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Preface

The presented papers form an important starting point for academic discussions and show us the diverse spectrum of interesting issues perceived from the perspective of organizational behaviours and organizational culture, enriched with examples of the interpretational possibilities offered by the psychoanalytic understanding of social phenomena. What merits special attention is the fact that half of the articles contributed to the collection present a systemic-psychodynamic approach, still relatively little known in Polish management. This approach is based on psychoanalytic theories and the concepts developed therein.

The exceptional nature of this collection consists in showing the diversity of perspectives regarding both the understanding and the empirical examination of the phenomena and processes which we observe in organizations. It contains six articles that describe from the cognitive-behavioural perspective phenomena as complex as whistleblowing (I. Świątek-Barylska, M. Opara: *Perception of whistleblowing by professionals-to-be. Results of the research*) and organizational creativity and ambidexterity in Polish enterprises (K. Bratnicka: *Creativity and performance. Testing ambidextrous hypotheses in Polish SME's context*). These two articles are based on extensive empirical studies and can form a very good groundwork for further research, and they have a great practical importance for managers, too.

The two subsequent papers present the issue of organizational culture described from the behavioural standpoint (J. van Cleff, and P. van Nispen: *Organisations, Projects and Culture*) and

from the systemic-psychodynamic perspective (L.F. Stapley: *Exploring the Meaning of Work in the Context of Organizational Culture*). Although it might seem that everything has already been said about organizational culture, it is worthwhile to consider the thought expressed by L.F. Stapley that we focus on the identification of symptoms of culture rather than understanding what it really is.

Then, the last two papers reveal the world of organizations through reference to strictly psychoanalytic constructs, such as death drive, mourning and melancholia (S. Kahn: *Eros & Thanatos: A Psychoanalytic Examination of Death in the Context of Working Life*) and the concepts of organization-in-the-mind, narcissism, unconscious, introjective identification (X. Eloquin: *The Tyrant-in-the-mind: Influences on Worker behaviour in a Post-totalitarian Organisation*). These papers, based on psychoanalytic theories, reflect upon and illuminate some of the new contours and shapes, perhaps previously not fully seen or appreciated from others perspectives.

It is my hope that this collection of six papers will form a framework for noticing, exploring, and reflecting upon the forces and processes that exist beneath the surface of our interactions with other people and our changing world. I believe that the submitted publications constitute interesting reading on modern management from the perspective of psychoanalytic and "classic" approaches to management. I hope they will become the source of many inspiring discussions and academic polemics.

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The tyrant-in-the-mind: influences on worker behaviour in a post-totalitarian organisation^{*}

Tyran w umyśle: wpływ na zachowanie pracownicze w organizacji posttotalitarnej

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Abstract

This paper is an extended single case study exploring worker behaviour in a post-totalitarian organisation – a large secondary school. It uses theoretical contributions from political science exploring totalitarian regimes and from systems-psychodynamics, specifically ideas of narcissism and the concept of the-organisation-in-the-mind, as well as the concepts of role, task and boundary. It proposes that due to narcissistic needs, a tyrannical leader over-identified with his/her organisation to the extent that his/her own ego needs were merged with organisational needs. This was then taken in by the followers as their version of the organisation-in-the-mind, but with a specific addition: because the tyrant and the organisation are synonymous, they took in an organisational manifestation of the tyrant – the tyrant in the mind. This became the unconscious predicate shaping subsequent organisational behaviour, leading to increased conflict and ineffectiveness. Implications for leaders entering a post-totalitarian organisation and the nature of interventions are discussed, as are further lines of enquiry.

Keywords: organisational totalitarianism, organisational ideal, narcissism, the organisation-in-the-mind, systems psychodynamics.

Streszczenie

Artykuł przedstawia przypadek ilustrujący zachowania pracownicze w posttotalitarnej organizacji, jaką jest duża szkoła średnia. Czerpie z dorobku nauk politycznych badających reżimy totalitarne oraz z założeń podejścia systemowo-psychodynamicznego; odwołuje się do koncepcji narcyzmu oraz organizacji w umyśle, a także do takich pojęć, jak role, zadania i granice organizacyjne. Autor dowodzi, że lider-tyran, ze względu na swoje narcystyczne potrzeby, nadmiernie utożsamia się z organizacją, czyniąc to do takiego stopnia, że jego własne potrzeby zlewają się z potrzebami organizacji. Takie podejście przejmują podwładni, tworząc swoje wersje organizacji w umyśle, ze specyficznym jednak dodatkiem: ponieważ tyran i organizacja stały się synonimami, pracownicy tworzą manifestację organizacji jako tyrana w swoich własnych umysłach. Staje się to źródłem nieświadomych założeń, które kształtują zachowania organizacyjne, co w konsekwencji prowadzi do eskalacji konfliktów i spadku efektywności całej organizacji. W artykule omawiane są konsekwencje takiej sytuacji dla liderów wchodzących do posttotalitarnych organizacji oraz dyskutowane są możliwe działania interwencyjne.

Słowa kluczowe: totalitaryzm organizacyjny, ideał organizacyjny, narcyzm, organizacja w umyśle, systemy psychodynamiczne.

^{*} To my father. Thank you for so much: the love, the support, the desk! Thanks also to: Dr Lionel Stapley, Sara Eloquin, Dr Halit Hulusi and Dr James Osbourne.

Introduction

This paper charts the course of a single organisation – a large secondary school in the UK – before during and after the departure of a highly charismatic, autocratic leader – a tyrant in the vernacular of this account. It is an extended single case study which utilises psychoanalytic and systems psychodynamic theory as a tool of cultural enquiry in the exploration and interpretation of events. It is based on the author's experience as an educational psychologist visiting the school on a weekly basis throughout the period described (two years in all). In addition to field and process notes, formal and informal interviews were undertaken with staff. This paper draws specifically from the literature on organisational totalitarianism and from the psychoanalytic concept of narcissism, specifically concerning leaders whose own ego needs are conflated with the needs of their organisation. The impact of this leadership style on workers is considered using the heuristic tool of "the Organisation in the mind" [Armstrong 2005].

In the field of organisational studies there is a significant body of research exploring phenomena such as leadership (see for example [Western 2008]), culture [Stapley 2006] and organisational behaviour, to name but a few. While writers such as Obholzer [1994] and Obholzer and Miller [2004], have commented on the idea of followership as an active dimension, much of the literature on positive organisational behaviour supposes followers to be passive recipients of transformational or other leadership styles. There is, however, a body of research that a change of leader has a significant destabilising effect on organisational functioning [Fink 1999; McMahon 2001; Barker 2006]. Fink [1999], observes in the case of a high school in Ontario that the "attrition of change" can lead to regression in performance. Balsler and Carmin [2009], noting that there is limited research on succession from the view point of employees, suggest that it is the employees' interpretation of their organisational identity and the proposed changes that shape their responses to leadership transitions. Writing about secondary schools in the UK, Barker [2006], observes that "successful transition from one leader to another seems to be a critical but neglected dimension of sustainable improvement". Peet [2012], considering successful transition offers up the concept of "organisational generativity" as a way of transmitting knowledge from one leader to another through the use of interviews with the remaining senior leadership team. Follower allegiance – or not – is an important factor in successful transitions, and the process succeeds when followers transfer their allegiance from predecessor to successor [Heller 1989].

The focus of this study is a different permutation of transition, from a totalitarian leader in a totalitarian organisation to a leader striving to leave behind that same culture. It further examines the reasons why the organisation failed to free itself from totalitarian modes of behaving and relating and, instead of moving towards a benign democratic culture of openness and tolerance, devolved into a conflict-ridden, mistrustful system of competing paranoias. In doing so, this study draws from a framework for studying group and organisational behaviour called systems psychodynamics [Obholzer 1994; Gould, Stapley, Stein 2001]. It proposes that while there were rational

structural and systemic reasons for the observed dysfunction, there also existed an underlying, unconscious cause for why the school as a whole, despite their declarations, was unable to achieve the very culture they longed for, once a hated leader had departed.

The following section considers the relevant theory and research literature: totalitarianism, systems psychodynamics, narcissism, the organisational ideal and the concept of the organisation-in-the-mind. The article will then go on to explore the school as a totalitarian and post-totalitarian organisation, exploring worker behaviour and the reasons for it. It concludes with a discussion of the developed concept of the tyrant-in-the-mind, its possible implications and lines of intervention, as well as avenues for further research.

1. Totalitarian states

Totalitarianism is a term used to describe a political system in which the state regulates every aspect of public and private life [Conquest 2000]. It was first formulated to describe the new political system of Italian Fascism in 1923 [Pipes 1995]. Gentile, the chief philosophical proponent of fascism in Italy described it as a form of society in which the state had influence – or power – over most of its citizens [Pipes 1995]. Mussolini held that the system politicizes everything spiritual and human, stating, "Everything within the state, nothing outside the state, nothing against the state" (quoted in [Pipes 1995]). While theorists describe totalitarianism differently there is agreement about the way in which totalitarian states are intolerant of activities that do not support or advance the goals of the state and of institutions that run counter to it, such as churches, labour movements and other political parties [Popper 1971; Arendt 1966]. Linz and Stepan [1996], developed the idea of "post-totalitarianism" to describe the new phase Soviet Russia entered after the death of Stalin, exploring the abandonment of mass terror and purges.

Several commentators have differentiated between totalitarian and autocratic or authoritarian regimes and this distinction is useful to this paper in advancing its case of a totalitarian organisational culture. Kirkpatrick [1979], describes autocracies as tending to be preoccupied with their own survival. There is a relative degree of autonomy regarding elements of society, religious institutions, the court and the press, as long as the regime itself is not threatened. Totalitarian states, which are concerned with ideology and total power, seek the control and regulation of every aspect of the individual's life, using all the powers of the state (secret police, propaganda and economic and political domination) to achieve this. Sondrol [2009], observes that there is an intention in totalitarian regimes, unlike in authoritarian regimes, to gain control of all aspects of public and private life.

Rahmetov [2012], explored authoritarian breakdown and collapse with a focus on the Arab Spring and the post-Soviet Eurasian colour revolutions. He distinguished between a "transition from authoritarianism" (regime change) and an "authoritarian renewal" (imposition of another authoritarian regime or an authoritarian regime of a different kind). He

suggests that these new terms are necessary to counter the assumption inherent in much post-Soviet collapse thinking, specifically the overly optimistic belief in “democratic breakthroughs” [McFaul 2005]: the idea that democracy is the logical step after the collapse of an authoritarian regime. While Rahmetov discusses authoritarian regimes, this paper argues that his concept of authoritarian renewal has relevance here, as does the misplaced hope of democratic breakthrough. It further proposes that the authoritarian renewal occurred primarily through the psychological processes in the role holders remaining in the organisation and not through the presence of a new leader.

2. Contributions from systems-psychodynamics and psychoanalysis

Systems psychodynamics is comprised of three interrelated disciplines – psychoanalysis, group relations theory and open systems theory – with distinct properties of its own [Fraher 2004]. In essence, it is the application of psychoanalytic ideas to large, open systems, including work institutions and organisations. The theoretical components relevant to this study, namely open systems theory and psychoanalysis, are discussed below.

3. Open systems theory

Open-systems theory [von Bertalanffy 1969], inspired by models of living systems in biology, conceives organisations as “open-systems”. An important feature in any living entity is the boundary, that which separates the system from its environment. Leadership is recast as a boundary function, as it is the leader who decides what is taken in and what leaves the system. If the boundary is too open, the system is flooded by information and competing demands. If the boundary is too closed, too little of the outside world can be taken in, affecting the organisation’s capacity to bring resources to bear on the task. It would also limit the flow of material which is to be worked on, the purpose of the organisation.

A critical factor is the identification of the primary task, “the task the organisation must do to survive” [Rice 1953]. The leader is instrumental in shaping how various subsystems within the organisation are aligned to face a specific task. Organisational conflict often emerges because of poorly defined or overlapping task conceptions. A common example in a school is conflict between the individuals responsible for educational attainment and for behaviour and pastoral care. The former construes the task of the school as optimising exam results, the latter gives primacy to supporting students’ emotional and mental well-being in order for them to be able to learn. Until conflicting conceptions of primary task are resolved there will be ongoing disagreement over how resources (e.g. teachers, time, money) should be used.

Role is a central concept in open systems theory, as it links the person to the organisation and the task. It is through role that an individual takes up and completes a task. At the same time an individual can never be reduced simply to role, as they bring their own individual psychology to the organisation. When indi-

vidual psychology, role conception and task allocation are congruent, then there is a “good enough” fit between them, allowing for efficiency in task completion. When there is a deficit or imbalance in one or more parts, phenomena such as stress, burnout, departmental conflict and organisational failure follow.

4. Object relations school of psychoanalysis

Systems-psychodynamics draws on the psychoanalytic conception of the individual unconscious and posits a non-unitary defended subject [Freud 1920]. That is to say, an individual who has aspects of functioning of which he or she is unaware – the unconscious. The unconscious acts as a repository of infantile and early childhood experience. Anxiety is held to play a significant role in psychoanalysis and if it intrudes too suddenly into consciousness, defence mechanisms are deployed to allow for a more or less successful functioning – to keep debilitating anxiety at bay. Research within the systems-psychodynamic field charted similar defensive mechanisms in organisations, social defences [Jacques 1953; Menzies 1960; Armstrong, Rustin 2015], which serve a similar function – to keep task-related anxiety at bay with a greater or lesser impairment to both role and task.

In object relations theory [Hinshelwood 1994; Waddell 1998], the external world (initially of the infant), as it is perceived and emotionally experienced, is taken into the inner world of the individual. In instances of good enough parenting a “good” object is taken in and becomes a guiding principle in an individual’s personality constellation. Thus, emotional states that required soothing by an external figure, initially the mother, begin to be soothed internally by the evocation of an internal “object”, the foundations for an individual’s resilience and capacity to tolerate distress and uncertainty. The process is the same when taking in “bad” objects, but with additional consequences. Experiencing the world as distressing through sensations such as hunger, cold and discomfort, the infant is quick to identify these as being caused by the mother, perceiving her as cruel, distant, or uncaring. Here the infant, “builds up a sense of himself (sic) as somehow the same as, or engulfed by, a non-responding, cold or distracted mother, and comes to feel himself to be just such a person” [Waddell 1998, pp. 256-7].

Object relations theory postulates two qualitatively different psychic states observed first in early infancy, but which remain possibilities throughout life. The initial experience of the infant is one that is separated into markedly “good” or “bad”: the infant is either fed or it is hungry, warm or cold, for example. Its experience and limited perceptual and cognitive capacity lead it, however, to construe these experiences as intentional “attacks”. That is, hunger is not a result of a lack of food, but a specific attacking entity intentionally invoking hunger. For these reasons this state is called the paranoid-schizoid position. Paranoid because of the felt experience of being attacked and schizoid because of the splitting of experiences into extreme polarities. In time, if circumstances are benign enough to permit, there is a move to a more developmentally and perceptually sophisticated position known as the depressive position. Here, one can tolerate uncertainty and take ownership of one’s own aggressive and hostile impulses. The two positions offer

a conceptual tool for understanding motivations behind organisational behaviour [Obholzer 1994; Krantz 2006; Eloquin 2016] in a wide range of settings.

The following sections will consider organisational totalitarianism, narcissism and the psychoanalytic concept of the “organisation in-the-mind” [Armstrong 2005].

5. Totalitarianism and psychoanalysis

Psychoanalytic accounts of totalitarian regimes present an account of below-the-surface dynamics. Kets de Vries [2006b] and Temple [2006], offer insights into the mind-set of the tyrant, despot or totalitarian. Stein [2007], undertakes a “psychodynamically informed cultural study of organizational totalitarianism” in US businesses. He explores how competitive capitalism, a focus on the financial bottom line and the manipulation of language allow Chief Executive Officers and the corporations they run to divest themselves of moral function and to behave with impunity in the face of workforce reduction and the destruction of careers and lives. The brutality with which corporations “downsized”, with no thought or care for employees who had given years of dedicated service, he identifies as a particular form of “Totalitarianism – American Style” [Stein 2007, p. 2].

Lawrence [2005], explores the working hypothesis that increasing uncertainty in the workplace increases anxiety, leading to the deployment of projection and projective identification as a defence against these anxieties. He notes “those at the top of hierarchies tend to have to carry the fear, or have it projected into them by others in the institution, that control is always in danger of being lost in the institution with chaotic results, and so part of their role is to ensure that there is compliance and obedience” [Lawrence 2005, p. 2]. In other words, followers unconsciously need leaders to be strong rulers in uncertain times and project onto them a quality of controlling omniscience as a way of warding off psychotic collapse associated with organisational failure. Lawrence proposes that a group mobilises its leader to protect it from the thing it fears the most, but does not examine the intrapsychic factors that can lead to a totalitarian organisational culture. This is discussed next.

6. Narcissism and organisational ideal

Schwartz [1987], has explored the way in which an individual’s ego needs intersect with organisational life. He examines the psychodynamics of totalitarian organisations, making links between individual narcissism and an over-identification with the organisation. Through position and power, a leader who over-identifies with the organisation is able to set up conditions for a totalitarian culture, in which her or his values and needs become the organisation’s values and needs. Anything that opposes this is cast as an attack on the individual as leader and the organisation itself, an example of a paranoid-schizoid mind-state. While a degree of identification with the organisation is expected and even desirable, it can become pathological. The process by which individual narcissism leads to organisational totalitarianisms merits further analysis as it is a central proposition in this paper.

Narcissism is a response to the realisation that one is not the centre of the world and that, furthermore, one is mortal, finite and imperfect [Freud 1921; Schwartz 1987]. The capacity to tolerate these truths is a hallmark of the depressive position discussed above [Klein 1935]. A healthy ego is able to negotiate these truths and engage successfully with the world, investing libido (life energy) in entities outside itself: activities, interests, other people. This, Freud termed the object libido [1920, p. 423]. In some instances, however, the needs of the self are so great that meaningful engagement with the world is not possible. In such cases libidinal resources are withdrawn and directed towards the self: ego libido. For example, when one suffers from physical pain and withdraws from the world, or when going to sleep. If the needs of the ego are too great, then the continual focusing of libido towards the ego leads to a simulacrum of the infantile belief in the centrality of one’s own agency and importance – narcissism. It becomes a defence against the painful truth that one is, ultimately, unimportant through attempts at forcing the world to signify just the opposite: it is all about me and for me.

As the ego develops and encounters the necessary difficulties of life it can progress to the depressive position in which ambiguity and uncertainty are tolerated. Failing that, it can adhere to the paranoid-schizoid assumption that phenomena exist in strict duality, good and bad. The bad that resides in the self is also split off and projected away. As Schwartz notes, “the representation we make to ourselves of the good world is termed the “ego ideal” and it is this towards which we are driven...” [Schwartz 1987, p. 43]. The ego ideal is an idealised version of the self that an individual strives toward at a cost, the more spontaneous yet finite part of the self that cannot conform to the strict and static criteria of perfection inherent in the ego ideal. In organisational life it is possible to identify with the organisation to such an extent that the ego ideal is supplanted by the “organisational ideal”, an idealised concept of the organisation divested of “bad” aspects. While this offers some comfort through the shared identification with other workers and a sense of certainty, an over-identification with the organisational ideal requires the denial of parts of the self-existing outside the organisational ideal. The more spontaneous and vibrant aspects of oneself come to be viewed as undesirable. The individual is set up in conflict with parts of herself in an effort to conform to one’s version of the organisational ideal, leading to feelings of shame about life affirming impulses.

Further complications arise when the leader’s own narcissistic needs lead to an over identification with the organisation, By dint of power and status, their ontological stature, a leader is able to “impose their own narcissistic fantasies upon others as the organizational ideal” [Schwartz 1987, p. 48]. What gratifies the unconscious narcissistic needs of the leader now becomes the central arbiter of what the organisation and those working in it must do. In “the process of defining happiness for them” [Shorris 1981], it becomes a totalitarian regime.

Before exploring these processes it is necessary to explore an additional concept that will go some way to explaining the behaviour of followers after the departure of the tyrannical leader.

7. The organisation-in-the-mind

The organisation-in-the-mind is a heuristic tool that explores the interrelationship between the individual, their role and the organisation. It goes beyond an external exposition of structures, tasks and hierarchies to consider what, in an individual's psychology, is brought to the organisation as well [Hutton, Bazalgette, Reed 1997]. It is, then, a subjective entity, akin to parental "objects" ([Hinshelwood 1994], discussed above) that merges the perception of organisational structure and the relationships with the felt experience of encountering such structures.

Initially the organisation-in-the-mind was conceptualised as a nexus of meaning, emotion and unconscious association projected out of the individual into the organisation. Armstrong [2005] developed the concept to describe a bi-directional process in which something of the organisation that is separate from the individual is taken into them: "emotional experience is not, or is not just, the property of the individual alone; it is not located in a purely individual space" [Armstrong 2005, p. 2]. This reworked concept suggests that the organisation-in-the-mind is not just an individual's creation but that, by crossing the organisational boundary, an individual is inducted into a nebulous, emotionally-suffused field – the flavour of the organisation – which then shapes the role concept, approach to the task and social relations. Quite how one shapes and is shaped depends on the role and position in the organisational field, but all will have an experience of the same field which emerges out of the patterned modes of reacting and relating of the individuals. This then reinforces the respective workers' organisation-in-the-mind, which then contributes to the organisation recursively through behaviour and attitude.

The organisation-in-the-mind is re-conceptualised as the mesh of shared projections merged with task, structures and relationships that creates its own emotional resonance in the minds of these same individuals. While it is implicit, the organisation-in-the-mind forms a template for how role holders relate to themselves, others and the organisation as a whole. It sets the emotional climate in which they relate, for better or worse, and following from Schwartz's organisational ideal, the quality of "fit" is variable. If the field, values and emotional climate are congruent with an individual then it confirms place, identity and purpose. If not, it can lead to stress, burnout and other deleterious consequences: Armstrong observes that "this world within a world can appear as a foreign body..." [Schwartz 2005, p. 7]. This has a bearing on the subject of this paper and the question is asked: what is an individual worker's organisation-in-the-mind when the organisation itself is the externalised mind of a tyrannical, narcissistic leader? Following on from this, what are the mechanisms that lead to the phenomena described as "the tyrant-in-the-mind"? What follows is an attempt to describe and explain just such a situation and to consider the special factors at play when an organisation is in thrall to a tyrannical leader. It will also consider the impact of the tyrant-in-the-mind as a specific sub-type of the organisation-in-the-mind on an organisation's behaviour after the leader's departure.

8. The totalitarian school

Southwick School is a secondary school with 1300 pupils aged 11-18. It is one of six secondary schools in a town with significant deprivation and transient migrant population. Pupils came with a wide range of additional educational needs (AEN) including cognitive and emotional needs. For the last seventeen years the staff of seventy or so teachers had been led by Tim. Tim was famous – infamous – within the Local Authority for his imperious, bullying manner and reluctance to engage with other schools and the local authority itself. Two examples exemplify this tendency. Under a Private Finance Initiative, the school was offered new buildings. One proviso was that it would become the special support centre (SSC) for children with physical disabilities, with the feeder primary SSC attached to a nearby school. This was agreed and a building with specialist fixtures (showers, toilets etc.) was built. Upon completion of the building, Tim refused to accept any children with physical disabilities, using it for existing students instead. On another occasion an escalating disagreement about placing a pupil led to Tim refusing a direct order from the then Secretary of State for Education!

Within the school itself, Tim kept tight control of the boundary and of internal processes. He was opposed to letting in certain types of student with emotional behavioural needs, causing the other schools in the town to have to take on a disproportionate load, which led to considerable bad relations with other head teachers in the town. Other professionals, including police and health professionals, were not always welcome, for example, a school nurse was not allowed beyond reception and had to administer HPV vaccinations to over 100 girls in the foyer.

The management of staff was equally controlling and the system operated a rigid centralised command and control structure. Tim appointed two deputy heads who were not strong enough to challenge him. His primary method of control was intimidation, the author observed him towering over students, yelling them into compliance on numberless occasions. Staff were treated similarly, with individuals being publically humiliated and shamed for any transgression. One teacher recounted how she was admonished for rearranging the desks in her own class room "because Tim wanted class-rooms organised in a certain way". Staff and students were not permitted to have drinks outside of break and lunchtime and never in a classroom or in school corridors, to avoid spillage on carpets.

This sense of control also shaped the recruitment and retention of staff. Some teachers came and went very quickly, either because their values did not tally with those of the school or because they were managed out by Tim. But a surprising majority stayed, despite the bullying culture. This was effected through a number of strategies. Desirable staff were paid slightly more than their equivalent posts in other schools. For some, the extra pay made it worthwhile. In the case of the two deputies, they were promoted beyond their abilities (as confirmed by them) and they knew they could not get equivalent posts elsewhere. At least one teacher did not have the appropriate qualifications to be employed in the UK and she was effectively trapped, unable to leave until she had the necessary qualifica-

tion, which Tim would not let her apply for. Finally, in some cases, Tim would not write references, which would make applying for other jobs difficult. Many of the staff, therefore, were demoralised, fearful and trapped.

Communication at the school was poor and complicated by the fact that Tim did not permit the use of email. Added to this was an organisational design that seemed to encourage miscommunication and distrust. Lines of accountability and responsibilities for tasks and people were poorly defined, leading to incessant mistrust and low level politicking. All problems were brought up to Tim and he was the sole arbiter and decision-maker. Staff tended to be passive and uncreative in the face of manageable problems as they were more likely to be punished for initiative than for inaction. Staff developed a highly anxious and dependent posture, unwilling to take even minor decisions. If possible, they would avoid Tim when he was on his rounds, turning and walking away before being seen. There was a tacit recognition that the further away one was from Tim, the better. Thus rooms furthest down various corridors were coveted as a way of putting distance between the teacher and the threat of Tim. Even an extra distance of twenty metres was considered a measure of safety.

Like many totalitarian regimes, there was a subversive element dedicated to its overthrow. This is not an exaggeration. Following a persecutory policy to a subset of the school's migrant community, one staff member had made contact with the national press and an expose of racist behaviour was planned. The same individual staked Tim out on several evenings, videing his movements and the transportation of files.

The features described in this section have high correlation with the hallmarks of a totalitarian regime. There was mistrust of external bodies and strict regulation over entry into the school. Easy communication was discouraged (lack of email) and the lives and destinies of staff were tightly controlled – from choices about leaving the school to classroom set up. The next section considers the unconscious motivation on Tim's part for creating such a climate.

9. The mind of the leader

As early as 1943 psychoanalysis has been used to study the psychology of leaders, starting with Adolf Hitler [Langer 1972]. More recently, Kets de Vries [1986; 2006b], has compiled a significant body of literature on the leadership and personality styles of chief executives. Tim's behaviour matches that of a narcissistic leadership style (and possibly a narcissistic personality disorder), where the needs of his own psyche merged with the needs of the organisation [Kets de Vries 2006a]. It is proposed that he was so over identified with the school – his school – that his ego ideal and the organisational ideal became one. The school under his leadership was less about meeting the task of educating children and more about meeting his own needs for status and control. The supposed task of educating students was not working so well, as was confirmed objectively through increasingly poor exam results and the imminent likelihood of a poor rating by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), the regulatory body for schools in the UK.

The tight boundary around the school, controlling what was allowed in and out was regulated solely by him with negligible powers delegated to others. It seemed that Tim used the school to manage many of his unresolved conflicts. On one occasion, during a consultation between the author and the female deputy head, Sue, a discussion arose about why the arts department, especially the pottery teacher, had been singled out for excessive budget cuts. The deputy felt he had a vendetta of sorts against the female pottery teacher but could not think why at first. Suddenly she had an insight: his ex-wife had been a potter. It is hypothesised that at a time of financial pressure and the threat of an imminent OFSTED inspection, Tim experienced these pressures as personally attacking and responded in such a way that organisational dilemmas were conflated with personal issues, reacting to them as if they were the latter. He experienced organisational problems through a paranoid-schizoid, personal lens, which mobilised quite vicious and unhelpful defences.

Leadership, as theorised in systems-psychodynamic thinking, is a boundary function [Rice 1953; Roberts 1994], where the leader regulates inputs and outputs across the organisational boundary. Tim's impermeable boundary around the school had dramatic effects on the staff group who were cut off from new developments in the teaching world. Serving as a replacement for his own ego, it is argued that the refusal to allow information and undesirable or imperfect students (for behavioural or physical reasons) into his school reflected a preoccupation with limiting the intrusion of "bad objects" into his own ego ideal by preventing threats of illness, disruption and "badness" from contaminating the organisational ideal, as played out on the wide canvas of the school. The psychological defence mechanisms are clearer here, with Tim splitting good and bad types of student and actually projecting them out of his school to be held in other schools. He could then ensure only desirable students were in his school. His psyche, just as in his school, contained only good, compliant objects.

10. The tyrant falls: narcissism and succession

With no warning Tim announced his departure. The unusually short notice meant a replacement could not be found in time and the governing body, guided by Tim, appointed the weaker deputy as interim head teacher. Tim left without fanfare. Initially there was jubilation and hope. Announcements were made that the school would move to a new way of working, in a culture of respect and tolerance. While the reasons for Tim's departure cannot be known, the speed and low key nature of it strongly hint that he was leaving before an uncomfortable truth emerged (indeed, a number of such reasons were revealed to the author subsequently). There are parallels with authoritarian breakdown [Freud 1930].

Rahmetov [2012] in authoritarian regimes, where dictators depart abruptly when their forces can no longer maintain control. Another similarity with many of the Arab Spring uprisings was the assumption of a "democratic breakthrough" [McFaul 2005], where the collapse of a tyrant in and of itself anticipates a move to benign, enlightened democracy. As with other post

authoritarian regimes such as Egypt and Libya, this was not the case. The reason for this was less obvious however.

Based on observation and theoretical analysis of Tim and the school, the following proposition is offered: having identified with his school to meet his own narcissistic needs, Tim used his power to select the least suited candidate to succeed him. This man, Simon, had been over promoted to the role of Deputy Head because he was quiet, diligent and challenge averse, his strengths were statistics and timetabling. Even by his own admission (in discussion with the author) he was not a leader and many wondered why the stronger of the two deputies, Helen, was not appointed. While it is not possible to know Tim's reasoning, one striking outcome was observed – Tim may have left in body but his spirit lived on. He was still referred to and the staff continued to operate as if he was still in charge, though in an altered fashion, which actually increased conflict and poor morale. This is the final act of a narcissist who cannot bear to think of being replaced. The conflation of his own narcissistic needs with the demands of the organisation led to the selection of a new leader who would, symbolically, permit Tim to live on, to achieve a form of the immortality towards which narcissism strives.

11. The post-totalitarian school: the tyrant in the mind

It did not take long for the feeling of liberation to wear off, as reality, in the form of students, inspection regimes and poor exam results intruded. In weekly visits the author observed the following trends.

The students, as a group, had been noticeably well-behaved upon arriving back to school. However, within a month behaviour had deteriorated to alarming levels: students were non-compliant, rude and frequently out of lessons. One group, the "gang of four", aged thirteen to fourteen, brazenly ran around the school during lessons, openly laughing at teachers' attempts to discipline them. In discussion with this "gang", it was clear that they – and others – did not recognise anyone as having sufficient authority over them. In the former epoch, the mere sight of Tim strolling the corridors was enough to encourage compliance. Now there was no-one with the requisite authority to keep students in check. At the same time, the school lacked the knowledge and systems that would lead to the tolerant culture that staff longed for and had anticipated. Instead, staff acted as Tim had done, yelling and haranguing, but with no effect.

In spite of this, the school was now trying to be more inclusive and cooperative with other schools. This meant taking its "fair share" of vulnerable and challenging pupils, which quickly led to unanticipated consequences. Isolated for so long from new forms of teaching practice and experience with students with AEN/SEN, staff were ill-equipped to manage more demanding forms of learning and emotional difficulty. Additionally, new students had never experienced Tim as an authority figure and entered a system which could not cater to their needs or manage their distress. With Tim-as-boundary gone, there was no regulating mechanism to balance the external demands of be-

ing a community school with the internal operational capacity. As the author observed in a working note [Miller 1995], to the subsequent head-teacher:

At the same time, because of this tight boundary, I have a sense that in some cases, staff don't yet have the knowledge, skills and capacity to manage certain types of need. This is mirrored across the school as a whole. Southwick is now having to contend with students who would never have been allowed in in the old regime or would have been quickly excluded. Therefore, there is sometimes a sense of being overwhelmed by things a less closed off system could manage. An analogy: North Korea suddenly having to deal with democracy, punk, student unions.

The poor behaviour and additional demands had negative effects on staff morale. Individuals clustered together in departmental or social "cliques" and there was even less meaningful communication or support between groups. Given the stresses prevalent in the school it is not, perhaps, surprising that most individuals and groups would operate from the paranoid schizoid position and do so more overtly now Tim had gone. But there was something else, the sense of a deeper rationale for their behaviour. It was not just that mistrust was evident but that any action on the part of another individual – a new proposal for managing behaviour, for example – was treated as a threat or attack. Huge amounts of energy were expended in actions that could be seen as political blocking but, on closer inspection, were inspired more by a need to avoid having real or imagined inadequacies revealed. The underlying fear – and this was experienced very much in the author's own counter-transference experiences – was that any action must be thwarted, attacked... punished. It was as if the organisation-as-a-whole still felt Tim was there and would punish any sign of initiative, as before. Or rather, an individual would take it upon themselves to act as Tim might have acted, while at the same time hiding their own vulnerabilities. This led to the scuppering of creative initiatives and reinforced poor relations between groups.

For the author, an additional consequence of this was that relationships between staff were never stable. Each week a disproportionate amount of time was spent re-establishing working relationships, checking in with colleagues and ascertaining if agreed actions had been undertaken, which often they were not. And when problems arose, the system seemed unable to align individuals and bring them into an effective work group [Bion 1961]. Rather a problem, something that by definition required some form of creativity or initiative, was the signal to abdicate responsibility, retreat and block any ideas others might have. What was so interesting was that, when one reflected, there was no longer any threat or negative consequence for taking the initiative. It was, and this is the central thesis of this paper, all in the minds of the staff.

Despite Tim's departure, the staff continued to operate as if he was still present but with some noticeable differences. Over time the euphoria of his departure had given way to a culture in which each group and sub-group viewed any ideas, suggestions or advances by the other as a threat. Throughout this time the author experienced his weekly visits as distressing

and disorientating. The working hypothesis at the time was that the absence of authority had led to a version of what Jacques called a paranoicogenic zoo [Jacques 1955]. However, an incident involving the female deputy head led to a revision of this, to posit the ongoing leadership of Tim *in the minds of the staff-group as a whole*. One particular encounter, four months after Tim's departure, illuminated this thought. At the scheduled time the author went to collect a looked-after-child with autism for his weekly therapy session. Arriving, he was informed by the Deputy Head that the boy was not allowed to go "because he had been naughty". This was unacceptable and after some debate the author and the boy met regardless. After the session, the author experienced exactly the dilemma of all staff during the time of Tim, to stay for financial reasons or to leave on principle. He wrestled with this dilemma before approaching the Deputy Head and asked her to justify denying a vulnerable student access to psychological support on the grounds of behaviour. Her answer was revealing: "it's not me, it's Tim. He has said that when children misbehave they must stay in the [detention room]".

The ethics of such a view aside, this comment revealed something specific. Even though Tim had left, he was still in charge and, while in the past he had physically controlled boundaries, he now continued to control staff behaviours from within their minds. He was a tyrant in the mind.

12. Introjective identification – from tyrant to tyrant-in-the mind

The question arises therefore: through what mechanism did this situation occur? In object relations theory the process by which a child masters, relatively, anxiety and frustration is through the incorporation in their minds of the parent, or rather a version of the parent overlaid with emotional experience. A child who experiences good enough care takes in, with the model of the caring parent, a sense that strong emotions can be withstood, fears mastered and that ultimately the world can be understood. Conversely, a child who has had an experience of poor parental care – or the perception of it through, for example, pains and upsets that cannot be soothed – takes in an amalgam of the parent and the experiences of an unmet need. These internalised figures are objects which relate to each other and the infant's ego in various configurations. They provide an unconscious substrate that sets out how the individual relates to others, the world and to him or herself, hence object relations. The process by which this occurs is called introjection identification. First, an object is taken in (introjected), then it is assimilated, to a greater or lesser degree, into the ego, becoming part of it (identification).

Here, it is proposed that a situation had arisen in which a tyrannical leader had achieved, to meet his own narcissistic needs, a form of immortality through the appointment of his weak replacement. His reign had ended – abruptly – but he lived on. It is also proposed that this allowed him to live on unchallenged in the minds of the teachers and staff at the school. Such was the long-term experience of the workforce, of being continually subjected to his totalitarian form of leadership, that in the absence of any alternative models of leadership, the

school unconsciously continued to operate under the assumption that Tim was still in charge. The experience of Tim as leader had been introjected into the unconscious of each of his followers and unconsciously identified as a model of how to be.

There were some significant differences however. The tyrant in the flesh had controlled absolutely the boundary of the school and monitored all that occurred within it. Now, each group and clique, subject to a greater or lesser extent to tyrant in the mind (this in itself dependent on factors such as length of service, exposure to Tim and other personality factors), replicated this sense of boundary control and distrust of the other *at the local level*: i.e. at the level of individual or departmental authority. When Tim had ruled externally, conflict was less overt. People deferred to him and the culture was one of extreme dependency and risk aversion. Now, however, the area of control was defined by the boundary of each individual's and group's authority. In other words, the limit was not the whole system but the various subsystems within it. Under Tim, boundaries, authority and tasks had been unhealthily blurred, the net effect being that only he had oversight and full control of all activities in the system. What now occurred was fragmentation, with multiple subsystems replicating Tim's model of distrust and poor communication. Without his containing presence the discord intensified and was manifested through two main sources of disagreement: either there was an overlap between task groups with each interpreting the others actions and intentions through a paranoid schizoid prism; the concept that people might work together, whilst consciously referred to, could not in reality be contemplated. Actions, rather, were predicated on an aggressive attempt to acquire resources such as people or territory, in the form of classrooms, for example, but never to solve actual problems. Alternatively, there was a gap between respective roles. Here, a task would not be done and re-priming would ensue. In either case it was, it seemed, conceptually impossible for opposing factions to come together. Indeed, if such a meeting proved imminent, anxiety levels rose and nothing fruitful would come of such meetings.

A specific example experienced by the author was his attempt to bring the SENCo and assistant head responsible for pastoral care together for a meeting to discuss vulnerable children. On seven subsequent occasions the meeting was cancelled. Emergencies were discovered or one of the individuals would call in sick. Taking each cancelled meeting in isolation the reasons were understandable. However, taken in totality, they served as data supporting the overarching hypothesis that the individual role-holders could not conceive of disparate groups working together productively, whatever its stated intentions. They reacted to events and related to each other *as if he was still in charge*.

Given the situation, it is not surprising that the common refrain was that life had been better under Tim. Indeed, by one reading it was. Following Tim would have been difficult for any leader, but the acting Head was just not strong enough or physically and psychologically present enough to bring about the desired changes. But from another perspective it was less a problem of an absent Tim than a problem of multiple Tim's existing in the minds of each individual within the school. Certainly, in co-

versation, even a year and more after his departure, Tim was never far from people's minds and was often the endpoint of any conversation. He remained present and potent. "The shadow of the object", to quote Bollas [1987], loomed large and long.

It is proposed, then, that the mechanism of introjective identification was central to the way in which the school manifested the difficulties described here. Over a long period, cut-off from the world and effectively imprisoned and terrorised, the staff had introjected not simply Tim but Tim as leader *and* the school as an extension of him. The school was effectively a holographic projection of Tim's personality: he was everything, he was everywhere, even to the limits of the furthest corridor. He was the school (interestingly, within the local authority in which the school resided, this was the case – Tim and the school was synonymous). In the process of introjecting Tim, individuals also took in the atmosphere of fear and distrust his leadership style produced in the organisation. Through identification this became the emotional tenor of each individual's internal working world, a world in which the actions of others were interpreted almost as transgressions which had to be punished. The organisation-in-the-mind was Tim's mind made manifest in the totalitarian culture of the school. Or rather, it was not an organisation but a tyrant-in-the-mind.

13. Discussion

Narcissism involves a turning away from the world and redirecting libidinal energy towards the self [Freud 1921; Hinshelwood 2004]. Leaders, due to the authority they hold, are in the precarious position of having the power and potential of merging ego needs with organisational needs. Thus the narcissistic drive effects not just the refocusing of internal psychic energy but the energy and resources of the organisation itself, as an extension of the leader's own psychology. In the case of Tim, these tendencies were evident: excessive control of the boundary and exclusion of undesirable and pollutant elements (certain types of student, external agents associated with illness and legality); control of staff (keeping them hostage, the micro-management); any sign of independent thinking in others and; ultimately in the choice of a weak leader to succeed him, whose presence permitted Tim to live on in the mind of staff. Tim's sudden and mysterious departure, similar in many ways to the abrupt departures of dictators in totalitarian regimes, led to initial jubilation and an assumption that just by his absence things would improve, and just as with a number of recent examples in the Arab Spring, things did not improve.

The proposition put forward in this study is that Tim, as a narcissistic, controlling leader, was introjected into the minds of his followers, who then identified this as a model of how to act. While Tim used the organisation to satisfy narcissistic ego needs, the staff took in a model of leadership – one that sought total control of the system under its command. After his departure and the removal of the outer boundary control, this model of how to lead (or how to control) was then applied by confused followers – leaders of their own sub-systems – at the sub-systemic, local level. The conflict and enmity of Tim's approach evoked in the town and the Local Authority, through

non-cooperation, refusal to help other schools, denigration and defiance of external authority, was, through the process of introjection, played out between the role holders within the school. This led to a further deterioration in morale and lack of trust in supportive structures. Behaviour and learning deteriorated, inducing greater anxiety and distress in staff and students alike. In such a scenario, leadership and psychological containment [Stapley 2006], are required in greater measure, in the very circumstances that mitigate against reflection. The only leadership model that staff could draw on was that of the "tyrant-in-the-mind", a fact compounded by Tim's approach of appointing people who would not challenge his authority. They had had no opportunity to explore and exercise alternate ways of wielding power and authority. Summarising the process, it can be said that Tim exhibited extreme narcissistic traits leading to a tyrannical leadership style. The staff group introjected a psychologically damaged individual as a model of how to lead. Thus it can be seen just how harmful an ill-appointed leader can be to staff well-being and organisational functioning and how far reaching its effects are.

This paper proposes a specific addition to the literature on totalitarian organisations and the organisation-in-the-mind. As the leader acts in a way that merges individual needs with organisational functioning, so the organisation and a totalitarian leader merge into one. In less extreme settings, what is taken in is an organisation-in-the-mind, where leadership is a function of that organisation. In totalitarian organisations, however, what is introjected is not the organisation but the organisation as a manifestation of the leader's psyche. The totalitarian organisation is the tyrant leader and the tyrant leader is the totalitarian organisation: it is this internalised object that dictates subsequent organisational behaviour.

At Southwick, as everywhere, time passed. Old staff left and were replaced by people ignorant of the school's turbulent history. Events were forgotten. Yet, at the time of writing, two years after the events described, many of the dynamics described are still in play (and have been commented on by the new head teacher and others). The tyrant, diluted, half-forgotten still casts his shadow on the organisation. The concept of the-tyrant-in-the-mind offers an explanatory construct for the effects of totalitarian leaders on ongoing organisational functioning. It also highlights the importance of attending to facets of organisational existence that are often neglected or misunderstood. This includes the unconscious contribution of each individual to organisational functioning. The challenge for incoming leaders, who may be ignorant of the full extent of their predecessor's behaviour and its effects, is great. A new leader must quickly develop relationships with existing staff, identify priorities among a range of competing concerns and arrange resources accordingly.

Becoming sensitive to unconscious organisational dynamics, then, is not easily done. Nor is being clear about what to do next. This is particularly difficult when the dysfunction involves the toxic over-shadowing of one's predecessor. From a psychoanalytic standpoint, a form of resolution is achieved through raising the concern into consciousness and then "working it through". There is no easy path to achieving and mainta-

ining the depressive position, which allows for difficult material to be processed, made sense of and then let go of, yet such a process provides opportunities to free individuals from old behavioural patterns. Mandela's instigation of the truth and reconciliation committee (TRC) in post-apartheid South Africa offers a parallel intervention of sorts: a safe-enough, containing environment in which experiences could be shared and truths acknowledged. In a busy organisation such as a school, it is often hard to recognise the need for, or to make a case for, such work. Dedicating time to the past is hard to justify, it seems, when the demands of the present are so great. Equally hard to justify is the attention to the emotional experience of organisational members. Just as with individuals, organisations deploy defence mechanisms through seemingly rational phenomena such as bureaucratic structures, poor communication and discordant group dynamics to limit the impact of emotional reality on the more rational idea of what an organisation is supposed to be [Armstrong, Rustin 2015].

While this study explored leader-follower dynamics in a secondary school, the insights gleaned have relevance for other organisational types. There is a vast literature on leadership and organisational culture, but less attention is given to the vestigial effects of former leaders on organisational behaviour. To that end, it is hoped that this paper offers a new perspective on the paradox observed in organisations that are free of a hated leader but incapable of changing hated behaviours. The tyrant-in-the-mind expands the idea of the organisation-in-the-mind to consider the totalitarian impact of narcissistic and tyrannical leaders on the psyche of their followers, even after they have departed.

This study is limited, focusing on just one organisation and this limitation itself identifies further lines of research. Exploring behaviour in other types of post-totalitarian organisation would be revealing, as would research exploring in more detail the experiences of individual workers. There are clearly parallels between the idea of the tyrant in the mind and the individual defence mechanism of identification with the aggressor [Freud 1993], and teasing out the distinction between the two in a further analysis of followership in post-totalitarian organisations could prove enlightening. A second observation is that this study focused on the process of introjection and has neglected the tendency of followers to project their need for certainty and protection into their leaders. Arendt [1966], observed this tendency in Stalinist Russia. This collusive quality in a totalitarian culture, commented on by Temple [2006] and Lawrence [2005], and the anxieties leading followers to project certain psychic states into leaders merits further analysis. Whatever follows, it is hoped that a greater awareness of the existence of such toxic mental states in organisations may provide some antidote to them.

Conclusion

This paper explored the individual, group and organisational dynamics in a large secondary school during and after a tyrannical leader. It posits that certain psychological processes occur that shape behaviour in a post-totalitarian organisation. It proposes that the mechanics described are relevant to organisa-

tions of all types. Arguably, the concept of the "tyrant-in-the-mind" also helps to explain the difficulties post-totalitarian regimes have in adapting to their own preferred futures.

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