination convincing organizational members that the victims are less than human, it creates distance between organizational members and the people who are affected by its action, and the human costs can be borne with greater equanimity as a necessary cost of a greater good—progress, the state, the Party or whatever it takes to still conscience. Representing victims as numbers rather than people also makes it also easier to forget the ethical consequences of actions. A generalized condition of organizational modernity is that only what can be counted counts (Power 1997; Brunsson and Jacobsson 2002).<sup>12</sup>

When actions are performed at a distance on people defined as administrative categories, the people are effectively dehumanized (Kelman 1973). The more dehumanized they are, the easier becomes the application of pure technique to their cases. Dehumanization involves the production of others whose most characteristic feature is their Otherness, their being different in essence from those who constitute them as such, as outside a space in which their exists a shared moral scope. The

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<sup>12</sup> In Spielberg's (1993) film, it is when Oscar Schindler spots a little girl in a bright red coats amidst the black and white and drab colours of those being rounded up, when her individual humanity shines out to him in all its bright luminosity, that he ceases to be a bystander (Higgins 2004: 94-5). He sees an individual amidst the mass, something that organizational modernity discourages.

novelist Ian McEwan notes that the ‘trick, as always, the key to human success and domination, is to *be selective in your mercies*. For all the discerning talk, it’s the close at hand, the visible that exerts the overpowering force’ (McEwan 2005: 127, my emphasis). Those whom one sees as essentially similar to oneself, as sharing in a common being and meaning, are that much harder to destroy. What you don’t see or can’t recognize as someone who is just like you needn’t bother you. What you can keep at arms length outside ones intimate fold of humanity is easier to defile.

When the subjective can be reduced to the objective, when the qualitative can be represented quantitatively as a bottom-line calculation it is so much easier to make rational decisions (cut costs, trim fat, speed throughput, increase efficiency, defeat the competition) without concern for the human, environmental, or social effects of these decisions. Again, it goes back to the value-free basis of management science. If one is cutting costs to become more efficient it is much easier, morally, to represent these costs abstractly rather than to have to deal with them personally (Moore 1989/2003).

### *Organizing to overcome humanism*

The most effective way of overcoming humanity is to treat those categories of person with which one will deal harshly as, in some respects not fully, wholly or essentially human in the way that normal, well-formed people like us can be taken to be. Make them the Other. Such sleights in casting identity enable one to maintain distance.

There are many ways of *maintaining distance*. One technique, of course, is through physical separation and isolation. The constant trains and fumes from the furnaces perhaps occasionally perturbed ordinary Polish citizens going

about their everyday life, yet nonetheless they remained separate from the camps, which were a spatially confined zone. Technique enables distanciation. When we master a technique, even when it comprises methods of brutal interrogation, intimidation or torture, skill on the technique has its own charm, aesthetics, and beauty, such that technicians can take sheer delight in using it, irrespective of its moral effects, resulting in '*the irrelevance of moral standards for the technical success of the bureaucratic operation*' (Bauman 1989: 101; italics in original).

Divisions of labor in complex chains of power enable elites to maintain distance from power's effects. Where these effects can be represented in terms of intermediary forms of data (kill rates, efficiency statistics, and so on) it also helps. Whatever may be our small labor input moves minute cogs in a bureaucratic machine necessarily intermeshed with so many others that we are just one small element in the overall scheme of things. We don't even have to try to understand the totality. And if, perchance we do understand, we realize that we can't do anything to change the situation, thus producing immobility reinforcing conformism. The system of which we are a part is responsible, not us.

When *technique is paramount*, action becomes purely a question of technical power in terms of the use of means to achieve given ends. For instance, as a master of logistics, Eichmann was enormously proud of his achievements in the complex scheduling of trains, camps, and death. He was, as he said, a good bureaucrat. There are two profound effects of organizational power that makes people technically accountable and responsible for results expressed in a purely quantitative form. First, make the person's doing of the task utterly transparent: either the targets are achieved

or they are not; second, being simply the subject of a target relieves one of moral indeterminacy. If one is authorized to do something and given targets to achieve by superordinates guiding strategies and plans, obedience surely is appropriate, and authority should be served.<sup>13</sup>

Obedience to power is encouraged where organization work is a ceaseless round of activity with little room for reflection, where activity is mostly just a small link in a great chain of doing. Most organizational members are in the middle of organizational chains whose links are not always clear. People are not always aware of the consequences of what they do and do not do. Most of the time, they are just doing what they are told (shred those files, write those checks, dispatch those troops, and maintain those train schedules).

### *Resisting the Final Solution*

Note that in this framework of total institutional power there has, as yet, been no mention of resistance. Where there was such resistance it often occurred in individual rather than collective terms through acts of self-annihilation by ultimate gestures of existential choice that refused total power its routinized predictability. It is extremely difficult to outflank a total institution from within its strategies of organizational totalisation: this is especially the case given the extreme time-space compression of the death camps. The camps were spatially highly circumscribed and the career of most inmates was terminated very quickly – within 24 hours of arrival. Control of the

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<sup>13</sup> A great source on the bureaucratic form of the Holocaust is Claude Lanzmann's (1985) brilliant film SHOAH based on interviews with people who participated in its unfolding. Director Claude Lanzmann spent 11 years tracking people down, cajoling them to talk, asking them questions they didn't want to face. *Shoah* shows the mundanity of terror. For instance, German Railways carefully invoiced the Reich for transportation of people to the concentration camps. A Treblinkan landowner who sold the land for the camp shows disdain for and disinterest in what was done with it, refusing the evidence that had been before his eyes, on the smell of the air he breathed in his nostrils, and the anguished sounds he could hear in his ears.

organizational apparatus, routinization of power in many small acts, extensive division and dehumanization, and responsible, regulated violence are hard to overcome when one is incorporated in the total institution, especially without recourse to any countervailing institutional powers, such as a system of rank and command. It is, perhaps, for this reason that the literature of total institutions so often celebrates the small acts of individual resistance that do occur, because there is so little chance of collective resistance as access to organizational means are so limited.<sup>14</sup> However, with the appropriate resources resistance was possible – if not in the camps at least in the occupied territories before people were processed into camps. The relative openness of an occupied territory compared with the ghetto or a camp made resistance possible where there was an ethical will to see a person as a person rather than a representative of a category device.

On average, two-thirds of the Jews in German-controlled territory during World War II did not survive (Seibel 2002), but there was significant territorial variance. The active engagement of people other than the subjects of the Holocaust in resisting the Final Solution made a difference<sup>15</sup>. Thus, we may draw a further implication, that

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<sup>14</sup> These small acts of resistance are the stuff of great fictional contributions to organization studies; one thinks, for instance, of Milos Forman's (1975) film of *One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest*, adapted from a novel by Ken Kesey (1973), as well as of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1963) and *The Gulag Archipelago* (1995). These novels offer a greater understanding of the nature of extreme power than is to be found anywhere in the canons of organization theory and represent some of the strongest examples to be found anywhere of the analysis of power and resistance in organizations. Especially with the focus on the individual incarcerated and their struggle to preserve autonomy, limits of freedom and dignity against overwhelming odds, they represent a central contribution to any analysis of power and organizations.

<sup>15</sup> That it is an essential sense of a shared humanity that enables survival from horrors that wait unleashing may also be seen in the Danish case, which offers a strong counterfactual. The Danish resistance movement, assisted by many ordinary citizens, coordinated the flight of some 7,200 Jews to safety in nearby neutral Sweden, suggests that it was indeed many small acts of omission and commission that were important in enacting the Holocaust. On September 11, 1943, the man in charge of the German occupation in Denmark told his head of shipping operations, Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, of plans to round up all of the approximately 8,000 Jews in Denmark and transport them to the Theresienstadt Concentration Camp. A week later Duckwitz was given more details. Ships would arrive on September 29 and a coordinated lightning raid would occur on the night of October 1. On

*power needs to delegate authorities to dispatch its projects, without which it can be deflected, even in total institutional situations.*<sup>16</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The paper began with an admonition from William Starbuck that, having lost its connection to world affairs, organization theory today lacks an external mission. The point of the paper is to suggest that the connection to world affairs of this immensely praxiological discipline has been highly selective and attenuated. The absence of major issues occurring in histories of the present being widely discussed amongst its significant contributors is striking. Not only was the postwar generation seemingly uninterested in the barbarism of which bureaucracy was capable but when it began to contemplate issues such as the relations of power in societies and organizations it

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September 25, Duckwitz flew to Sweden and met with the Swedish prime minister to ask him to help save Danish Jewry. The prime minister sent a telegram to Berlin offering to accept all of the Danish Jews if Germany would agree to let them go. Duckwitz returned to Denmark and waited for news. When none came, he assumed the Germans had ignored the Swedish request. On September 28th he looked up his friend, Hans Hedtoft (who became Prime Minister after the war) and told him of the plan. Hedtoft and three of his friends set out to warn as many as possible. One of the first he spoke to was the head of the Jewish community in Copenhagen, who in disbelief first accused him of lying (German officials had convincingly denied earlier rumors of the raid). When Copenhagen Jews came to prayers on Wednesday morning September 29, they were told there would be no services that morning nor on Rosh Hashana, which was to begin that evening. Instead they were to spread the word of the raid and go into hiding. Christian Danes told their Jewish friends and neighbors. Some even looked through the phone book for Jewish sounding names to call and warn. When the Nazis carried out their raids on the night of October 1, they found less than 300 of the 8,000 Jews. Eventually they rounded up only 475 Jews who were sent to Theresienstadt. The others had gone into hiding. Within the month of October, fishermen had been recruited to transport them to Sweden (which had broadcast their willingness to provide them sanctuary after Niels Bohr had convinced them to act publicly). Money had been raised to pay fishermen for the risks they took; Jews were moved from their hiding places to new hiding places near the ports and beaches used to transport them. Danish police were recruited to keep others, including the Germans, away, and the Jews were ferried to Sweden. One tally was that 5,919 Jews, 1,301 half-Jews, and 686 Christians married to Jews (a total of 7,906) were successfully transported to safety. A tally of Jewish Holocaust victims in Denmark said only 30 had died while en route to Sweden, another 30 committed suicide, and only 51 of the 475 sent to Theresienstadt did not survive. (The Danes maintained constant contact with Nazi officials about the fate of the Jews shipped to Theresienstadt.) The toll among the Danish Jewish population was slightly more than 1 percent, which was a remarkable record. Thanks to this remarkable mass rescue effort, at war's end Denmark had one of the highest Jewish survival rates for any European country. No other country came close to the Danish percentage of survivors.

failed to connect with theorists such as Goffman (1961), with his emphasis on the materiality of spatio-temporal concentration and instead connected with abstractions such as ‘coping with uncertainty’ (Crozier 1964; Hickson et al 1971). In thinking about power, despite the example of neighbouring scholarship from people such as Hannah Arendt (1970), abstract functionalism won out over the study of actual discourses and practices of power.

Why was it that in studying power and organizations the academic gaze of organization theory did not fix on recent materialities? Starbuck (2003) provides us with a possible answer: because their knowledge is an instrument of power, scholars in organization theory have become parts of a movement that designs and operates business systems and maintains silences in return for some perks, such as tenure in well-salaried positions in business schools. Students in these schools, for whom history is boring anyway, do not want to hear sad stories or deal with negativity. Scholars who carp on about the past, injustice, viciousness and the dirty work of organizations are hardly likely to build glittering careers for themselves in the best-funded and most prestigious institutions. Firms such as IBM do not want reminding of their complicity with the Nazi regime. Organizations who hire professors for their expertise do not want to hear that their present cultural commitment programs and intensive regimes of discipline are just a few steps removed from being total institutions and thus genealogically connected to atrocity rather than glory.

The position of social science scholars is always ambiguous; of necessity they exist in their discourse while they enter into the discourses of ‘subjects’, the author of these words being no exception to the general rule. They can choose to look back, historically, as I have done, inspired by Bauman and Higgins, or they can remain

resolutely in the present. They can choose to enter into the discourses of the portentous and powerful, a particularly attractive option for Business School professors, or the maligned and the marginalized. It is a matter of choice as to whether one focuses one's gaze on those operating the machinery of power, on the machinery itself, or those it damages. Overwhelmingly, the organization theorists' gaze has seemed more fascinated by designing a better machine in the interests of those it serves rather than those it damages.

In total institutions in extremis, such as the death camps, whether we like it or not, we see the techniques of everyday organizational power in sharp relief and focus, as earlier generations of organizational behaviorists realized (Milgram 1974). The techniques of total institutional power are assuredly organizational techniques, not techniques of caprice, will or individual voluntarism. Moreover, these techniques are deliberate acts of domination. By this we refer not to the violence but to the ordering, the social organization of ethical horror, in such a way that damage is domesticated, tamed, made normal. If such horrors and monstrosities can be tamed, how much easier is it to enact the many lesser calumnies and sins of everyday power in ordinary organizational life?

Where damage has been done, *in extremis*, as in the Holocaust, it seems to have largely slipped organizational analysts' attention. The Holocaust, rightly, is claimed to occupy a special case in the annals of twentieth century history. The Holocaust is *the* crime of the last century, largely because it was not some gruesome means to some other end but was an end in itself. Nonetheless, although the atrocity of the Holocaust was unique, its organizational form as a total institution was not. While industrially organized genocide may not have recurred since the Nazi's death camps, despite the



many atrocities that have occurred globally in the intervening sixty years, the total institutional form did not die out with the Nazi's. Here is not the place to tell of more contemporary horrors but should the reader need instruction, if current affairs do not suffice, then they can consult Clegg et al (2006), from which this account is, in part, drawn.

Power is a relation between human beings, who are, in theory, free to act by being in the world and projecting their being onto the world. Organization at its most liberal is carried out with regard for persons; when that adage is turned against particular categories of person for whom ill-regard is only too evident, legal instrumental rationality makes it easier for some people to do horrific things in order to make other people do things which they might not otherwise do through the practice of rigid adherence to rules. When organization members apply a rule they cannot do so blindly, unaware of the consequences. Where rigid adherence to a legal instrumental rationality is fused with a total organizational apparatus, we have a fearsome instrument. A total institution is not merely a material apparatus; it is a value apparatus constructed around too high a regard for legal instrumental rationality and too little regard for the care not only of the self but also the other.

Perhaps this can be made more tangible for those without historical memory and a sense only of the pervasiveness of the present. While the current Global Financial Crisis is hardly a Holocaust it is an object lesson in the ways in which others have been treated by the financial masters of the universe during the past decade.

Technique has prevailed over ethics; judgments have been mired in such complex instrumentalities that they were scarcely comprehensible. The present contagion of market failures results in part, as we all know, from an ethical code of 'light

regulation' coupled with a view that markets 'know best', discourses in which some colleagues in many Business Schools were enthusiastic collaborators, including a few from the 'Organizations' departments. Trillions of dollars lost later, as well as hundreds of thousands of jobs and homes, we should know better. When we recall that the Holocaust was inflicted by the educated elite of the German nation it is also worth recognizing that the MBA graduates of the most elite United States Business Schools, such as Harvard, were overwhelmingly responsible for the present mess. Intelligence is no guarantee against barbarism but an appropriate ethical education may be. That is why the organizational analysis of the Holocaust remains important.