Managing the Polytheistic Organization

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Abstract: The paper outlines the development and utilization of the Dalmau-Neville Archetypology Indicator (DNAI), an instrument designed for the exploration of organizational culture by change agents and managers who wish to initiate cultural change. The instrument has been designed within the framework of Jungian/archetypal psychology to provide a means of distinguishing sixteen archetypal patterns observable in organizational behaviour. Three case studies are provided to illustrate the nature and utility of the information provided by the instrument. The authors argue that organizations must be “polytheistic” in their values and processes if they are to survive and flourish in the twenty-first century.

Keywords: Archetypal Psychology, Organizational Culture, Dalmau-Neville Archetypology Indicator, Diversity in Organizations, Organizational Change

Origins of the DNAI

WHEN WE FIRST began to bring a Jungian perspective to our work with organizations, we found a need for a language which was precise enough and rich enough to label the various constellations of behaviours, emotions, perspectives and assumptions which seemed apparent to us, and which we were inclined to label as ‘archetypal’. Jung provides a language of archetype in his writings: anima, animus, persona, self, old man, trickster, shadow and so on. This language is useful for many purposes, but we found it unsuitable for distinguishing the various dominant and alternative narratives we found shaping the lives of the organizations we dealt with. We needed a language that could cope with both creative and pathological forms of the patterns we detected. The metaphor of culture presented itself readily enough, and Jung himself had pointed to mythology as containing the imaginal forms of archetypal patterns. We found in the Greek pantheon a set of images and a language to distinguish the diverse narratives, and found in the notion of culture a framework for looking at the organizational phenomena that were of most interest to us.

Accordingly, we have drawn on the Greek pantheon to represent a number of recognisable and distinguishable cultures that we seemed to find in organizations. In theorising this approach we have drawn on the work of archetypal psychologists such as James Hillman, Ginette Paris, David Miller and Anthony Stevens.¹

Our model of key archetypal patterns was not logically derived. Unlike the Myers Briggs Type Indicator², it is not a rational model based on polarities or dichotomies. It does not represent a closed system, as such logical models do. Neither is it empirically derived, like Hofstede’s and Trompenaars’ models of culture, which are based on polarities. The gods are innumerable and many-faceted and their complexity is unending. Indeed, the more closely we look at them the more complex they and their relationships appear. We can deal with them imaginally or mythically as distinct personalities, but when we try to deal with them rationally in the language of drives, needs, instincts or perspectives, we find that they are not at all distinct and discrete. They overlap each other in many complex ways.

Rather than develop a classification based on abstract concepts or factor analysis, we started with a set of images that have been significant in European culture for three thousand years. We took the twelve Olympian gods, accepting the classical Greeks’ ambivalence about precisely which twelve gods were actually the twelve. We translated divine image and narrative into specific attitudes and behaviours. Our experience in using the model in various organizations eventually led us to settle on sixteen god-images which seemed to us to represent sixteen specific

² The MBTI is based on four polarities theorized by Jung: introversion/extroversion, sensation/intuition, thinking/feeling, perception/judgement. Jung’s conceptualization and the design of the MBTI refer to individual psychology, but it is possible to apply the resulting sixteen types (INFP, ESTJ etc) to the categorization organizational culture.
constellations\textsuperscript{3} of attitudes and behaviours which we found demonstrated in the organizations we studied.

There is certainly something arbitrary about stopping at the number sixteen. There are more than sixteen narratives dominant in contemporary organizations. There were more than sixteen gods worshipped by the classical Greeks. Nevertheless, we had to stop somewhere, even if it meant leaving out Poseidon, Persephone, Hekate and Pan.

The selection of gods was determined by our experience in using the model. We ended up with six female and ten male gods, not because the goddesses are less influential than male gods in contemporary organizations, but because in our experience of working with organizations we have found the worship of the male gods more widespread. We have not come across organizations dominated by Persephone or Hekate, though they presumably exist. We could have introduced Gaia, or other personifications of the Great Mother, but we were able to represent her various aspects through Demeter, Artemis and Hestia. Likewise Zeus, in his Senex (old man) aspect stands in for Kronos and Uranus.

So what then are the organizational god-images? They are all complex and multi-dimensional, and resist summary statement. Nevertheless, some such statement seems warranted here. How would we describe an organization that is given over to a particular god-energy, carried along by the myth of a particular god? The following summary is based in the first place on the personalities of the gods as represented in classical Greek mythology, and secondly on our experience of imposing this particular template on the organizations with which we have worked.

Aphrodite: An organization that focuses on beauty and pleasure, that seeks to be admired and desired.

Apollo: A rationally structured organization that seeks clarity, understanding and meaning in all its activities.

Ares: An organization in which people challenge and are challenged, in which energy is expressed through activity.

Artemis: An organization that focuses on achieving harmony with nature, an environment in which the affirmation and protection of ‘feminine’ values is privileged.

Athena: An organization characterized by cooperation, the sharing of power, the manifestation of balanced and practical wisdom.

Demeter: An organization that mothers and nourishes its members.

Dionysos: An organization that values growth, emotional excitement, spiritual experience, and rewards creativity and spontaneity.

Eros: An organization that focuses on intimacy and community, in which people can express their need to love and be loved.

Hades: An organization characterized by extreme indifference and apathy; an organization from which life has departed.

Hephaistos: An organization devoted to the values of work, skill and craft excellence.

Hera: An organization that demands great commitment from its members, in which the members give organizational loyalty precedence over their individual needs.

Herakles: An organization that sees itself involved in an heroic struggle.

Hermes: An organization focused on communication, process and transition, and which abhors all regulation.

Hestia: An organization characterized by quiet, focused, centered and receptive activity in the service of others.

Prometheus: An organization with a mission to save humanity through the application of technology.

Zeus: An organization based on centralized power.\textsuperscript{4}

The classical Greeks did not distinguish between ‘good’ gods and ‘bad’ gods. They all have attributes which we might consider negative or pathological. In the instrument we have developed to explore organizational culture according to this model we have not attempted to represent specifically negative aspects of the gods. We do not have any items attributing to the organization the qualities of the devouring

\textsuperscript{3} The metaphorical underpinning of the words ‘constellation’ and ‘constellated’ is worth spelling out. Constellations do not exist of themselves independently of an observer. It is the observer who ‘constellates’ a set of phenomena into a meaningful pattern. As far as the Pleiades, Orion or the Southern Cross are concerned, the stars and galaxies that comprise them are thousands of light years apart. They only appear as a cluster because we observe them from a particular point in the universe. From another point in the universe the constellation will have an entirely different shape, or will disappear altogether. The ‘archetypal constellations of instincts, needs, behaviors, emotions, narratives, images and ideas which we personify as Greek gods exist in the shape they do because we are choosing to perceive the raw elements of human experience from a particular point in human history and culture. Shift our vantage point slightly and we see the Hindu, Celtic gods. Shift it rather more and we see Rainbow Serpent or Coyote.

mother or the limb-tearing Dionysos. We have used neutral descriptive terms as far as we can, rather than give them a good/bad connotation. We might say that ‘creative’ is a ‘good’ word and ‘treating people roughly’ is bad, but this is Dionysos and Eros speaking. Ares does not think so highly of creativity and thinks rough treatment is perfectly appropriate. Likewise Aphrodite puts a positive value on ‘sensual’ and a negative value on ‘systematic’. Apollo puts these the other way round. We try not to enter into this dispute.

We developed the Dalmau Neville Archetypology Indicator as an educational and consulting tool. We were suggesting that if people looked at their own organizations they would be able to detect certain specific patterns of assumptions, attitudes and behaviours, and that these represented ‘old stories’. We wanted to concretize these patterns to help people recognize them. Administering the DNAI was a means of getting people to become more aware of the ways they perceived their own organizations, to find patterns that they had not previously noticed, and to reflect on whether these patterns did indeed represent the ‘old stories’ that we were so interested in.

We had no intention at this stage of developing it as a research instrument. In this context, questions of ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’ did not really concern us. We were not interested in whether some one’s responses to the questionnaire represented an ‘objective truth’ about the organization in question; we only wanted them to articulate their personal and subjective perception of the organization. It did not matter to us whether they would give the same answers to the questions on a different day; we only wanted to know how the organization seemed to them on this particular day.\footnote{However, we did check the construct validity of the instrument by giving all the items, randomly sorted, to ten judges who had a thorough knowledge of the Greek pantheon. Only items that were attributed to the appropriate god by 90% of these judges were kept in the instrument.} If people within an organization gave widely varying responses on a particular item, or changed their responses from day to day, we accepted this as an additional piece of information about the organization’s culture rather than as evidence of a lack of validity or reliability in the instrument.

In spite of our interest in the unconscious components of any organization’s culture, we had to acknowledge that a questionnaire like this can explore only the perceptions and attitudes of which people are conscious.

Development of the DNAI was begun in 1991 and the task of refining it continues. The use of the instrument in workshops and consultancies has given us regular feedback about which gods are dominant in contemporary organizations and which items best represent their presence.

In spite of its origins as an educational tool, the DNAI seems to have some appeal as a diagnostic instrument. It is possible to use it in ways that seem to validate statements like: ‘This is essentially an Eros organization’; ‘The dominant narrative in this organization is the Promethean one’; ‘Aphrodite is seriously neglected in this organization’, to compare the profile of one organization with that of another, or to compare two sites within the one organization. When we administer the instrument to fifty managers in an organization and find that there is a great deal of consensus in the way they perceive and categorize their organization, we do have a sort of quasi-objectivity which enables us to make such statements. Of course, we have keep in mind that the management perception of the organization is no more or less ‘objective’ than the perception of employees or clients.

While such quasi-objective statements may be made, and we might make them ourselves, we need to remember that the instrument is not constructed on the Apollonine fantasy of objective truth. It is constructed, rather, on the postmodern, Hermetic fantasy of shifting images. We present the instrument to any group in the hope that people will conscientiously record their awareness of the group’s way of functioning and that this conscious awareness will give us adequate hints at the pattern which is operating both consciously and unconsciously in the life of the group.

In the meantime we can shift into the Promethean fantasy for a moment and argue that justification for the DNAI lies in whether it ‘works’ or not. Our experience has been that it is instrumentally useful, that it provides a handy technique for facilitating self-reflection and self-transformation in an organization. Whether we can also justify it in terms of intellectual rigour (within the Apollonine fantasy), social value (Hera) or creativity (Dionysos) is not so clear!

**The Archetypology Indicator**

The DNAI is a 32-item questionnaire divided into two parts. Part 1 asks the respondent to rate 32 statements on a scale of 0 - 5 according to their accuracy as descriptors of their ideal organization, that is, the kind of organization which they would find it most satisfying to belong to. Part 2 asks them to rate the same items as descriptors of an actual organization. In the context of an organizational consultancy the questions are obviously related to ‘the organization (or workplace) that would be ideal for me’, and the actual organization (or workplace) that is being studied.

With each of the 16 items four descriptors are presented. These are separately rated. There are accordingly 64 descriptors in each of parts 1 and 2.
Each descriptor represents a specific god. There are 4 descriptors for each of the 16 gods. Totalling these provides a score range of 0 - 20 for each of the 16 archetypal patterns. These can be graphed as a profile of the organizational culture.

While our interest is the unconscious dynamics of organizational culture, it is clear that a questionnaire cannot deal with these directly. The descriptors deal with group and individual behaviour, perception, leadership, values and emotionality, as they are observed by the members of the organization, on the understanding that these point to the core assumptions which lie at the deepest level of the organization’s culture.

The four descriptors that represent the Aphrodite pattern in the current version are listed below for illustration.

People in this organization expect a leader to make it a pleasant place to work.

The most valued people in this organization are those who perform their tasks elegantly.

People in this organization like to be surrounded by beautiful things.

People in this organization like to have fun.

There are, as we would expect, high correlations between the scores on these descriptors. In the course of the development of the questionnaire, descriptors that are not positively correlated to the others have been rejected and replaced. There are also high correlations between some of these descriptors and the descriptors associated with certain other gods, notably Eros and Dionysos. This also is what we should expect. The archetypal patterns represented by the sixteen gods have significant overlap, and we have not attempted to make the patterns discrete by rejecting such ‘redundant’ items. If this were an evaluation instrument that was designed for sophisticated statistical analysis, we might be more concerned about its methodological purity. As it is, we are more concerned with the instrument’s ability to raise the respondent’s awareness of the presence or absence of certain patterns in the life of their organization, and in its ability to give us useful information about the organization’s underlying story. The continuing development of the indicator has this aim in mind.

Using an Organizational Profile

The organizational profile contains a great deal of information about the culture of the organization. The following aspects may be usefully dealt with in discussion:

- The consensus or diversity in perceptions of the actual organization.
- The consensus or diversity in notions of the ideal organization.
- The sources of variation. Do the diverse assessments merely represent the perceptions of different individuals, or do they represent particular sub-groups within the organization?
- The gods which appear to be dominant in the organization. What basic assumptions shape the organization’s thinking and actions? What needs are being satisfied?
- The possibility of inflation. Is the organization so dominated by a particular archetype that it carries its pathology as well as its constructive aspects?
- The gods that appear to be absent or ignored in the organization’s view of itself. What needs are being neglected?
- Do the neglected gods represent the organization’s ‘alternative narratives’? What sources of creative action are being closed off by neglect of these narratives? Are there sub-cultures in the organization which keep these narratives alive?
- The nature of the organizational shadow. Do the neglected gods force themselves into consciousness through pathological behaviour?
- The appropriateness of the organization’s ‘personality profile’ to the professed purposes of the organization. Is the organization stuck in a story that no longer represents its experience?
- The comparison between the organization’s profile and the organization’s espoused theory of itself.
- The relationship between the dominant gods in the organization. Are the tensions between them utilized productively?
- Are the dominant gods associated with stability in the organization and are the neglected gods associated with threats to this stability?

Analysis of individual questionnaire items allows for further questions to be addressed.

- Which statements about the ideal and actual organization attract the highest scores and the greatest agreement?
- Which statements attract the lowest scores?
- Which statements attract the least agreement?
- Which statements show the greatest match between ideal and actual?
- Which statements show the greatest divergence between ideal and actual?

Such information provides an invaluable starting point for an organization’s reflections on its own culture, its dominant and alternative narratives.
Three Case Studies

The Community Organization

The DNAI was administered in the context of an investigation of the organizational culture of community learning centres in the state of Victoria. A qualitative study based on the study of documents and on interviews with both managers and clients in a sample of these centres had indicated that they possessed a common culture centred on values of participation, belongingness and empowerment. The DNAI was administered in a separate sample of centres to determine whether these conclusions could be confirmed by a more objective and quantitative methodology. Both samples included both urban and rural centres and represented both middle class and working class areas. The different centres are essentially autonomous but they perceive themselves to be linked as a network by shared values and vision. While the network operates a central office to deal with common administrative concerns and provide a common voice, this office intervenes very little in the operations of the centres.

The organizational profile depicted in Figure 11.1 essentially confirms the conclusions of the qualitative study. There are two high-scoring patterns - Athena and Eros - which represent the valuing of democracy/participation/power-sharing on the one hand and relationship/community on the other. There is a group of moderate to high scoring patterns: Apollo, Artemis, Demeter, Dionysos, Hephaistos, Hera, Hermes, Hestia and Prometheus. A lower scoring group includes the sensual and fun-loving goddess Aphrodite, on the one hand, and the decisively ‘masculine’ gods - Ares, Herakles and Zeus - on the other. Hades scores very low.

Key Values

An indication of the key values in this culture may be found in the highest scoring items.

The most valued people in this organization are those who can work cooperatively with others. (Athena)
People at the top in this organization like to see themselves as providing a secure and supportive environment (Demeter)

The most valued people in this organization are those who understand their tasks and carry them out. (Apollo)
People in this organization expect a leader to respect the contributions of all its members. (Athena)
To really belong in this organization you should be interested in people. (Eros)
Relationships in this organization are cooperative. (Athena)

A further indication of the nature of this organization’s culture may be found in the rejection of the lowest scoring items.

This organization treats its people roughly. (Ares)
Relationships in this organization are dreary (Hades)
This organization manages its people by reward and punishment. (Zeus)
People in this organization are focused on how hopeless it all is. (Hades)
To really belong in this organization you should love technology. (Prometheus)

We would argue that a healthy organization will be pluralistic in its values. We would also argue that in a healthy organization goals and culture will be congruent. By both of these criteria, this organization appears to be healthy. There may be unrecognised drives to beauty (Aphrodite) conflict (Ares), heroism (Herakles), and power (Zeus), but most of the gods are honoured. The extremely low score on the Hades dimension indicates that the organization is perceived to be very much alive.

It was necessary to address the question of whether these means were simply the averaging of diverse responses or did indeed represent a common culture, by comparing this profile with the separate profile of each of the nine centres included in this sample. All centres had essentially the same profile.

Actual and Ideal

The profile (Figure 11.1) that represents respondents’ description of ‘the organization that would be ideal for me’ gives us further information. We find that the Athena and Eros patterns are again dominant. The means as represented on this chart show the profile of the ideal organization to be almost

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6 Version 6 of the DNAI, which was used in these three studies consisted of 64 items. Later versions have been reduced to 32 items.
7 See B. Neville Neighbourhood Houses: Twelve More Years, in P. Willis & B. Neville (1996) Qualitative Research Methods in Adult Education. Melbourne: David Lovell Publishing. The nine centres that responded to the questionnaire represent an independent random stratified sample. As it turned out there were in fact two centres that were included in both the qualitative study and the DNAI study. Each of the nine centres was sent a parcel of questionnaires and the convenor/manager was asked to distribute them to a group including administrators, teachers and students. Total number of completed questionnaires was 101.
8 Paired samples analysis (t-tests) comparing each centre’s profile with that of the entire sample indicated that there was no significant statistical difference between the profile of any one centre and that of the population as a whole.
identical with the actual organization, though analysis shows greater range and variation in responses to the ideal organization than to the actual. An item by item comparison reveals that for all eighty individual items no ‘ideal’ mean differs by more than one point from the ‘actual’ mean on the five point scale. Once again, there were no significant differences between the profiles of the individual centres. None of the needs represented in the image of the ideal organization appear to be frustrated in the actual organization.

In this analysis, the greatest consensus (as represented by standard deviations) was found in the following high-scoring descriptors:

- The most valued people in this organization are those who can work cooperatively with others. (actual and ideal Athena)
- Relationships in this organization are cooperative. (ideal Athena)
- People in this organization like each other. (actual and ideal Eros)
- The most valued people in this organization are those who understand their roles and carry them out. (ideal Apollo)

There was similar consensus in strongly rejecting the following descriptors:

- Relationships in this organization are sensual. (actual Aphrodite)
- People in this organization like to be stars. (ideal Dionysos)
- Relationships in this organization are hierarchical. (actual and ideal Zeus)
- In this organization problems are dealt with by crashing through. (ideal Ares)
- This organization treats people well or badly according to how likeable they are. (actual Aphrodite)

The greatest disagreement was in regard to the following descriptors:

- People at the top in this organization like to see themselves as engaged in the same craft as those at the bottom. (actual and ideal Hephaistos)

In this organization problems are dealt with by working on the problem cooperatively. (ideal Athena)
- People in this organization don’t like being pushed around. (actual and ideal Herakles)
- People in this organization are interested in producing the goods (actual Prometheus)
- People at the top in this organization like to see themselves as running a family (ideal Hera)

Conclusion

The picture which emerges is of a network organization which has a consistent culture across a range of locations. The culture is characterized by strongly held Athena values (cooperation, participative decision-making) and Eros values (intimacy, caring). There is no significant difference between members’ description of the organization as they experience it and their description of the organization as they would like it to be. The analysis corroborates the evidence from interviews that the organization has a shared and distinct culture and that this culture is essentially compatible with the needs, aspirations and meaning-making of its individual members. There is a good deal of consensus about what sort of culture characterises the centres, a good deal of consensus about what sort of culture people want, and a good deal of compatibility between the two.

The Mining and Resources Company

The context in this case was an investigation of the connections between organizational culture and safety in a multinational mining and resources company. The questionnaire was used to supplement the data collected through focus groups. The researchers
met with work groups (including management teams) of between four and twenty people for a two to three hour workshop which comprised an initial discussion of how safety issues were handled in the plant, administration and scoring of the questionnaire and feedback of the questionnaire results as a basis for further discussion. There were a total of 134 completed questionnaires, from nine sites in Australia and North America. The questionnaire was modified in this study to include a set of descriptors relating to safety.

**Company Values**

The organizational profile based on aggregated scores is represented in Figure 11.2. The profile for the actual organization is dominated by Apollo, Athena, Prometheus and Zeus as we might expect in a hierarchically structured resources company with a history of patriarchal, or at least paternalistic, management and an espoused commitment to initiating more democratic structures. We might expect an historically successful company in this field to have a value system and mode of operating which are embedded in the myths of Apollinine rationality and order, Zeus-like centralization of power and Promethean progress and purposefulness. Athena, Zeus’ loyal daughter, appeared in the group interviews to dominate both managers’ and workers’ espoused theories of best practice in management. The company illustrated in the graph is one where people (both managers and workers) would like to see more of the Athena, Demeter, Dionysos and Eros dimensions of culture but are adequately satisfied as far as Apollo, Prometheus and Zeus values are concerned.

![Figure 11.2: Mining and Resources Company](image)

The highest scoring descriptors for the actual organization across the whole sample were:

- People in this plant expect a leader to keep the system functioning efficiently. (Apollo)
- People in this plant expect a leader to get things done. (Prometheus)
- People in this plant expect a leader to give clear directions. (Zeus)
- The most valued people in this plant are those who understand their roles and carry them out. (Apollo)
- People in this plant don’t like being pushed around (Herakles)

In the aggregated profile for the ideal workplace we find Athena prominent, ahead of Eros, Demeter, Apollo, Dionysos and Prometheus. Athena received the highest mean score in every site visited. Eros was included in the top three scores in every plant but one. It should be noted that the desire for more Eros, Demeter and Dionysos is not accompanied by a rejection of Prometheus and Zeus. Managers and workers appear to be generally satisfied with the degree to which the Zeus and Prometheus patterns are manifest in their workplaces. But they certainly fantasise an ideal workplace which is more cooperative and participative in its practices and procedures and which does more to satisfy their needs for relationship, support and creative action. The highest scoring descriptors of the ideal workplace indicate the kind of culture in which they believe they would like to work.

- People in my ideal workplace expect a leader to give clear directions. (ideal Zeus)
- The most valued people in my workplace are those who can work cooperatively with others. (ideal Athena)
- Relationships in my ideal workplace are cooperative. (ideal Athena)
- People in my ideal workplace are interested in sharing their knowledge and expertise. (ideal Athena)
- To really belong in my ideal workplace you should be dependable (ideal Demeter)

It is noteworthy that Athena was prominent in the ideal profiles of the management teams as well as those of operators and maintenance crews. In inter-
views with management we heard that they had a desire to adopt a more democratic management style and were attempting to do so, but were frustrated that the workers were unwilling to take on the responsibility that this entailed. In interviews with the operators we heard that they wanted a more democratic plant and were ready to take it on, but management were unwilling to let go their power. In one plant with a previous history of autocratic and oppressive management, the leadership team complained that in spite of their good intentions they were finding it difficult to operate in a democratic manner because the workers did not trust them. In the same plant the workers complained that they were ready and able to take much greater responsibility for decision making in the plant but that management did not trust them.

Trust was a significant issue in the discussion of safety in all the plants. Management teams asserted that they made it clear to operators that safety was always to have priority over productivity. If the safety of operators was threatened in any way, the plant should be shut down until the problem was solved. In discussions with operators they agreed that this was what management told them. But in some plants the operators simply did not believe it. They were convinced that if they followed this instruction productivity would be affected and they would put their jobs in jeopardy. The lack of trust was reflected in low Eros scores in the profiles of these plants.

Closely associated with trust was the issue of honesty and deceit in communication between management and workers. In the plants where workers thought management were trying to deceive them about safety policy, they were themselves involved in a deceit about safety performance. They were expected to report every accident or incident involving safety, but they did not. In the context of threatened redundancies they preferred to hide anything that might conceivably go on their record and jeopardise their prospects of future employment. Management knew this was happening but were inclined to collude in it because it improved the safety statistics of the plant. In deceit and collusion we have the shadow manifestation of Hermes.

Hermes is not generally prominent in the profiles, either actual or ideal. The only place he has any prominence is in the ‘ideal’ profiles of the leadership teams in some of the plants, which may reflect frustration with the company’s inflexibility and inability to change with a changing marketplace.

**Culture and Safety**

The comparison between two plants with similar work procedures and contrasting safety performance suggests a connection between work safety and particular aspects of organizational culture. Figure 11.3 shows the profiles of Plant A (poor safety performance) and Plant B (good safety performance).

The actual profile for site A is dominated by Apollo, Zeus and Herakles/Ares, with Aphrodite and Eros representing the least significant patterns. The profile for site B is dominated by Athena, Apollo and Prometheus, with Hades being least in evidence. (Apollo is actually the only god who appears among the three most dominant patterns in each of the nine plants, and in every sub-group except one.) While there are indications in both the group interview data and the DNAI data that plants with good safety records can be distinguished from plants with poor safety records on the basis of their organizational culture, the data does not lead to unambiguous conclusions. However, the comparison of plants A and B illustrates the kind of pattern that appears to be associated with safety performance in this sample.
The profiles of these two plants differ in two distinct ways (Figure 11.3). In the first place, while order and clarity (Apollo) are significant in both profiles, Plant A, which has poor safety performance, is perceived by its workers to have a more autocratic management style (Zeus) and a more aggressive and individualistic work culture (Herakles/Ares). Plant B, which has excellent safety performance, is perceived to have a basically democratic management (Athena), and a commitment to efficiency and productivity (Prometheus). The Eros dimension is significant in Plant B and minimal in Plant A. The purposelessness of the Hades dimension is significant in Plant A and minimal in Plant B. (In the most accident-prone sub-group of employees in Plant A, Hades scores more highly than any other god in assessments of the actual organization).

In the second place, the plant with good safety performance presents a very similar profile for the actual and ideal workplace (prominent Athena/ Apollo/ Prometheus) indicating that what people want and what they get are not in conflict. Workers in the plant with poor safety performance present a substantial contrast between their assessment of the actual plant (Apollo/ Zeus/ Herakles/ Ares) and their ideal (Athena/ Eros/ Dionysos/ Demeter). In the peculiarly accident-prone sub-group referred to, the absence of Eros in the actual workplace and prominence in the ideal contrasts with the prominence of Hades in the actual and absence in the ideal.

In the third place, though this is not represented in the graph, the Plant A data shows more variation between individuals’ scoring of the items than does the Plant B data. It seems that employees in Plant B
have a more widely shared consensus with regard to their values and assumptions.

Fourthly, the mean scores for Plant B are higher than those for Plant A on every dimension except Hades. Even the distinguishing gods of Plant A - Zeus, Herakles and Ares - are more strongly represented (albeit marginally so) in the Plant B profile. Plant B appears to be more energetically polytheistic in its culture. For instance, there appears to be no felt contradiction between wanting to participate in decision-making and wanting a leader who gives clear directions.

Conclusions

Whether or not a causal relationship can be established between safety performance and these four factors (separately or in association) is not clear\(^9\). Certainly, it is not possible to come to firm conclusions on the basis of this limited comparison. However, the interview data from all sites appears to support the same conclusion - that good safety performance in these plants can be construed to be related to:

- a privileging of teamwork and participative decision-making, associated with a sense of purpose and clear and unambiguous procedures
- a match between the kind of workplace culture people have and the kind of workplace culture people want
- a shared acceptance of and commitment to a set of cultural values and cultural practices
- the ability to acknowledge and address a full range of psychological, social and emotional needs.

If all four factors are necessary and sufficient conditions for optimal safety performance in this industry, we might expect to find such performance in plants where the workforce (not simply the management) is committed to full and intelligent involvement in decision-making with regard to safety issues and to providing and taking responsibility for clear and unambiguous safety procedures, within the framework of a pluralistic and inclusive system of values.

On the other hand, it may be that the strong Athena/Apollo culture in Plant B is just a particular case of a culture that is both cohesive and compatible with the workforce’s needs. We might find that an efficient Zeus culture that meets a different set of psychological, social and emotional needs of a different workforce might also manifest excellent safety performance. We might find a family company where an efficient Hera culture meets the particular needs of a particular workforce, resulting in a high degree of workplace safety.

It is worth noting that the North American plant with outstanding safety performance produced a profile very similar to that of the (Australian) Plant B. Athena, Apollo and Prometheus are predominant, with the rest of the gods, apart from Hades, close behind. These two profiles may indeed point to best practice in this regard.

There is some support for this conclusion in the assessments of how safety would be handled in the ideal workplace. Highest scoring items aggregated across the whole sample are:

- Safety in my ideal workplace depends on people facing and overcoming safety problems. (Herakles)
- Safety in my ideal workplace depends on safety procedures being developed by the team. (Athena)
- Safety in my ideal workplace depends on having clearly understood safety procedures. (Apollo)

These items may be read as recommendations by the workers both to management and to themselves.

The Religious Community

The DNAI was administered in the context of a conference of a Catholic religious congregation that was meeting to review its activities and orientate itself to the future. All members of the congregation were invited to the four-day residential conference and twenty-nine (approximately one third) attended. The questionnaire was sent to the participants with their pre-conference information, and they were asked to complete it and return the completed questionnaire. The results were analysed and were presented to the conference as a basis for discussion.

The conference was organized because there was a sense in the community that many of its members were experiencing difficulty in dealing with a world in which the traditional practices of the congregation were apparently not appropriate or effective. There was some tension between those who believed that the only way to survive was to reinforce traditional identity, priorities and practices, and those who saw the need for a major reorientation.

In using the questionnaire in this group, the main interest was in the way the members wished to orient themselves towards the future. Accordingly, discussion focused on the profile for the ideal organization and the match or mismatch between actual and ideal.

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\(^9\) Managers of plants were invited to have their plants included in the study. No plants with notoriously bad safety records chose to be included. Accordingly, the sample did not include enough variation in safety performance to test these hypotheses statistically.
Community Values

The predominant gods in the profile of the actual organization are Apollo, Athena, Hephaistos and Hestia. Apollo represents the significance of both intellectuality and order in a group of men who have chosen a structured way of life in which to pursue questions of meaning and truth. Athena represents their experience of the community as basically egalitarian. The Hephaistos dimension reflects the strong work ethic of the group and their sense of themselves as being engaged in a craft. Hestia reflects the interiority of the culture, with its privileging of meditative practice.

The appearance of Hades as a fairly strong (though not predominant) dimension in the profile reflects the level of doubt in the community about the value and sustainability of its current activities. The ideal profile shows a strong desire for Athena - for a more participative and democratic organization - even though Athena is already prominent in the actual organization. It shows a strong desire for Eros - for a greater sense of community to combat a felt sense of fragmentation and alienation. It shows an ideal organization with minimal Hades in contrast to a somewhat demoralised organization represented in the score for actual Hades. It shows also a desire for a stronger presence of both Hera and Hermes - on the one hand more stability and shared commitment to the organization and, on the other, more flexibility and adaptability to counteract the current rigidity of Apollo. Finally, there is a desire for rather less of the paternalistic and hierarchical Zeus dimension.

Contrasts

These contrasts are made concrete in the specific items on which there is the greatest contrast between scores for actual and ideal organization.

The ideal organization scores significantly higher than the actual organization on the following descriptors, indicating a desire for an increase in these qualities:

- Relationships in this organization are strong and stable. (ideal Hera)
- In this organization problems are dealt with through trust and openness. (ideal Eros)
- In this organization problems are dealt with by facing them head on. (ideal Herakles)
- To really belong in this organization you should be open to any possibility. (ideal Hermes)
- People in this organization like to have fun. (ideal Aphrodite)
- People in this organization are interested in community. (ideal Eros)

The actual organization scores significantly higher than the ideal on the following, indicating a desire to decrease these qualities:

- People in this organization are lost and confused. (actual Hades)
- People in this organization expect to be looked after. (actual Demeter)
- People in this organization are preoccupied with how hopeless it all is. (actual Hades)
- You will be comfortable in this organization if you are resigned to having things the way they are. (actual Hades)
- Relationships in this organization are awkward. (actual Hephaistos)
- Relationships in this organization are hierarchical. (actual Zeus)

The validity of an instrument, broadly speaking, is its ability to tell you what you already know. In this case, the profile delivered by the DNAI did not represent new information for any of the participants. Indeed the conference was organized and attended...
because of a sense of incongruence between the congregation’s traditional way of identifying itself both as a community and as an agent of change and its current state of operational and ideological doubt. What was new information for the participants was the level of consensus in their assessment of the organizational culture and the ways in which the culture needed to change if it was to meet their needs. The level of consensus around the congregation’s core values provided a sense of stability in which it was possible to confront present tensions and potential conflicts and to explore ways in which members might change their practices without threatening the values themselves.

Sites of Belongingness and Empowerment

These three organizations are very different in their purposes and this is reflected in their culture. The mining and resources company would not be very effective in doing what it does if it developed the culture of the successful community organization, and vice versa. The religious community may be experiencing some tension between what it currently is and what it wants to be, but it cannot simply find an attractive culture somewhere else and copy it. If it is to survive it has to get in touch with its own ‘formative tendency’ and allow its own unique response to the new environment emerge out of its current experience of doubt. The descent into Hades as a prelude to resurrection is a powerful image within the Christian tradition.

The questionnaire on the ideal organization is included in the DNAI to give some clue of the emerging or frustrated energy in the organization. If we accept the validity of the organic metaphor and put our attempts at deliberate organizational change in the context of a living organism’s ongoing self-organization, people’s fantasies of the ideal organization may point to the kind of self-organization that is in process or potential.

In the three very different organizations presented here it is worth noting the predominance of the Athena and Eros in the fantasy of the ideal organization. Horizontal power relations and an experience of community are idealised as essential attributes of the healthy organization. This gives some support to the notion that, whatever the express purpose of an organization and the conscious purposes of those who become members of it, we find that there is a core, often unacknowledged, function of organizations and groups. They exist in order to be sites of belongingness and empowerment for their members. In a society where traditional sites of belongingness are disintegrating, this is not surprising.

The Multi-layered Organization

The DNAI can be used without reference to archetypal theory, simply to get information about the ways in people perceive an organization that they observe or belong to. It does not have to refer to any theory of archetype. If the particular groupings of items are useful it is because they represent particular patterns of thinking, valuing and behaving in groups, and these particular patterns happen to be common enough and distinct enough to be a useful way of describing contemporary organizations. The gods may simply provide convenient and colourful ways of naming and distinguishing them. The god-image becomes a tool to help us in our thinking about organizations.

Nevertheless, we wish to take the gods more seriously. Not because we believe they somehow exist as transcendent, superhuman persons as pre-scientific peoples may have thought, but because we see them as root metaphors for particular, significant patterns of thinking, feeling, valuing and acting, by which our consciousness and behaviour seems to be structured. We cannot get away from them. Without them our behaviour would disintegrate into meaningless fragments. Recognising them not only gives richness and coherence to our lives. It prevents us from being stuck in particulars – in roles, in facts, in thoughts or in the concrete necessities of our lives. When we cannot see them for what they are we become trapped in them – in obsessive ways of thinking or feeling which are blind to anything outside themselves. We cannot see another’s point of view, because, as Hillman puts it, ‘we are gripped by a particular vision’:

Within and behind these ideas, making them so instinctually certain, so libidinally charged with excitement and endurance, so universally familiar, so few in number and repetitive in history, are the archetypes which form the structure of our consciousness with such force and such possession that we might, as we have in the past, call them gods.\textsuperscript{10}

The gods and their stories are alive in the mythical structure, which is one layer of our multi-layered consciousness.

Cultural historians and evolutionary psychologists tell us that pre-scientific peoples were enmeshed in the constantly repeated drama of the gods.\textsuperscript{11} They lived the myths from within, not being able to step

\textsuperscript{10} Hillman (1977) \textit{Revisioning Psychology}. Dallas: Spring Publications. p. 129.

\textsuperscript{11} The framework for the following discussion is taken from the cultural philosopher Jean Gebser, who distinguished five structures of consciousness which have emerged in the course of human evolution: the archaic, the magical, the mythical, the mental/rational and the integral. He argues that the emergence of the integral structure could be observed in the language and methods of the arts and sciences as

\begin{itemize}
    \item The archaic, which is a pre-literate way of thinking, valuing and acting, by which our consciousness and behaviour seems to be structured.
    \item The magical, which is a post-literate way of thinking, valuing and acting, by which our consciousness and behaviour seems to be structured.
    \item The mythical, which is a post-literate way of thinking, valuing and acting, by which our consciousness and behaviour seems to be structured.
    \item The mental/rational, which is a post-literate way of thinking, valuing and acting, by which our consciousness and behaviour seems to be structured.
    \item The integral, which is a post-literate way of thinking, valuing and acting, by which our consciousness and behaviour seems to be structured.
\end{itemize}
outside them and subject them to scientific scrutiny and consider whether they made rational sense. This is not to suggest that they could not think, only that they may not have been able to distinguish between themselves and their thoughts. It was only with the development of mental consciousness that people became able to stand outside their thoughts and realise that these taken-for-granted thoughts, opinions, attitudes and beliefs were something I have, not something I am. And it was only with this mutation to the mental structure of consciousness that people were able to stand outside their group culture for the first time and realise that these taken-for-granted thoughts, opinions, attitudes and beliefs were actually borrowed from the group rather than the result of their own reflections. They became able to detach themselves from their world, look at it objectively and form their own conclusions about it.

When we look at the gods in organizations we may be able to detect the separate functions of the magic, mythical and mental structures and the dynamic interplay between them. We may see the rituals and incantations of magic consciousness constantly working to keep things in control. We may see the myths being lived out without reflection and rationalised in a particular taken-for-granted set of beliefs, perspectives and narratives that represent the agreed truth about things. Or we may see individuals detaching themselves from this ‘consensus reality’ and trying to sort out the truth about the organization and its role by objective observation and reflection. It is often those who live on the margins of the organization who have the clearest notions of what is going on.

We may usefully think of any organization as a cluster of organizations, all comprised of essentially the same people, inhabiting the same space but thinking in quite different ways.

The magic organization does not think reflectively. It is aware of its experience but does not think about it. It experiences collective emotions – excitement, fear, anxiety – in response to events that happen to it. It engages in ritual acts to try to ensure that the things that happen to it are good. It keeps itself feeling secure by repeating slogans (or chanting incantations). If bad things happen it does magic to make the bad things go away. It clings obsessively to rituals that have worked for it in the past, and its decision-making is dominated by emotion.

The same people belong to a mythical organization that has a particular way of imagining the world and its place in it. It lives a story, which has a past and a present and a script for the future. Archetypal theory suggests that this particular story is a version of one of the big stories, the myths of the tribe, localised in time and place. Members of the organization may not perceive it as a story, for it is usually rationalised as a set of taken-for-granted ideas or beliefs, which members accept as a condition of their membership, but is essentially a narrative of who we are, where we come from and where we are going. Decision-making in this mythical organization is shaped by this shared story, and it has limited flexibility in responding to unexpected events and changing circumstances.

The mental organization consists of all the individual members who are capable of distinguishing between themselves and the organization, of reflecting critically on the organization’s beliefs, values and behaviour and of recognising that these inherited beliefs don’t necessarily represent the ultimate truth about things. They look at the evidence objectively and make rational decisions about appropriate courses of action.

The integral organization comprises all the members who can get a glimpse of the organization and its place in the world unconstrained by either the organization’s notion of truth or their own prejudices and presuppositions. They can see through the particular phenomenon that is this organization to the whole human experience that is made concrete in it. They are not frightened by complexity, or try to reduce it to simplistic terms. They are able to act freely in complex situations. They glimpse many truths about the organization at once, and rather than try to resolve them they acknowledge the richness, diversity and multiplicity of the organization and their relationship to it as the best bit of truth they are likely to get. They do not choose between the truth of Apollo and the truth of Dionysos or Hestia, nor do they believe that they must reconcile them or select particular bits of each of them in order to find the real truth. Rather they see the truth as including all of the incomplete truth of Apollo, all of the incomplete truth of Dionysos, all of the incomplete truth of Hestia and the other gods, and all of the tensions and contradictions between them.

It is easier to be in touch with our integral consciousness and welcome complexity when things are going well with us and our organization than when we are in crisis or under threat. A common human response to threat is to focus on the threat and ignore everything else. We develop tunnel vision and regress to simpler kinds of consciousness, responding to danger by running away, lashing out at any one in reach, or calling on magic to save us. It is when organizations are under threat that we are most likely to see rationality abandoned and magic embraced. There are usually shamans or gurus around in such circumstances to provide the magic incantations that

are supposed to save us if we chant them long and loud enough: downsizing... outsourcing... competition... re-engineering... over-servicing... even learning organization and archetype. Magic still works in closed societies where every one believes in it. However, organizations nowadays are more usually open societies and belief in a particular magic is not automatic. If an organization's response to threat is to be creative rather than reactive and regressive, the other layers of organizational consciousness must be brought into play.

The Polytheistic Perspective

When the Greeks settled on the membership of their Olympian pantheon they were making a statement about the archetypal patterns they experienced most powerfully in their lives. It is a statement about life that has had currency for nearly three thousand years. On the authority of that statement we may look for all of these gods in contemporary human behaviour. If some of these gods appear to be missing, we may suspect that something untoward is going on.

The organization's story about itself is that decisions are made rationally, on the basis of the best information available. The reality is more likely to be that these 'rational' decisions are often made on the basis of managerial whim, prejudice, personal point-taking or personal loyalty, cowardice, denial, political manoeuvring, impulse, panic, intuition, dreams and visions – just as they are in 'irrational' organizations. The voice may be the voice of Apollo, but the actions are often the actions of Dionysos, Ares, Artemis and the rest.

We are focusing in this discussion on what Gebser calls the mythical structure of consciousness, believing that the human capacity for story-making, storytelling and story-performing is an essential element in our experiencing of the world – more basic than the human capacity to conceptualize. We have suggested that when individual consciousness gives way to group consciousness, magical and mythical thinking replace conceptualization altogether. What the archetypal perspective adds to this is the observation that the stories that groups and organizations tell themselves, and through which they filter and censor their experience, are variations on a limited number of 'old stories', narratives of the gods who inhabited the cosmos 'once upon a time'.

Alternative Narratives

Members of deliberately constructed organizations, like members of families, are recruited into the dominant narratives, the received mythology, of the organizations. Some organizations tend to have a unitary notion of truth, and membership of such organizations means accepting this truth about how the world is, how the organization is, and how each member ought to be, and shutting out any information that might challenge it. The change agent, like the family therapist, has to call the organization’s attention to the things that do not ‘fit’ the dominant narrative, for these point to the neglected or suppressed ‘alternative narratives’, which carry the organization’s potential for change.

Adopting the archetypal perspective puts a particular spin on this activity, because in attempting to see through an organization’s icons and behaviour to the gods who govern it, we are calling on the history of Indo-European story-making to make some pre-suppositions about what these alternative narratives are likely to be.

In the approach we take here we have used the Greco-Roman pantheon as a template, both to guide us in our depiction of the dominant narratives of organizations and to point us to significant alternative narratives. In dealing with the unconscious dimensions of organizations we are not bound to use the template all the time, for we are well aware that some of the narratives of contemporary culture have no foundation in ancient Greece. Nevertheless, the test of this model is not in its theoretical purity but in its usefulness.

Some organizations see plurality and changeability as a problem to be addressed, and deal with it by strengthening the magical-mythical dimensions of group life. The wearing of uniforms, the chanting of slogans, the use of a ‘secret language’, the performance of induction rituals and ‘rites of passage’, the constant exposure to the wise sayings of the founder or the glorious history of the company are magical-mythical means of homogenising the culture of the organization. To the same end, some companies and cults make a point of recruiting employees from among the least powerful groups in society, e.g. adolescents and ethnic minorities with a magical relationship to authority.

Other organizations see the diversity of their membership, with their diversity of gifts and points of view as a great asset that, more than anything else, gives them the capacity to respond in a flexible way to a constantly changing world. They don't find it uncomfortable that their organization does not worship at a single shrine. They are happy to worship many gods. They find polytheism liberating.

As individuals we have many values, many centres of worth. Most of us prefer to live in a society that respects plurality, rather than one that demands that we all hold the same beliefs and values. We are not as sure as our grandparents were about the absoluteness of any truth. The polytheistic organization is shaped in the same image as the flexible, multi-faceted individual and the flexible, multi-cultural society. It holds the same promise, feels the same tensions and meets the same contradictions.
The manager who takes this perspective will be faced with these same promises and tensions as he or she attempts both to work within the company’s dominant narratives and to draw attention to the alternative ones. In our own work, we have found in the Greek pantheon not only an appropriate language for raising awareness of these narratives, but a means of engaging people in a creative, imaginal process. It also provides a map of possibilities, a guide to the discovery of hidden strengths and energies.

Polytheistic Management

The challenge for us is to apply such thinking in managing organizations. We may use the DNAI or some other method to uncover the key pattern or patterns in the life of a particular organization, but what can we usefully do with the information? We are not dealing with a static structure here. Not only are the structures of organizational consciousness in dynamic interaction. So are the gods.

An approach to management that deals only with the rational organization will ignore or fail to recognise the magical and mythical dimensions of group culture. A polytheistic approach to management will take full account of the magic and mythical as well as the rational, and it will do more. It will invite everyone to see the whole picture. It will not attempt to substitute Athena’s beliefs, values and assumptions for the beliefs, values and assumptions of Zeus. It will recognise the incompleteness of the truth of both gods, and acknowledges the truth – and its incompleteness – of all the other gods as well. It does not try to reconcile the differences between the two perspectives, or let one overpower the other. The tensions and contradictions between the gods are as much aspects of the truth as the separate perspectives they offer. A polytheistic view does not privilege as a matter of principle efficiency over relationship, cooperation over competition or order over creativity. It looks for the richness and diversity in the company, its multiplicity of subcultures and its forgotten or suppressed stories. It is not constrained by the history of the company or its proclaimed identity to think that this is all the company can be. It invites difference to come forward and be honoured. It encourages all of the company’s capacities and potentials to declare themselves, so that they are all available to deal with whatever challenges the company may encounter. When it needs the energy of Zeus or Herakles, Zeus and Herakles will be available, as will Artemis and Dionysos and the rest when they are called on.

Such invitation and encouragement may not receive a very enthusiastic response. We seem to have a fairly tenuous hold on integral, and even rational, consciousness, and most of us slip back fairly readily into our personal and organizational fundamentalisms. There is some security in knowing that the way things are is the way they have to be, and we sometimes prefer to believe this rather than take the risky road to critical consciousness.

Many, even the majority, of the company’s employees, management, board of directors and shareholders may be uninterested in functioning at other than the magic or mythical level in that part of their lives which involves the company. They dwell comfortably enough in a company myth; if this becomes uncomfortable they may be persuaded to substitute another, which they will believe in with the same fervour. If this is the case there does not seem to be much chance of the company negotiating the first decades of the twenty-first century, unless the minority of rational and integral thinkers are extraordinarily clever and persuasive.

We are now surrounded by indications that fixed ideas are becoming an obstacle to survival, not just the survival of this company, which may not be terribly important, but the survival of our species and its planet, which we like to think is rather more significant.

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