

MANAGERIALISM AND ITS DISCONTENTS

‘The campaign captures in a visual way Cap Gemini Ernst & Young’s essential brand equity of “entrepreneurial creativity”. It demonstrates that Cap Gemini Ernst & Young has successfully distilled the brand essence of the newly merged company. The campaign is a celebration of having defined the global offer which distinguishes Cap Gemini Ernst & Young from its competitors. This campaign marks a new phase for Cap Gemini Ernst & Young as it continues its aim of achieving global domination in consultancy services. Creative execution of the campaign was developed with a total campaign budget of \$30 million.’

Patrick Boccard, CGE&Y Communications Director, 2001

‘Management of what? Management for what? Management. Management. Management. The word sticks in one’s interface. Please excuse me if I dare laugh, but I know that each age, even each decade, has its little cant word coiled up inside real discourse like a tiny grub in the middle of an apple. Each age, even each decade, is overly impressed for a little while by half-way bright youngish men on the make who adeptly manipulate the current terminology at precisely the right moment to make precisely the right impression on those who are a little older, a little less intelligent and considerably less alert.’

Dennis Potter (1994: 47)

What sense does it make to be ‘against’ management? It is easy enough to be against many things – discrimination against different groups of people, the degradation of the environment, the rise of corporate power – but to be ‘against’ management? Surely to take such

a position on something like this is like being ‘against’ buildings, or air, or society? That is to say, it makes no sense to be against something that constitutes the world that we live in so completely. ‘Management’ is a fact of life, and we might try to discover how to do it better, or aim it at different ends, but it makes no sense to deny it so unconditionally. But it is precisely because this idea sounds so implausible that I want to try and explore it. Simply because something is everywhere doesn’t mean it is good or necessary, and simply because being ‘against management’ is perverse does not mean that it isn’t worth thinking about.

Three assumptions

‘Management’ has become an inextricable part of the common sense of my world, and almost certainly of yours too. It is difficult, perhaps impossible now, for citizens of the first world to imagine a state of affairs in which we could buy bananas from our local supermarket, or visit a hospital, or vote in elections, without some process of management having taken place behind the scenes. It has become a defining feature of an organization that it has a group of individuals called managers. Most of these managers will have undergone extensive training in how to do management, perhaps in a Management Department of a university which contains specialists who teach and research on management and how to improve it. The managers of these organizations will also employ management consultants who often work for global organizations and advise on various aspects of management functioning. In an unholy (but well-compensated) trinity of self-interest and back-slapping, management academics train managers who seek advice from management consultants who seek their legitimacy from management academics, and so on.

Given this state of affairs, it is hardly surprising that many people believe that management is a precondition for an organized society, for social progress and economic growth. If we have a difficulty, with our jobs, our lives, our government or our world, then the answer is often supposed to be better management. It is increasingly articulated as a universal solution to whatever problem presents itself. Management protects us against chaos and inefficiency, management guarantees that organizations, people and machines do what they claim to do. Management is both a civilizing process and a new civic religion. Even if we don’t share the faith in today’s management, we often seem to believe that the answer is ‘better’ management, and not

something else altogether. There are some rather interesting general assumptions lying behind this faith and I want to begin this book by briefly untangling them in three ways. The first is control over nature, the second is control over human beings, and the third is an increasing control of our organizational abilities. All these themes help to support our faith in management, though they are rarely articulated in the starkly simplistic way that I do here.

Firstly, it is assumed that social progress is equivalent to our ability as human beings to increasingly control the natural world around us. History tells us of a long struggle against adversity, of the attempt to overcome crop failures, floods and diseases, and of the replacement of incorrect assumptions by a scientific and rational world view. Where we were once the victims of a wild, unruly nature, we are now becoming the masters. It is, so the story goes, because we are now capable of understanding and organizing the world that we have sent a man to the moon, and can buy golden even-sized bananas in cold countries at any time of the year. Disorder and chance have been conquered by order and understanding. In the future, as our understanding grows, we will be able to understand and control the very molecules that make rockets, humans and bananas what they are; conquer unhappiness; and perhaps even travel outwards to the furthest reaches of the universe, boldly going where no one has gone before. Management is one of the ways in which we articulate this control over things by making them manageable, subject to the control of human beings. So, management is a key element of a particular version of the progressive scientific attitude that allows for, or encourages, an increase in the sum total of control that human beings have over the world that they live in.

Secondly, management is also a way for human beings to be controlled. That is to say that human beings are also a potential source of disorder in organizing the world. Here we have some sense in which an internal 'human nature' is being progressively better understood through the various tools of behavioural and social science. This internal nature is sometimes depicted as just as wild and unruly as 'external' nature, and requires similar forms of domestication in order that it can be made amenable to the modern world. Often this nature is understood as individually or collectively selfish, or as easily swayed by unconscious mysticism and irrationalism. Left to our own monkey instincts, we would be lazy and brutish – victims of the monsters from the Id and the endless armies that have raped and pillaged in the name of yet another God. Yet, if we can better understand our nature, we can better structure human societies to the benefit of all.

So psychologists determine the nature of our deepest motivations, personality types and social development; sociologists describe the interactions and invisible structures of the organized world; economists discover the hidden mechanisms of the market and so on. Once all these matters can be better understood, then a world can be engineered which harmonizes our individual natures with collective betterment. By using these sciences of the human, management can shape and shepherd human beings towards a more productive future.

Finally, it might be noted that management is also implicated in a story about the development of control strategies themselves. According to this account, the forms of social organization that characterize early societies were autocratic and cruel: sacrifices to the sun, golden-topped pyramids of hubris built with slave labour and kings who demanded that their serfs leave their entrails on muddy battlefields. Management, on the other hand, is democratic and transparent. It is a form of organization that is premised on the efficient ordering of people and things in order that agreed collective goals can be achieved.¹ In its best form, it prevents the abuse of power and greed and turns human energy into measurable objectives. For nineteenth-century utopians like Saint-Simon, this was a matter of replacing ancient regimes of privilege with a meritocracy governed by experts who knew what they were talking about (Berneri 1971: 213). This bourgeois revolution is now complete, and management is dominant. Management is clear, is accountable and precise. Management does not waste human energy, and only demands that democratic market liberalism be recognized as the best solution for all. Management, therefore, is the most advanced form of human organization – a professional expertise that Whyte suggested was based on the idea that it is an ‘expertise relatively independent of the content of what is being managed’ (1961: 11).² When the cruel autocrat becomes the responsible manager, the greatest good of the greatest number will be achieved.

Given these kind of assumptions,³ these stories that many human beings tell about progress, it is hardly surprising that management occupies such a central place in advanced industrial societies. If we want to control nature and ourselves, and do so in a transparent fashion, then management is an obvious answer. It is the consolidation of order and efficiency, and who could be against order and efficiency? The common subtext behind these accounts of modernization is that progress is defined as the process of defeating disorder. Chaos and disorganization are obstacles that need to be overcome. Ordering, producing a pattern which will transcend space and persist into

the future, is the activity which defends us against being open-mouthed and hollow-eyed victims. The process of management allows us to control our individual and collective destinies. To return to an earlier metaphor, if someone in Stoke-on-Trent wants to eat a banana in winter, then management allows them to do it. And why should we not eat bananas in winter? Further, if someone from Stoke-on-Trent also wants to write a book which calls into question 'management', then management (of higher education, of research output, of publishers, of printers, of bookshops) is necessary. I could not do what I want to do without the thing that I want to dethrone. I will return to this awkward contradiction later in the book, but note in passing that this might also be taken to be further proof of management's superiority to all other forms of social organization. The cruel king would not allow me to write a book which called into question his authority, but management is so democratic that (if there is a market for this book) it will be published. I, in biting the hand that feeds me, merely demonstrate the incoherence and ingratitude of my attitude. But, as I said, more of that later.

Now, as the astute reader will have noticed, I have used the word 'management' in a very general sense so far. Indeed, I seem to be conflating management with modernity itself. But my point here is that what we understand as management nowadays is predicated on a very large story about social progress. In many pre-industrial societies, it would make no sense to disentangle something called 'management' from the everyday skills through which life was lived. We have some hint of this when we talk about 'managing' in the sense of 'coping' with a particular state of affairs. So it might be that the very separation of management from other words which concern our abilities to organize our lives reflects a certain self-consciousness about our abilities to detach a general technology of control from other, more specific and grounded ideas. Growing crops, looking after cattle, determining the inheritance of property, throwing pots, trading things with other people and so on were all specific matters which required quite specific solutions and knowledge. But the very generality of management reflects a claim that this is a form of knowledge that can be made widely applicable across a huge variety of domains. Once it has been learnt, management can be applied anywhere, to anything and on anyone. More than any other form of knowing or practice, management is claimed to be absolutely nomadic and universally useful. It is the synthesis and culmination of the stories of control of things, the control of people and even the control of control itself.

Three definitions

The etymology of the word ‘management’ reflects this gradual expansion of its claims. It seems to be derived from the Italian *mano*, hand, and its expansion into *maneggiarre*, the activity of handling and training a horse carried out by *maneggio*. From this, very specific, form of manual control, the word gets expanded into a general activity of training and handling people too. The later development of the word is also influenced by the French *mener* (to lead) and its development into *ménage* – household, or housekeeping – and the verb *ménager* – to economize (Weekley 1967; see also Jacques 1996: 88). So an intimate technology of the hand or of the household grows to become a technology of the workplace, and eventually of the state too. But the later imperialism of this word for handling beasts also follows from its subsequent division into three parts – a noun, a verb and an academic discipline. I will look at each of those in turn, in order to refine what management means more precisely.

management (1) [*manʌjment*] *n* group of executives directing an industrial undertaking.

First then, management is a plural noun for ‘manager’. The management. We can describe them as an occupational group who have engaged in a very successful strategy of collective social mobility over a century or so. From a disparate collection of occupational nouns – owner, supervisor, superintendent, administrator, overman, foreman, clerk – this collective term has emerged that represents anyone engaged in the co-ordination of people and things. Further, these managers are no longer concentrated in industrial organizations, making things. Nowadays, we find managers everywhere – in hospitals, universities and football clubs. Managers manage hotels, railway stations and museums – they are universally essential. There is an unusual reversal at work here. As Adam Smith, Emile Durkheim and many others have argued (Durkheim 1991 [1983]: 1), the historical effects of the division of labour have usually been to subdivide tasks, and their attached labels, whilst this word is a successful attempt to undivide, to create a general term which covers many labours. Whilst there might be qualifiers added to the noun (Marketing Manager, Human Resource Manager) and there are other occupational terms that can be subsumed within management (Accountant, Director), the general category is one that would be recognized across most of the

world, and in every sector of the economy. Through this undivision, this merging, a new class of people is created. Perhaps not a class in the classical Marxist sense, though that might not be too wide of the mark, but certainly a class in the sense of concepts. Importantly, the term is almost always a positive ascription. Whilst ‘engineer’ or ‘teacher’ are occupational terms that are descriptive and sectorally located, ‘manager’ is a term that can be applied anywhere, and that implies a degree of power and status within the organization. It may also be attached to the possession of certain credentials, an MBA for example, usually implies high reward, and (if airport bookstalls are evidence) requires a lot of travelling and the use of mobile phones, lap-top computers and expensive hotels.

management (2) [*manɪdʒmənt*] *v/i* process or act of managing; skill in contriving, handling *etc.*

The management practise management. Which is to say that, as with a word like organization, the noun can also be translated into a verb. This is a verb that can be applied to the processes of ordering and controlling people and things. It implies a separation between the actual doing of whatever is being managed (engineering or teaching) and the higher-level function of control of these processes. In other words, management is not *about* engineering or teaching, but the coordination of the doing of these things. In some sense, management is constituted as a higher order of brain work which requires an elevation from mundane functions in order to gain a better overall perspective. Though management may be etymologically linked with the hand, it is no longer a practice that is ‘hands-on’. In substantive terms, management usually refers to what managers do – marketing, strategy, finance and so on – but the word is spreading beyond such restrictive definitions. Thus there is increasing talk of the management of everything. A look on the internet recently gave me books on Managing Anger, Managing Your Divorce, Managing Money in Relationships, Managing the Morning Rush, Managing Attention and Learning Disorders, Managing Childhood Medical Emergencies, Managing Disagreement, Managing the Demands of Work and Home, Managing Your Health Care, Managing Your Children’s Conflicts, Managing Loss, Managing to Make It, and (of course) Managing Your Children, Career, Home, Finances and Everything Else. This was a small sample from a much longer list.⁴ In principal, anything that is problematic or chaotic is potentially a target for management. ‘Knowledge management’ is currently a very fashionable

term, but it leads me to wonder what happens to knowledge if it isn't managed properly.⁵ What happened to knowledge, relationships, children and anger before management came along? The division performed here is between managing something, which is good, and not-managing, which is bad. The not-managing usually gets less attention but seems to include both bad management (mismanagement) and no management, in other words both doing things badly and leaving things alone altogether. Both can be repaired by better management.

management (3) [*manjment*] *n* the academic discipline concerned with managing and administration; the part of an educational institution concerned with the same.

The place that this book is written from. The name of university departments that signifies (paid) engagement in the discipline of reading, writing and talking about what the management does and what management is, and sometimes talking to managers about what they do. This is certainly not a practice that can be isolated from the other two, simply because much of the output of this 'discipline' is shaped by, and in turn shapes, contemporary practices in both of the other areas. Management Departments, Business Schools and so on have become an ubiquitous part of further and higher education over the last fifty years or so. From origins in the USA, elements of commerce, economics, psychology and sociology have congealed into the B-School, the cash-cow of cash-hungry university managers and what Thomas Frank calls 'processing plants for the faking of intellectual authority' (2000: 177–8). Nowadays, Management claims to be a coherent discipline in itself, and employs specialists to teach and research in organizational behaviour, human resource management, accounting and finance, marketing, strategy, operations and production management, international business, business ethics, information systems as well as a dizzying variety of specialisms within, and cross-overs between, all these areas. The vast majority of the output from this network of hundreds of thousands of texts, professors, journals, Ph.D. students, conferences is unquestioningly supportive of the growth of all three senses of management.⁶ Oceans of ink have been drained to promulgate highly performative and machinic notions of what 'organizing' is, and what 'organizations' are and should be. In the simplest of terms, problems of organization are reduced to matters of human systems engineering. Even when the intent is avowedly 'soft' or 'humanist', the subtext stresses the imperatives of

managing and the necessity of control. This is one of the largest institutional legitimations and public relations campaigns in the history of thought, though it is rarely recognized as such.

It would seem then that management, as person, practice and discipline, is almost everywhere nowadays. It has become one of the defining words of our time and both a cause and a symptom of our brave new world. It directly employs millions, and indirectly employs almost everyone else. It is altering the language we use in our conceptions of home, work and self, and both relies on and reinforces deeply held assumptions about the necessary relationship between control and progress. I make a living from writing and teaching about it. How can it possibly be a bad thing?

Against what?

In this book, I will try to persuade you that almost all these senses of management are both limiting and dangerous, and that managerialism is ultimately a form of thought and activity which is being used to justify considerable cruelty and inequality. I will also be suggesting that, in a variety of places, an odd variety of people seem to be coming to the same conclusion. In other words, that it is possible to identify cracks in the new religion as some of its converts begin to lapse and others intensify their protest. In order to do this, I will be drawing from a wide variety of sources – academic writing on management and organization, general social theories of the present, various books and films which use management as their backdrop, and the increasing range of anti-corporate protests and politics. The overall argument will be that we can see the beginnings of a cultural shift in the image of management, from saviour to problem, and that this is a significant historical move. In essence, though, this is a polemical book. I want to fan the flames of discontent. I want to try to persuade my readers that they have good reason to be suspicious of management by showing that many people already are, and that they have some rather good reasons. I want to encourage *you* to question the common sense that tells us that we need management, managers and management schools. I want, in a sense, to put myself out of a job.

This means that the book is partisan. I would argue that all books already are, and that there is no neutral academic voice, but that is another story. I am not going to spend a lot of space carefully sifting evidence in order to reach balanced conclusions, or appealing to

established academic authority to convince you by weight of reputation. It seems to me that there has already been quite enough partisan writing concealed as serious advice, or breathlessly hysterical writing that has puffed and sold market managerialism and global corporate libertarianism for money. Take another look at your local bookshop if you don't believe me. There will be a vast teetering pile of *Seven Secrets of Successful Managers*, *Marketing Yourself for Fun and Profit* and *Managing People and Organizations* (eighth edition, with instructor's manual, website, OHP slides, class exercises and testbank). Open some of these books. You will see bullet points, flip-chart summaries, cartoons, learning boxes and two by two matrices supported by legitimating references and case studies. Others will overwhelm you with hyperbole – world-class excellence, strategic future vision, high-impact global odyssey to tomorrow; currently fashionable terminology – knowledge management, emotional intelligence, spirit and passion, e-business; or brutal straightforwardness – scaling the corporate wall, how to succeed in business, discovering the leader within. Most of them are actually the same. Their hysterical attempts to differentiate themselves, to go beyond this, reassess that, or provide you with the essentials (principles, fundamentals) of the other, are merely expressions of wish-fulfilment – perhaps for both writers and readers. Whether wide-eyed and fashionable, warm and helpful, or dutifully academic, all these books praise management. They might attend to, or construct, debates *within* management, but these will be debates about the newest organizational form, or why companies should adopt relationship marketing as opposed to transactional marketing, or whatever. The king is dead, long live the king. Old management versus new management in other words, but very little which questions management itself. But this book comes to bury management, not praise it. This book seeks to attack these vast libraries of propaganda that masquerade as necessary common sense.

However, this opening is too insufficient and imprecise to be left as it is. Of course the argument gets more sophisticated and nuanced as you burrow into the book, but I can imagine too many objections to what I have written so far for me to leave it here. For a start, I think my broader target is 'managerialism', the generalized ideology of management. This lies behind all the three senses of management I outlined above, but does not include a more modest version of 'managing' as a local and temporary art. As I said, when we ask someone 'how are you managing?', or 'how did you manage?', it usually means something like 'cope' or 'deal with'. It suggests that an individual has

a problem with something rather difficult – learning to juggle, moving house or the death of a friend – and that they could describe whether they found a personal way of dealing with it as best they could. This partial and modest sense of managing, perhaps like the practical art of *maneggiarre*, is not one of my targets. Rather, it is the application of a narrow conception of management as a generalized technology of control to everything – horses, humans and hospitals. This is management as the universal solution, not a personal assessment of a local problem.

This imperialism of management has found a particular home in large organizations, the ‘corporations’ which will be the particular focus of my chapter on anti-corporate protest. But taking the big organization as the breeding ground of managerialism is not intended to imply that only big organizations are managerial, or conversely that all organization is inherently managerial.⁷ In terms of the former, I have already suggested above that the instrumentalism of management expertise has found its way into most organizations, big and small, as well as into the crevices of private life. I am not at all sure that this colonization is always helpful. However, I don’t believe that this is true of all organizations or all organizing. My last chapter will make this argument more forcefully, but it is important to note that there are potentially many non-managerial ways in which organizing can get done, and many different ways in which we can think about markets too. My argument here is that the market managerial notion of organizing is only one alternative amongst many. However, its dominance is now so unquestioned that it is increasingly difficult to imagine or remember alternatives. Words like co-ordination, cooperation, barter, participation, collectivity, democracy, community, citizenship, exchange all refer to methods of doing organization, but they have been increasingly erased, marginalized or co-opted by the three senses of management. It is almost as if we have resigned ourselves to the idea that only management can do organization, and that organization only involves permanent hierarchies of status and reward, the separation of conception from execution, the dominance of a particular form of market and so on.

So, I am *not* (in some perverse way) trying to set this book up against management as coping, or against all versions of organization, or even against all versions of markets. I *am* trying to argue that the particular version of managerialism that has been constructed over the past century is deeply implicated in a wide variety of political and ethical problems, and that it limits our capacity to imagine alternative forms of organizing. This, it seems to me, is a matter of

politics, because conceptions of organizing are politics made durable. As Marx and Engels put it in 1846, ‘The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas: that is, the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force’ (Bottomore and Rubel 1963: 93). One of the ruling, or at least hegemonic, ideas of the early twenty-first century seems to me to be located around managerialism. But its commonsensical nature should not be taken to indicate its truth, merely that it reflects the interests of a ruling class of managers. So this book is one element in a battle of ideas for this particular epoch which attempts to open up the possibility of alternative, non-managerial, conceptions of organizing. That is the overall argument, but for those who like to know exactly where they are going before they begin (and hence manage their reading more efficiently), the next section briefly outlines the next eight chapters.

The rest of the book

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 all deal with ‘internal’ critiques of management. That is to say, they provide an alternative history of organizational theory over the past century or so, and explore the ways in which classic formulations of the role and purposes of management have been opposed and reformulated, though often in ways that re-legitimize a market based managerialism rather than seriously exploring alternatives. I begin with a chapter on the most enduring critique, the characterization of managerialism as being equivalent to vast pyramidal bureaucracies that crush individuality with the weightiest of rule books. After a short history of the long-standing tradition of anti-bureaucratic thought, I go on to consider the latest version of this idea – George Ritzer’s formulation of McDonaldization. Whilst in many ways being sympathetic to a critique of McDonald’s, I suggest that Ritzer’s liberalism combined with his cultural elitism means that his analysis of capitalism and managerialism is essentially nostalgic rather than progressive. Being against bureaucracy is not the same as being against fast food in general, or indeed as being against the role that managers commonly play within global corporations. There is actually rather a wide gulf between the kind of activism represented by the McLibel trial and Ritzer’s attempt to argue that resistance involves eating with a knife and fork. Further, there are actually many good reasons why we might want to defend a bureaucratic sense of probity. This is particularly important in the

context of newer developments in managerial thought which seek to make employees discipline themselves through self-management dressed up as commitment, whilst managers are positioned as visionary leaders.

Chapters 3 and 4 consider these modern formulations of the committed worker through the characterization of the organizational citizen and the community member. Both these characters are rhetorically justified by business writers and B-School academics through their opposition to the heartless bureaucrat, and their position within flexible and supposedly more democratic organizations. The old slow-moving dinosaurs are doomed to extinction as turbo-capitalism demands knowledge workers with portfolio careers. So, given the difficulty of managing people without a rule book, organizational citizenship suggests the possibility that an organization could be unified through sharing common values which are made explicit in mission and vision statements formulated by heroic and charismatic leaders. This is a potentially critical position on managerialism in that it assumes that classical management is an inadequate way of capturing the hearts and minds of employees. After all, the idea of belonging to organizations in a similar way that we belong to states is a powerful one, particularly if the organizational citizen has similar rights and responsibilities to the citizen of a modern democratic society. The chapter concludes by exploring the problems of a genuinely pluralist conception of industrial citizenship within a context where corporations have all the power, and states seem to be on the wane.

These arguments are taken further in chapter 4 in terms of the currently fashionable idea that the formal organization could dissolve altogether and become nothing more than a technologically mediated constellation of specialist individuals held together by emotional and electronic ties. Management withers away, and is replaced by metaphors like community, soul and spirit. In this case, I will argue that definitional and actually existing features of large-scale organization are being effaced through these kind of arguments. Hierarchical organization and management are not withering away, but becoming more pervasive, though camouflaged through colonizing other forms of language. Managers can now claim that their organizations are caring communities at the same time as they down-size and relocate to maximize shareholder value. Though there are some interesting lessons to be learnt from thinking about organizations as communities, this is a metaphor that breaks if it is stretched too far. Essentially these kinds of ideas function as ideology for the transnational capitalist class, an ideology that celebrates a small group of

knowledge workers at the same time that it effectively condemns the rest of the global population to serving in McDonald's or working in Export Processing Zones.

Though there are useful ideas for being against management in anti-bureaucratic, citizenship and community ideas, I think they need to be placed in a more radical, and non-managerial, context to have much bite. So the next four chapters shift focus, and look at examples of more 'external' criticism. The chapters are broadly organized as a series of movements away from the usual concerns of management. So business ethics (the subject of chapter 5) can be critical, though many elements of it are actually supportive of business. At the other extreme, the anti-corporate protest movement (considered in chapter 8) is entirely unconcerned with legitimizing management in any form. The former assumes that the force of the better argument is sufficient, the latter prefers political pressure and direct action. Books or bricks?

The business ethics chapter begins by looking at the various ways in which the explosion of interest in business ethics, corporate governance and social responsibility might articulate a sustained evaluation of the means and ends of management. Whilst much of this literature does argue that business ethics makes good business, other elements of it open up business practice to questions that it does not usually have to answer. I suggest that moral philosophy can help us think about the reconstitution of business organizations, but that it generally only asks very specific questions in very specific ways. Importantly, business ethics usually excludes the politics of business, and of capitalism more generally. It tends to personalize these matters as questions for individual managers, when they might be better asked as structural questions about market managerialism and global corporate domination.

Yet also from within B-Schools, and over the last ten years or so, there has been increasing interest in what is now usually called critical management studies. In chapter 6 I consider this body of academic writing which is concerned to denaturalize and re-evaluate many of the taken-for-granted assumptions that are deployed within the mainstream – including the ideas covered in the previous chapters. However, the arcane nature of many of these arguments, the endless debates between neo-Marxists and Foucauldians, realists and post-structuralists, and a typically academic emphasis on the importance of Big Theory means that most of this writing is rarely read outside the academy. So, what is the point in complaining if no one can hear your voice, or understand it even if they could hear you?

Oddly though, in the most popular media of all – the entertainment industries – we can find voices that echo far beyond the seminar room or the academic journal. There is a rich vein of anti-management material in popular books and films that often articulates a critical understanding of managerialism and the big corporation in some very surprising ways. Chapter 7 will survey much of this material, from Charlie Chaplin to cyborg science fiction, in order to argue that the ‘against management’ cultural current is clearly emerging in other places, just as it did in the first third of the last century during an earlier crisis of managerialism. The image of the utilitarian bureaucrat, or the conspiratorial organization, is one that is now firmly embedded within popular narratives, yet this is almost always ignored by those writing about management within the academy.

But perhaps the most visible form of resistance to corporate colonization, and the provocation for this book, has been the rise of a loud rainbow coalition of protesters who are taking to the streets in order to make their point. Chapter 8 covers the battle in Seattle and many other recent anti-capitalist protests, as well as magazines, internet sites and a small mountain of books by authors such as Naomi Klein, George Monbiot, Thomas Frank and others. In bringing together activists with a wide variety of interests under the banner of resistance to various attempts to further globalize world trade, this movement has become a central feature of the contemporary political landscape. These groups have, unlike business ethicists or critical management studies academics, no particular concern with Big Theory, yet they gain more media coverage and seem to have much more impact. I will argue that their lack of concern for the niceties of scholarship and argument makes them a particularly powerful and important symbol of protest to inspire others – including cloistered academics like me – and possibly the most important contemporary example of an evaluation of managerialism as the problem, and not a solution. In summary, and despite their various strengths and weaknesses, chapters 5 to 8 seem to represent something of a change in the political culture. Many people, in many different sites, seem to be losing their faith in managerialism and provoking a legitimacy crisis that this book seeks to amplify.

In the last chapter I begin by restating that I am not against organization as such, or technology, or even progress, but that the uncritical celebration of management over the past fifty years has been most unfortunate. It has damaged democracy, legitimated inequality and exported injustice in the name of a neutral and efficient technology of organizing. Sadly, or perhaps predictably, those academics who

could be in a position to offer articulate resistance are too busy arguing about different ethical or epistemological frameworks to do much about it. The chapter compares four possible sites of resistance to managerialism – managers themselves, academics, individuals and states – and attempts to evaluate their relative strengths and weakness. But, most importantly, it suggests that there *are* alternatives to narrow conceptions of organization as market-driven managerialism. So, in the second half of this chapter I raise questions of scale, hierarchy, the division of labour and so on (all prefigured in utopian, anarchist, situationist and feminist accounts of organizing) in order to open up ‘organizing’ in much more multiple ways than are presently thought to be proper. The problem is that the idea of the market managerial one best way, combined with the ideology of the end of history, has restricted our imagination of what organizing might involve to a remarkable degree. It is almost as if we now have so much faith in management, in all three senses of the term, that we cannot imagine being organized without it. The book concludes with a self-consciously utopian plea for more public debate on, and resistance to, the ideology of management, and an insistence that the point of books like this is not merely to come to a different understanding of the world, but an attempt to try and change it.