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Images of the School – Images of the Organisation.

The uses of imagery in the structuring of educational organisations

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ABSTRACT: While the use of concrete imagery enjoys widespread approval in teaching methodology in schools, its value also extends to other disciplines, such as organisational science. Within the concept of "organisation" these two perspectives merge, insofar as schools themselves are *educational organisations.* This article begins by discussing reasons for considering images useful in both contexts. Then typical images from within organisational science, on the one hand, will be compared with pedagogical images on the other. Finally, the potential usefulness of this approach for the organisational structuring of schools will be assessed, with particular emphasis upon the way the images of learners are affected by those of the organisation and the school.

Keywords: school, organisation, school development

Introduction: why images?

In Waldorf education images play a central role. Right at the time when the first school was founded clear emphasis was placed upon the importance of using concrete pictures in teaching: on this subject Eugen Kolisko, who taught natural history and was the school doctor at the first Waldorf school, said in 1929: "Natural history must be presented to children and young people in such a way that in every natural phenomenon its relationship to the *universe* and its major laws should shine forth on the one hand, while on the other its relationship to the *human being* can be apprehended." (Kolisko 1929, quot. in Graudenz 2013, p. 86). Naturally the same holds for other subjects as well, for instance, cultural history (ibid.). Here, of course, pictorial concreteness does not just mean spicing up lessons with pictures, rather it has more to do with creating in the mind of the learner a living image, which allows him to experience the phenomenon in a wider context. This way of doing things finds echoes of approval far beyond the borders of Waldorf education. And thus the question arises all the more insistently as to whether such an approach really applies only to "children" and "young people". What would it mean and how effective would be the use of pictorial concreteness, in this sense of the ability to generate ones own images, in other learning and design situations? In particular what does this figurative approach imply for the overall idea of an organisation like the Waldorf school, which itself claims to be seriously concerned with both its relation to the individual and to a greater whole far beyond the limits of the school.

Certainly from the Waldorf point of view it seems perfectly apt *to think of the school in a figurative way.* This idea places Waldorf practitioners in good company, in that the use of the image is held in high regard in organisational science, which still has an immense contribution to make in the field of school development – a position it owes in no small measure to Gareth Morgan's bestseller "Images of Organisation" (Morgan 1998). It is precisely in the context of working with images and metaphors, however, that one is easily in danger of taking apparent similarity for identity. Thus before we come to describing how images of the school may be used constructively, we must first consider the nature of figurative thinking itself.

Figurative thinking

To think figuratively means to apprehend relationships in a way that can be designated by that very overworked adjective "holistic" (see also Meyer-Drawe 2008, p. 103ff). Attention is not directed towards matters of linear cause and effect, but rather is upon the "whole", the "vision", the "big picture". Details get lost in the process – although it can also be seen as sacrificing any expectation of complete comprehension of the details for the sake of a composite picture. Thus, a picture – to revise the old saying – doesn't tell more than a thousand words, just something else. This *something else* is often associated with non-rational, sometimes even mythical thinking. Mythic language, it is thought, is "not a rational language which communicates abstract, cognitive content. It is a picture language which invokes the listener's powers of imagination (Hübner 2005, p. 75). Edwin Hübner sums up the connection between myth and figurative thinking as a phase in the history of culture which lasted up to the time of the ancient Greeks. Here myth, irrationality, pictorial consciousness and the absence of any analytical separation of subject and object form a unity:

> "Ancestral picture-thinking is devoid of rationality in the modern sense and is equally lacking in any awareness of an individual self confronting the objects of this world" (Hübner 2005, p. 77).

In the further course of history this unity was gradually displaced by an increasing rationality with the ability to separate subject from object. The price of this, of course, was the loss of the comprehensive picture with its far-reaching range of figurative associations. In this context Hübner employs Schopenhauer's concept of "ancestral thinking"[1] (ibid., p. 75) and quotes him as follows:

> "All ancestral thinking occurs in pictures: which is why imagination is one of its essential instruments; and heads devoid of imagination will never achieve much – even in mathematics" (Schopenhauer, quot. in ibid.).

At the same time this points to the fact that figurative thinking is also of great importance today. The reference to mathematics marks its epistemological standing at the time and will not be pursued here in historical terms, but as a metaphor itself. Then in addition there appears here a special second form of figurative thinking, which will later be of central importance: with pictures a human being can form representations of the world, in Schopenhauer's sense, and in this way bring order to it. Pictures can also be used intentionally to gain another *perspective* on a particular situation. The idea behind this process lends itself to illustration particularly well in mathematics: here there is the principle of isomorphism (i.e. equivalence of form) among two or more structures. Two structures are said to be isomorphic when every element in the one can be assigned to a corresponding element in the other such that all spatial relations among the elements of the template structure are preserved in their equivalents in the target structure, and vice versa.[2] The usefulness of isomorphism lies in the fact that anything that holds for one of the structures can be expressed in terms of the other one. Its practical utility appears, for instance, when a certain property of a particular structure needs to be tested and is for some reason difficult to determine directly. In such a case it may be possible to perform the test upon the isomorphic equivalent, where proof may be easier to obtain (e.g. because more is known about it). Here *imagination* is not needed for the forming of representations, but is essential for discovering isomorphic relationships between structures and for envisaging the procedures required to work with them.

The principle of isomorphism thus forms the basis of a sort of controlled model building. This consists in taking a relevant extract of something (the world, a branch of science, a play, an object or event of some sort) and matching it isomorphically, such that certain operations can be performed with the elements of the extract and can at the same time be applied retro-actively. The special thing about mathematics is that this retro-active transference can be formalised with complete accuracy, whereas with model building (in a physics experiment, say) there is always the danger of the relationships between the elements changing in the process of transference from one area to another.

For most sciences, however, to set a standard of completely accurate transference between the model and the real world would be an unattainable ideal; outside of mathematics the applicability of a model can always

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1. Translator's note: The English essayist and cultural historian, Owen Barfield, called this "original participation" (Barfield, "Saving the Appearances", 1957).
2. In the interests of readability it was felt that a not quite exact mathematical description of isomorphism would suffice.

be called in doubt; the above described rationality never achieves its full extent. Viewed in this way, a model, beyond the limits of an isomorphism defined in strict mathematical terms, is *always* mythical: All striving towards rationality entails an unavoidable portion of *hope* (not seldom based upon a given individual's store of scientific experience) that the model will preserve the relevant combination of elements. The literary term for the vehicle of this kind of hope is "metaphor".

Metaphors

In the philosophy of science metaphors lead a peculiar existence. On the one hand, they are regarded with considerable scepticism, which in view of their history, as described above, is hardly surprising. To say something metaphorically implies presenting it not very exactly, rationally or well-based in terms of evidence. The speaker doesn't take full responsibility for what he is saying, but in using a metaphor is referring to a vague and indefinable element, a sort of referential deficit, that one must put up with in translating a certain set of circumstances into an image. On the other hand, language, and here that of science is no exception, is shot through with metaphors. No matter what the discipline, its technical terms will employ images in order to name theories or factual content.[3] Metaphorical images, however, are not merely concepts, but also tools of thought – whether in the guise of "imaginative pictures" in organisational science (Kieser 2006, p. 86), or "school profiles" (Moser 2004, p. 95ff) or "vision statements" in management. In their theory of metaphors Lakoff and Johnson describe such as these as "exploratory" (cit. in Fuchs & Huber 2012, p.143). They not only deliver a representation, but also permit the person using them to participate in a metaphorical experience. To work in a bureaucratic organisation and feel like a "cog in the machine" is much more expressive than saying that one's employment contract stipulates subservience to a particular organisational configuration. It could imply, for instance, that colleagues are also felt to be "cogs", that one suffers on account of the anonymity of the powers that stand behind the organisation's planning, and that one therefore feels completely at the mercy of mechanical forces. But in this feeling also lies the potential for alternative ways of perceiving social and material reality. It is not irrational in the sense of putting an indeterminate feeling in the place of logic, rather it aggregates logical possibilities on a higher plane. Metaphors are, in the words of Michael Pielenz, "bundles of rules for forming conclusions" (cit. in ibid., p. 144). Could it be that this form of figurative thinking is also suited to provide the basis for describing – and changing – organisations in general and schools in particular?

Images of the Organisation, the School and of Management

Pursuing this line of thinking further, metaphors are regular tools of thinking with the special ability to incorporate into the overall picture aspects not immediately accessible to rational analysis, such as subjective theories, cultural assumptions, prejudices or habits. (cf. ibid., p. 151). This idea is particularly important in organisational science. For one thing, its task consists to a considerable degree in dealing with phenomena that are hard to access rationally (for instance, organisational "cultures"); for another, its whole development has taken place in close interaction with social and economic scientists on the one hand and people directly involved in business on the other, especially management consultants. Thus its ideas, tools and procedures have all developed in close association with practitioners of one kind or another, and continues to do so. Metaphorical thinking and description as a way of working has proved very effective in this context, and in the Welsh-Canadian author, Gareth Morgan, has found an advocate who is also at home on the interface between management consultancy and organisational science.

Gareth Morgan: Images of the Organisation

In his book "Images of Organisations" (1998) Morgan presents various metaphors by which the never quite simple construct, organisation, can be captured in descriptive terms. One by one he gives detailed

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3. The choice of possible examples is well-nigh infinite; here a few arbitrarily chosen ones must suffice: mathematics speaks of "gradients", biology of "ecological niches", economics of "transparent markets".

descriptions of organisations as machines, organisms, brains, cultures, political systems, psychic prisons, flux and transformation and as instruments of power. The thrust of his argument is very explicit: he offers metaphors not just as vehicles for reflection upon the nature of organisations, but as a concrete instrument for their management and structuring and as a principle of knowledge – "the medium of organization and management is metaphor" (ibid,. p. ix). At the same time he wraps the argument in several key ideas in the development of organisational theory. That the images Morgan presents enhance rather than displace each other is for him no disadvantage, but entirely in keeping with the whole programme, for, as he says, "all management theory and practice is based on images, or metaphors, that lead us to understanding situations in powerful yet *partial* ways (ibid. p. 3f)."

Morgan's presentation of the various images is diverse and stimulating, but cannot, of course, be given in detail here. Instead, I would like to highlight three "images"[4], which are especially productive in the context of education: organisations as machines, political systems or organisms. They will be presented below and then taken up in later sections of this article. While this presentation deviates from Morgan's in that it makes points of its own, it also says nothing that contradicts him.

Machines

The image of the *machine* is probably the most prominent in organisational science; from Max Weber's model of bureaucracy via Charley Chaplin's parody of the machine age (in "Modern Times") to modern epithets, such as the "intermeshing of cogs", it has remained both a constant leading metaphor and the butt of easy ridicule any time the subject of organisation is raised. And with equal justification such expectations as "well-oiled" efficiency, the danger of over-regulation, "spanners in the works" and "total breakdown" are also associated with it. Machines work properly when they are well constructed and interact with an environment that doesn't require of them any special adaptations. The reason for this is that machines are themselves objects which are insuperably separated from the subjects responsible for their construction. They are made according to a plan, which itself lies outside the machine, and of which the machine is an invariant manifestation. If nevertheless it does vary, this either occurs unintentionally, or within the framework of pre-planned adaptive tolerances.

The sociologist Stephan Fuchs relates the machine model to the epistemology of realism (Fuchs 2001, p. 298ff) – machines must, as it were, assume that there is *one* unchangeable reality, within which they operate. Thus, having been constructed by human beings, who are familiar with this reality, they are indeed able to fulfil the tasks arising within it with great efficiency. The metaphor, however, shows its limits where it encounters environmental change. On the one hand, machines can only adapt themselves to their environment to the extent that this has been planned for in their construction. On the other, they either make no contribution to changing their environment or do so according to a pre-determined picture of how this should look. Neither of these, however, is compatible with the open-ended nature of teaching situations.[5]

Political Systems

In relation to organisations the machine metaphor is always coming up against limitations, in spite of its popularity. It generates basic assumptions, such as that employees, in exchange for their wages, will be prepared to take on any role or task that might be expected of them, that they will not put forward any unsolicited suggestions as to how the organisation should be run, or, to stay with the image, that individual cogs don't care what the other cogs are doing. These assumptions have proved false. For this reason since as early as the 1920's there has been a growing flood of studies conducted in organisational science under

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4. In the title of the German version of the book the word "images" has been translated with the word "Bilder", which loses the reference the English word makes to "imagination" in the sense of the faculty of representation. On the level of direct translation, however, this problem is insoluble – which points, as often is the case, to the limitations of translation (which again could serve as a metaphor for the limits of isomorphism and model-building).

5. A prime example of this debate is Parson's critique of supposed conservatism in his outline of a theory of the education system (see Tillmann 2010, p. 143f).

the general heading of "human relations" (cf Schreyögg 2008, p. 40ff). They have been concerned with investigating change-generating factors that do not fit in with the machine image. Here the main thing was always the subjects' "personal existence", both in terms of their own place within the organisation and – perhaps more importantly – their way of relating to one another. When in this connection organisations come (much later) to be spoken of as *political systems*, this does not mean that they are seen simply as reproductions of whatever political system they happen to be subject to (that in democratic states, say, only democratic firms or democratic schools arise), but that the basic elements of politics are also played out at the organisation level. Conflicts, competing interests and power are all part of what goes on in an organisation and keeping them in constant balance is a process that can be described in terms of political categories. An employee could, for example, be furthering his individual interests (the desire for a nicer office, say) through amassing power (for instance, by gathering and selectively withholding information crucial to the running of the organisation) and then using it against his opposite number in the case of conflict. This example represents a rather pessimistic image of the human being, as appears prominently in the approach known as "micro-politics" (Burns 1961, cit. in Schreyögg 2008, p. 348). In this view, however, it is often a question of making sure egotistic motives are paid due attention *as well*, rather than trying to force the human being into the mould of a rational "utility maximiser". Organisational development is seen from this perspective as a matter of taking account of political processes as a manifest component of organisational dynamics and taking them seriously. Organising schools according to political or governmental systems, such as democracy, is a further aspect of this theme that will be taken up later.

Organisms

The concept of organism has had a very checkered history, which admits of a large number of metaphorical interpretations. For the ancient Greeks "organon" signified a "tool" (also in the context of perception). It has also been used in the sense of a tool of thought – a collection of Aristotelian writings on logic is called "Organon" (even though this title was presumably not chosen by Aristotle himself). Only considerably later was it first applied to living bodies in the train of the Cartesian idea of the body as a (highly complex) mechanism. To the extent that this idea encountered contradictions, the word "organism" became associated with the idea of something independently alive that could no longer be reduced to a perfect, machine-like construction.

Thus today, when organisations are spoken of as organisms, a parallel is being drawn (quite apart from their purely verbal similarity) not only with the refined and well-nigh infinitely complex relationships among the parts of an organism, but also with the dynamic autonomy of this interplay. In contrast to the machine metaphor, it is assumed thereby that an organism cannot be taken apart and then reconstructed into a functional whole. Organisms fulfil their function only as long as they are alive, and when they are taken apart that life is irrevocably at an end. The organism metaphor, however, has more to tell us. It carries the implication that organisational structure is *functional* (in correspondence to the body's being composed of organs). The physiological functions of certain organs may thus be applied to organisations: for instance, the managerial function of the brain, the supply and maintenance function of the circulatory system (which can be further divided into other organs) etc. As is well known, Waldorf education has adopted this idea, as when, for example, the college meeting is designated as the "central organ" of a school (Steiner 1986, p. 241); but such metaphorical expressions are also used of other organisations, as when one speaks of the "head" or the "backbone" of an institution, and so on. In organisational science the concept of the organism was championed particularly in the 1960's by Burns and Stalker through their clarifying of the distinction between mechanistic and organic organisation (cf. Schreyögg 2008, p. 278). Here also there are the associated ideas of high complexity and self-regulation, which have become very important in the context of modern systems theory.

Images of the educational process

Just as organisations can be described using images, the same is true of the organisation "school" and of the institution "education". This practice is by no means a modern invention, but has a long and varied

history. In order to establish a framework for images of the school and of education, the next three sections will present images which have to do with the school, but also add substance to the perspectives from organisational science considered above. The first is the Baroque notion of the "didactic machine", then the school as a mini-state, and finally the school as an organism.

Didactic machines

During the Baroque Period the metaphor of the automotive machine – the automaton – was the last word on pedagogical method. The "Baroque love for everything machine-like" (Meyer-Drawe 2008, p. 22) created a union of a "mechanical theory of learning" (ibid.) with "the forcing of school life into compliance with the rhythm of the clock" (Neumann 1993, p. 30).[6] The Baroque philosopher of education, Comenius (who also figures large in connection with the pictorial in teaching, see Hübner 2005, p. 54ff), was an adherent of this idea, in that his picture of teaching is thoroughly mechanistic:

> "It is, however, desirable […] that educational method be mechanical: *in other words, that it prescribes everything in such a reliable way that all learning, teaching and classroom activities cannot but advance, just as does a well-made clock, a waggon, a ship, a mill, or any kind of* machine *artificially equipped with the ability to move." (Comenius 1657/2013)*

This Comenius quotation is less well known than, say, the introduction to his Didactica Magna, which speaks of the joy of learning and of avoiding unnecessary unpleasantness, and thus puts forward an image of school decisively oriented towards human well-being. How comes it, then, that Comenius's attitude to the machine is so unreservedly positive? Without wishing to go too deeply into the historical argument, we can approach this question by considering how the word "plan" was used within the context of the machine metaphor. For us machines appear – from experience – as artefacts constructed, with varying precision, by human beings. The machine is an "aggregate" (Latour 2010, p. 109ff) of physical laws, designers' ideas, materials, utility scenarios and much more. Thus the plan behind it is no monistic, ideal structure, but of necessity a kind of patchwork. In contrast to this stands the Baroque Era's conception of an ideal plan, which inscribes into the machine a perfect functionality, which in turn may be seen as on a par with the transcendent attributes of divine power, or at least as an emulation of them. The classic examples of the Baroque art of the machine are probably the astronomical clocks of this era: "hitherto the most convincing human answer to the God-given model of the cosmos". (Neumann 1993, p. 41) Thus Comenius's idea of a didactic machine embodies the optimistic intention of being in tune with the divine plan. This machine model – in contrast to modern mechanistic thinking – surpasses human capabilities rather than falling behind them. Today, however, our experience of machines is of a kind that did not exist in the 18th century, and so we can no longer share their optimism. School as a machine sounds to us more like mass production, uniformity, dehumanisation. We do not associate it with divine or transcendent wisdom, but rather with things like Moritz Schreber's bodily standardisation devices (see Fig. 1) or the "disciplinary wheels" described by Foucault (Foucault 1994, p. 244).

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6. Authors like Meyer-Drawe quite rightly point out that this love of the machine analogy is currently producing mechanistic models of learning in a new guise – for instance, in the programmed instruction popular in the 1960's or in modern models of computer-supported learning.
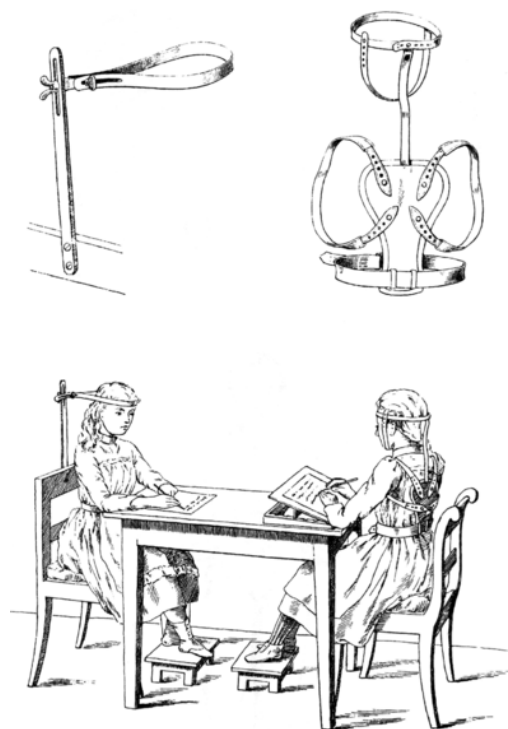
Figure 1: Schreber's "Back-straightener" (source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/
File:Geradhalter_%28Schreber%29.png)

School as "polis"

One answer to the absence of a divine plan is self-regulation, which in the case of a school can mean envisaging it as a political system. The idea of the school as "polis" is associated in the realm of German educational thinking with the name of Hartmut von Hentig. It was first put forward by him in 1993 in a book called "Die Schule neu denken" ("Rethinking the School", cf. von Hentig 2003, p. 189ff). Von Hentig, however, sets his face against the idea – favoured by Comenius – of controlled learning outcomes, not to speak of "conditioning techniques" (op. cit. Arnold and Schüssler 1998, p. 119) and excessive "determinism" (op. cit. ibid.). In this his thinking has been strongly influenced by the American pragmatist John Dewey, who drew a close theoretical parallel between the school and democracy (Neubert 2006). But the connection between the school and particular forms of government had already been made before Dewey's time. In 1898 the Herbartian philosopher Karl Volkmar Stoy described an institute of learning as a "small republic" (op. cit. Coriand 2006, p. 153).[7] In spite of all practical reservations, it can be said that the basic idea of organising schools along democratic lines finds general consensus. There are very few serious fundamental objections to giving students a say in the running of schools, and the organisation of political decision-making in the respective country would tend to be taken as the model of how to do this, even though ideas as to the framework within which this student participation should take place might vary considerably. In the state sector of education things are developing in a similar direction in that teachers are being given more responsibility for decisions affecting the running of their school. For instance, formerly centralised tasks (like the appointing of staff) have been given to the schools. Private schools, through being in the hands of a decentralised body – perhaps in the form of an association – are normally obliged to have democratic decision-making structures, but mostly they create them of their own accord.

It would be going too far, however, to speak here of an actual "polis". For one thing, historically it is itself

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7. In relation to von Hentig it is interesting that Stoy also embraced the idea of experimental schools, and in relation to Waldorf education that he outlined the idea of "child portraits" (op. cit. Coriand 2006, p. 151), which is very similar to its practice of the "child study".

not without problems (for instance, in the matter of the distinction between free and un-free citizens in the Greek city-state); for another, democratic principles can be interpreted and realised in a wide variety of ways. The idea of the polis is thus in need of interpretation, and it cannot be maintained that it has been widely accepted as the normative model for the structuring of schools. The opinions as to the manner and extent of self-determination and participation in decision-making vary too widely for that. In view of the constantly changing ideas about what constitutes government in the wider political context of whatever country a school finds itself in, this is not surprising. A particular form of school can establish its own norms and facilitate their implementation; in most cases, however, it will draw the norms required for the carrying out of its organisational tasks chiefly from its surroundings. The utopian idea of the school as an ideal democracy or "polis" requires, in other words, both concretising in terms of content (which can turn out very variably) and a political context in which its hard-won principles can find practical application. For model schools this seems to be possible, although this shows no sign of giving rise to a school design movement.

Schools as organisms

The idea of the school as a living organism is very familiar in Waldorf education, as previously mentioned. It points, on the one hand, to the dynamism and complexity of the school as a system, while on the other indicating the existence of limits. An organism is a self-organising system, which may be suffused with the light of individuality as a sort of higher level of control: the individual " is not myself as an organism with its instincts and feelings, rather it is my own world of ideas which lights up within this organism" (Steiner 2004, p. 164). By way of analogy, the essential nature of a school consists not primarily in its having a particular structure involving a subtle interplay among its various organs, but rather in the degree to which certain ideas and practices which find their realisation through these organs. The (school-) organism fulfils its purpose not through itself, but through the fact that it bestows *being* upon something more significant. This does not have to be expressed in abstract or esoteric language. It can very well be concerned with concrete aims like cultural knowledge acquisition, power-sharing, inter-personal solidarity and so on – in fact, any aim appropriate for a school. Thus, in a certain way, the concept of a living organism takes up the legacy of the original machine metaphor. In contrast to the machine, however, its underlying plan still is not fully understood, nor is its construction in human hands. Thus the organism sometimes commands the kind of reverence formerly (but no longer) evoked by the machine image, and expressed by Schopenhauer in this oft-quoted and well-loved aphorism:

> *"Any stupid boy can stamp on a beetle, but not all the professors in the world could make one".*

The organism metaphor combines rule-bound structure (an organism does not come about by chance) with a principle of life that transcends human capability. At the same time it also leaves open the question of *how* a given organism is composed; its organs and their possible channels of interaction can be arranged in a certain order, but its life can only arise through the animate contribution of its parts/members.

Images generate Images – consequences for the structural design of organisations

With what has been presented here an overall picture rich in contrast has been built up. For instance, on the one hand each of the metaphors alluded to has appeared on the scene with at the very least the purpose of overcoming the limitations of the previously reigning one; on the other hand, they bear witness in some respects to large differences between the organisation and the school. There is, in my opinion, a certain potential in this, for all schools are *also*, even though they are never *only*, organisations. Thus it is necessary to reflect upon the dynamics of this relationship with a view to working out how the school as an institution is to develop appropriately in the future. In conclusion, this general perspective will be considered in connection with the question as to what images of this institution's *members* emerge from it.

Contrary to Weber's view, the machine model of an organisation usually carries a negative connotation, associated with the image of bureaucracy, regimentation and restriction of freedom. Both staff and students in a machine-like institution are to fulfil their functions and not question the underlying plan – particularly

as, structurally speaking, they are not in any position to understand it. Even in Comenius's much more optimistic scenario of the "didactic machine" every individual had to submit to the unfathomable plan. The crucial difference lies in the fact that the latter was not of human and therefore fallible design, but divine and perfect. If these two models are merged, this yields a varied picture of the organisation's members: On the one hand, they are obliged to follow the rules of engagement laid down by the plan, lest the machine come to an abrupt stop. The plan itself, however, can no longer be regarded as infallible. The organisation's members must therefore bring their critical awareness to bear upon their activities: they obey rules, but question them while holding open the possibility of actually revising them – their actions are informed by reason, in a dynamic relationship between trust and criticism. How far the balance tips towards the one or the other depends upon the roles the organisation has assigned to its members, and therefore also upon the underlying plan. The details of this, manifesting as they do in every organisation in an individual way, cannot be discussed here. Nevertheless, the picture of the individual member consistent with all of the above is of someone who can act (i.e. function) either correctly or incorrectly, but whose non-functionality can equally well be the expression of a mistaken plan. Thus, school models that place central importance upon individuality (say, in the interests of inclusivity) must consider how they are going to ensure the organisation's ability to run according to plan while leaving scope for its members to perform successfully.

The idea of the organisation as a political system provides two further complementary, but distinct, perspectives. The micro-political approach appears rooted in a pessimistic worldview – organisation members strive to maximise their own utilitarian interests, and in so doing make use of such rooms for manoeuvre as the organisation's structure permits. Here they are engaging in political processes, and attaining or using power. It is logical to picture the members of such organisations as being pervaded with mistrust (cf. Schreyögg 2008, p. 359), a definite weakness when attempting to put some co-operative, productive project into practice. The school as "polis" or "small republic", on the other hand, works on the assumption that its members are (or should be) capable of constructively applying democratic principles which can be extended into the surrounding community. In its optimistic version this model also assumes that students are particularly suited to this, the less optimistic one that they must develop these abilities within certain (arbitrarily) defined limits, this being the only appropriate way they can be equipped to cope with such situations later in life. More concrete school models usually ascribe to students the fundamental abilities required to participate in democratic decision-making, but at the same time leave open the extent to which they have already been developed or are to be regarded as unrealised potential (cf. as prominent example Bildungskommission 1995, p. 79ff). In the pessimistically tinged micro-political picture both merge into an image of the organisation's members as having the potential for democratic co-operation, but nonetheless of having to work at it and constantly renew it. Human weaknesses and egotism are regarded neither as required conditions nor as needing in principle to be overcome, but as aspects of human communal life that can only be held within bounds but cannot (and should not) be eliminated.

In organisational science the organism concept is primarily associated with complexity, and as such stands implicitly in contradiction to any analytical approach. In accounts picturing the school as an organism, however, a clearer view is gained of functional structure, so that the organs of a school can be thought of as analogous to bodily organs. Common to both views is the fact that organisms create something which goes beyond the sum of their components. From the perspective of Waldorf education, it is particularly clear in this connection that the organism is not an end in itself, but contributes to the bringing forth of something else. Furthermore, the organism metaphor is collectivist to an extent beyond any of the others dealt with here. The individual, whether student or teacher, is not an organ, but appears in different contexts as a part of various organs. Since so much emphasis is placed upon the interplay of the parts, these lose their contour. Thus this image harbours the danger of suppressing individuality, but also confidently affirms that a social organism does not depend upon the contribution of any one individual, but upon the interplay of many contributions. It further provides a counterpoint to individualistic ideologies that over-emphasise competitive performance.

This last section gave a sketch of how images of the organisation and the school ultimately generate images of their individual members (students, teachers). These relationships are not universally valid: It is possible

to regard organisations as machines, but their members as creative individuals reined in by the machine and stunted in their development. Nevertheless, to assume that the image of educational organisations and that of their members could be permanently at odds would be to underestimate the power latent in the cultural dynamics of organisations (cf. Herbrechter and Schwankl 2009, p. 105). Specially significant here, of course, is that it is the organisation's members who conceive, spread and apply their images of it. Insofar as they do this, however, they are searching for some kind of (possibly common) orientation to guide their individual action, whether it be resistant or supportive. Upon this background it is apparent that what is important for an educational organisation is not so much the propagation and even enforcing of a particular image of the organisation, as the development of a common, solidly viable image that permits the members to channel their intentions and actions constructively towards common goals. In contrast to the formulation of a "vision", this sort of image is not arrived at by systematic voting processes, nor is it even explicitly formulated. It is an emergent phenomenon that is continually changing (cf. Schreyögg 2008, p. 339ff) and evades direct definition. The examples presented here were intended to show that each of the images combines desirable and less desirable aspects – a viable image is not a harmonious ideal, but one capable absorbing contradictions and conflicts. And finally, it is always flexible. Every new person joining the organisation, every new child in the school, contributes to its further development. The individual encounters the image as the expression of something advanced in its growth, greater, and realises his own part in it. In this way both image and human being (and organisation) are enabled to change. The use of figurative thinking in arriving at the conception of a school, then, involves rephrasing the Kolisko quotation we began with: The image of the school unites the "major laws" (regardless of whether they are thought of in a social or material, universal or temporal context) with the individual person and he or she unites him- or herself with them.

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