

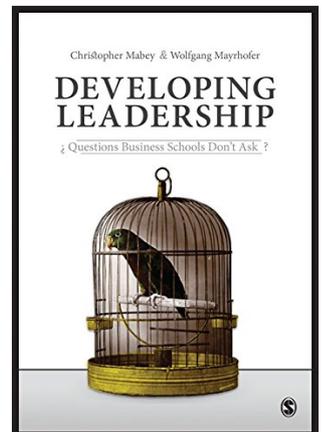
***Unplugged* - Book Review Essay : Questions a Book on ‘Questions Business Schools Don’t Ask’ Doesn’t dare to Ask**

Christopher MABEY & Wolfgang MAYRHOFER
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The 31 authors of this potpourri of 21 individual chapters discuss not so much the role of leadership development (to which the book's title refers) as questions business schools don't ask (which comprises its subtitle). The collection begins with the phrase 'business schools teach a mix of subjects' (page: 1), and to the insider that may appear to be true. To many, however, business schools teach a highly specific selection of narrow subjects dedicated to the 'science of making money' (Ross 1984; Gennaioli et al. 2015), or what the ideologues of Managerialism call competitive advantage and shareholder value, which is code for profit. When the outcomes of business teachings, that is, managers with MBAs and the like, collide with economic, environmental and social welfare, the collection suggests that 'as each month passes, it seems that new scandals emerge' (p. 1). But many questions go unasked, including:

- Do these business scandals, immoralities and outright business criminalities not have a very long history dating back to the 'East India Company' of the 17th and 18th centuries, when Great Britain started to 'subcontract imperialism to companies' (Dalrymple 2015; Micklethwait & Wooldridge 1996:35)?
- Are these really just 'scandals' or is this part of the functioning of capitalism?
- Do these scandals just 'emerge'?
- Are business schools not deeply involved in making these scandals (one of which recently mutated into a global financial crisis; GFC) possible?

These are some of the questions that the book prefers not to ask. To eliminate business school-trained CEOs and MBA-trained top managers from the crime scene, we are told that there is 'illegal behaviour and self-serving arrogance among public figures' (1). These are just 'public figures' – not corporate CEOs or business school graduates. Over the estimated 100 years of their existence, 'business schools [have become] assembly-line cash-cows [losing] some of their original ambition and promise to make leaders for society' (2). And yet some questions still remain unanswered:

- Do societies really need 'leaders'? If so, should our leaders be trained by business schools that teach the intricacies of making money?
- Are business schools the right places to be when focusing on the 'skills' (11) that those leaders require?
- Was training leaders for 'society' (!) ever the ambition of business ethics?
- Was (and is) the ambition of business schools to train a class of managerial functionalists (13) to make capitalism profitable while spreading its prime ideology of Managerialism (Enteman 1993)?

With that, the authors note, 'our contention is that three issues substantially contribute to the difficulties faced by business schools:

1. inadequate theorising about leadership;
2. a failure to nerve concerning the centrality of moral values to sound leadership; and
3. impoverished curriculum design when it comes to the teaching and learning about leadership...what kind of leader are you becoming?' (3).

We need go no further than these three issues to see that the present collection of chapters in this book is based on unmentioned and – worst of all – unquestioned assumptions, such as the notion that we inevitably need leadership. The authors do not stop to ask whether we actually do need it. What also fails to be asked is do we really want a society defined by authoritarian domination with leaders on top and a mass of followers beneath? The second assertion – and this is repeated frequently throughout the collection – is that

business schools are not part of the problem. The hidden subtext here is that we try to do good but occasionally 'we fail', and this argument takes precedence over the question of whether leadership can really have sound moral values, or whether it is itself immoral, especially in the business schools' understanding? There is hardly any moral philosopher between Socrates (470–399BC) and Singer (2015) who advocates sound leadership. These and many other questions are areas that the book declines to explore, despite its title. In order to deal with the above three aspects, the authors advocate 'critical research which is capable of surfacing unheard voices rather than reproducing the ideologies and power relations of the dominant elite' (7).

They also advocate system-stabilising critique, meaning critique from within business schools. By focusing on internal critique that finds its basis 'within' business schools, many avoid asking what is perhaps one of the key questions, namely what is the relationship between capitalism and business schools? Critical research on the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory is very different from merely 'surfacing unheard voices' (Horkheimer 1937; Klikauer 2014 & 2015), but reducing critique to a system-perfecting instrument also reflects the overall tone of the entire collection. Oblivious to its own ideological entrapment, which is exacerbated by the failure to question the *raison d'être* of business schools and their position in capitalism, the collection more often than not 'reproduces the ideologies [...] of the dominant elite' (7). Overall, it seeks to provide system theory-led stabilising correctives while presenting business schools as institutions that try to do good but unfortunately quite often fail. This assessment is supported by statements such as 'avoiding the danger of corporate capture' (9). Business schools are one of the prime tools that enhance corporate capture – through, for example, one of their favourite hobbyhorses: stakeholder theory (100). Just naming suppliers, customers, workers, shareholders and the like hardly makes a theory. Quite often, stakeholder models view society as a system while placing the company at the centre, as companies are the centre of society. Through this, however, society is suffocated inside stakeholder ideology. All this remains unquestioned in this work, which is defined by deceptions that are frequently repeated, such as 'so then, there are many factors which conspire against business schools fulfilling their original mission to be capitalism's conscience' (12).

Questions such as whether capitalism's conscience was ever intended to form part of the mission of business schools are never asked. Is capitalism's so-called conscience not found in the notion with adequate profit, capital is very bold? 'A certain 10 per cent will ensure its employment anywhere; 20 per cent will produce eagerness; 50 per cent, positive audacity; 100 per cent will make it capital ready to trample on all human laws; 300 per cent, and there is not a crime at which it will balk, nor a risk it will not run, even to the chance of its owner being hanged' (Klikauer 2014a:233). And are business schools not the prime training facilities through to make this possible? In reality, business schools are much more than 'part of a managerialist ideology' (15). The question of 'Can they?' is never mentioned. Nor is the question of whether they are 'just part of' the managerialist ideology. Another question is whether it is at all possible that business schools are one of the prime inventors and propagators of the hegemonic ideology of Managerialism, stretching well beyond, for example:

- Harvard Business Review
- The Academy of Management Journal
- The Academy of Management Review
- The California Management Review
- ASQ, etc.

as the favourite myth-creating flagships worthy of A-star ratings (Fleck 2013). Well in line with the overall apologetic perspective of the collection are the

'three risks facing business schools [among which is] selling students short' (16; cf. Hil 2015). The constantly propagated myth of the 'do good' business schools surrounded by evil forces becomes at times overwhelming. Nonetheless, the important fact remains that business schools – unnoticed by the authors – sell high exchange-value degrees using the linear formula of 'degree-equals-\$\$\$'. And indeed, business schools are places where 'instrumental student meets career-minded academic' (12) but they also train future managers in the latest managerial buzzwords (www.atrinxnet.com/bs-generator) – the 'bs' in the internet link standing for buzzwords, not bullshit, or at least one might hope that this is the case. That all this leads to the 'decay of public language' (Watson 2003) is yet another question that the authors do not ask, but the ignorance-is-bliss attitude adopted in the collection, or – to put it in more philosophical terms – the 'veil of ignorance' as US philosopher John Rawls (1921-2002) called it, is on rare occasions broken. These are the exceptional signposts of flickers of truth shining through the ideological fog:

'by propagating ideologically inspired amoral theories, often under the rubric of leadership, business ethics have removed any sense of moral responsibility from their students' (18).

This is one of the rare and thoroughly true sentences in the collection. Business schools train people to take on a moral attention deficit disorder (MADD) (Klikauer 2013:106). This sets the overall tone for the subsequent chapters. Chapter 2 begins with 'as the global financial crisis unfolded' (31) – it just 'unfolded', like an umbrella and quite miraculously. Business schools have not contributed to that by training MADD accountants, MADD CEOs and MADD senior managers. We tried so hard to be good but very unfortunately 'business schools lost their way' (31) is the oft-repeated ideological mantra of the book. Fortunately, the collection – on a few occasions – still gets it right when, for example, noting that 'leadership, as traditionally envisaged, is a key part of the problems we are now facing, rather than the solution' (35). Almost inevitably, however, this is neither further explained nor analysed, and nor does it lead to any further questioning. This is the clever sales pitch of ideology, as ideology always works by mixing truth with fantasy given that virtually all ideologies – even Managerialism and neo-liberalism – have some element of truth in them.

Nonetheless, the problem remains: what does all this mean for business schools and why does this not lead to any further questioning of these institutions? Instead of that, one is presented with laughable statements such as 'I find the reference to the missing moral dimension of particular interest' (36). The author of this chapter – as is perhaps perhaps rather typical of the entire collection – manages to mention Locke and Spender but goes on to refer their 'challenge to Newtonian paradigm' (38), not their most relevant book on business schools (Locke & Spender 2011; Klikauer 2013a). Symptomatically, this is another chapter that looks in all the wrong places.

The same criticism can be levelled at the call for the aforementioned system theory and cybernetics (47), as if the function of a standard household refrigerator could tell one something about how society, capitalism and, above all, business schools operate. This is the mythical belief that through 'steering systems [and] cybernetic feedback loop [it is believed that] order emerges' (48). Perhaps that is what the collection pines for: order. However, the unasked question remains: do we want to live in a society, in universities and in business schools that create the intellectual mutations depicted in the order of the fridge?

Strangely, system theory's favourite term, 'equilibrium', is missing too. More often than not, this term is used to indicate an order establishing a balance between parts of society so that society comes to a standstill, thus cementing forms of domination and the current status quo with all the pathologies that come with it. Positive social change, rebellion and revolution are simply 'system engineered' out of the picture; 'order emerges' (48). They become impossible as

society is asphyxiated – just like a refrigerator is asphyxiated inside a self-balancing system. This is the much acclaimed ~~hallucinogenic wet dream of the fridge-driven social engineer~~. Perhaps the task of business schools and the writers of books on ‘questions business schools don’t ask’ is to make living inside the ‘society-fridge’ normal so that the ‘cold intimacies of emotional capitalism’ (Illouz 2007) appear as the naturally determined ‘order’.

Perhaps in a propagandistic misbelief that ‘repetition equals truth’, again and again one reads statements like these: ‘business schools have become largely incapable of fulfilling their original purpose of benefiting society’ (50). The hallucinogenic deception that business schools somehow need to be rescued is ‘sexed up’ (Blair 2010) with lines like ‘research in business schools is not real science, but only everyday wisdom cloaked as scientific output’ (53) – if it only were wisdom (*philosophia*).

An unexpected highlight is Ng’s chapter on exile workers in Hong Kong, which presents next to nothing on business schools and the subject of the book. Contributing to the mythology of the book is the ideology of ‘economic citizenship’ (73), sometimes also passed off as ‘corporate citizenship’. These must be citizens of a dictatorship, as the most evil-ish D-word – democracy – is suspiciously absent from the entire collection. The much-acclaimed leaders of society have, according to this collection, nothing to do with democracy. Perhaps the D-word remains a deeply feared term for the writers of ‘developing leaders’ (the collection’s title). Perhaps these leaders are not at all meant to be democratic leaders. Instead, they are engaged – just as business schools are – in ‘the search for a superior justification for selfishness’ (75) even though it might just be democracy, collective cooperation and altruism – feared words in business schools and books on business schools – that are important to us and not selfishness. Perhaps it is democracy, collective cooperation and altruism that make us human (Klikauer 2012).

The collection also includes ‘rapporteurs’ at the end of each section largely summing up what was already said. In the first instance, the author rehearses the ideology that ‘every ten years or so an ethical crisis or incidence occurs which results in businesses and corporations at least paying lip service to their interest in ethics’ (79). This can only occur in the highly selective memory of a business school’s academic – perhaps because of decade-long intellectual hibernations. It blends out the ongoing lies, deceptions, immoralities and business crimes committed in the form of:

- Lockheed (bribery), Bhopal (poison gas), Nestle (baby killer), etc.;
- the corporate standard of the uninterrupted hiding of cancerous facts as in the cases of asbestos and tobacco’s 100 million deaths (Benson & Kirsch 2010);
- more recently, and this is less than a decade ago, there was the GFC; but even more recently there was:
 - Volkswagen’s emissions number fiddling;
 - ‘Exxon’s Global Warming Facts Hiding Mission’ (Krauss 2015);
 - Chevron paying only AUS\$248 tax (this is not a typo!) on \$1.7b profit in Australia (Chenoweth 2015);
 - BHP’s toxic sludge in Brazil (Reuters 2015);
- and all that was in between.

Unfortunately, awareness of all this – on the part of, for example, corporatewatch.org, www.thecorporation.com, SumOfUs.org, change.org, secure.avaaz.org, popularresistance.org, dissentmagazine.org, www.counterpunch.org, www.truth-out.org, inthesetimes.org, etc. – does not seem to come from ‘spirituality at work and spiritual leadership [and] the use of spiritual methodologies such as meditation’ (80-81).

Perhaps not even reading the *Journal of Management, Spirituality and Religion* (82) can make one understand this, but maybe it has something to do with Upton Sinclair, who once noted, 'it is difficult to get a man to understand something, when his salary depends upon his not understanding it!' Conceivably, the above-quoted spiritual-religious inclinations (80-81) also prevent one from understanding the following: 'I have so far not seen any major or bestselling management or organisation behaviour textbook having a chapter or section on spirituality' (82). Superstition, spirituality and religion supplied ideology to feudalism (Dawkins 2015). Today, these are insufficient to camouflage capitalism's contradictions, sustain domination and prevent emancipation. Modern capitalism demands modern and, above all, realistic ideologies that are rationally constructed and contain a higher level of consistency compared with religion. This is what creates ideologies such as, for example, Managerialism and neo-liberalism.

Instead of spirituality, perhaps 'business schools need to question the growth paradigm' (87). Just do not watch 'www.growthbusters.org', as otherwise you might realise that business schools are prime instruments for encouraging relentless growth. However, you might also realise that it is not the 'increase in crime that results from increased material wealth' (91) but the increases in global inequality and an unequal distribution of wealth that creates crime. Otherwise, perhaps wealthy countries such as Iceland and Norway would be hotspots for crime instead of the relatively unequal USA, Mexico and South Africa, where it has become rampant (Reiman & Leighton 2013).

In a similar way, Parry and Fiskerud ask, 'can leadership be value-free?' (99) – a question largely answered by Kant around the year 1780 with his 'Three Critiques' (1781, 1788, 1790). Adorno (1976) answered it again about 40 years ago. Perhaps it also does not help when an author argues that there is an perceived 'the over-emphasis [of] American corporations [in the general business press on] maximising shareholder value [while at the same page saying] businesses will still have to make money' (103). It is reminiscent of the collection's overall delirious belief in the adage 'make money but please be kind'. The collection manages to become even more problematic at this point, however. The chapter's hallucinogenic belief in 'moral corporations' (99) is not really assisted by the example used, 'Cadbury in the UK' (105), as the much-acclaimed moral business leaders of Cadbury sold the company to Kraft. This came with a lovely corporate social responsibility statement on not closing the manufacturing plant in the UK, but this is exactly what Kraft did to the ethical business leaders of Cadbury (BBC 2010). None of this appears in the collection. True to ideology, however, the collection hides contradictions, asks no questions, avoids investigation, refrains from reading newspapers and listening to the radio (BBC). The book continues to ask all the wrong questions. In other cases, it simply avoids – often rather painfully – to ask any questions at all.

Asking the wrong questions or – more frequently – not asking any questions at all appears to be a constant stance on the part of these authors. Another example of asking the wrong question come in the form of 'do business schools create conformers rather than leaders?' (108), especially given that this is partially answered with the response that 'managers work under a contract of employment which obliges them to comply' (110). Hannah Arendt (1994) comprehensively demolished this sort of 'I was just following orders' excuse, framed as 'working under contractual obligations'.

However, one is kept wondering what 'capitalism as a political, as well as economic, order was neglected in the twentieth century' (115) means when the 20th century began with Marxian economics, continued with Keynesian social-democratic economics and ended with Hayek's neo-liberal catechism of the free-market economy. The chapter ends with the educational philosopher Dewey (118), but not – as Dewey did so pointedly – by linking education to democracy.

Perhaps only by blending out Dewey's educational philosophy (Dewey 1916; Noddings 2015) can one conclude with banal platitudes such as 'I also trust business schools and their students will contribute to advancing professional rigor' (119). Only by hiding what the educational philosopher Dewey really said and by reframing a relative side issue of Dewey's educational philosophy can his work be (mis)appropriated. This would sadden anyone with an understanding of educational philosophy (e.g. Robinson 2006, 2010, 2013).

The next, also philosophical, section does not reference Aristotle at all while discussing Aristotle's philosophy. The author seems to have avoided reading Aristotle's actual philosophy and does not even delve into it. What Aristotle's philosophy was about is rather different from what writers on business ethics make it out to be (Klikauer 2010, 2012a & 2014a). The ideological outcome of such an exercise is rather predictable. To ideologically reformulate Aristotle's philosophy, all one needs is to do is select a relative side issue and reframe it so that it suits the hegemonic discourse on business school academics. Hence, one gets: 'for Aristotle the economic problem was that of optimising good. The issues here are in defining good' (125). This is entirely untrue, as Aristotle is very clear about what is morally good and what is a morally good person. The problem is that by Aristotle's actual definition, virtually nobody in business and in business schools is good. We should talk about Aristotle's conception of 'happiness as a state of self-sufficiency' (126) rather than his actual philosophy of virtue ethics.

Unlike Aristotle, the Nazi philosopher Heidegger (132) is much better suited to business (Klikauer 2015a) as for Heidegger and for the SS, 'death matters' (134). Heidegger's ideologically motivated 'crypto-philosophy' does not truly stand for 'the significance and urgency of personal responsibility' (138). Heidegger's crypto-philosophical convolutions, which Holocaust victim and exiled philosopher Adorno called 'fascist to the core', were not about personal responsibility. Heidegger himself wanted to be the leader of the leader, Adolf Hitler. Heidegger did not assume personal responsibility; instead, he wanted to be responsible for the philosophical underpinnings of Adolf Hitler. One wonders where the personal responsibility in Heidegger's 'inner truth and greatness of this [Nazi] movement' is. Finally, where is his personal responsibility for his very personal actions to make German universities 'judenrein' [the ethnic cleansing of Jews]? Although hardly men of spirituality, both Hitler and Heidegger were of Catholic religion. This chapter repeats the aforementioned 'no major bestselling with a spirituality chapter' perhaps because not even businesspeople believe that 'spirituality can help them and their business' (152). Business is, as management super Guru Peter Drucker once noted, a rational game which any donkey can win provided he is ruthless enough (Magretta 2012). With or without spirituality, however, there is:

the excessive pay of vice chancellors offering a very real demonstration of how senior academics mimic the values and practices of senior business executives [who express] cynicism and an instrumental approach to ethics in business (153).

This is what business is about, what business schools teach and what Managerialism says rather than 'the mystical, divine or transcendent' (155). Staying with the truth for a while, 'for Slovenian philosopher Zizek [all this] means questioning the ideological workings of the allegedly post-ideological' (172) world of business. However, the book on 'questions business schools don't ask' avoids asking about the ideology of business schools. It does not ask, for example, why business schools' knowledge is sold as being value-free while simultaneously the term 'value creation' – the Orwellian Newspeak term (Watson 2015) for profit – has been the all-defining element known as the 'shareholder principle' ever since 'Dodge vs. Ford Motor Company' (1919) invented the much-acclaimed shareholder principle.

The collection delves even deeper into philosophy when it notes that 'classical Greek philosophy and the learning journey [starts with] business schools [that] are places of learning' (178) – if they only were 'places of learning' rather than conditioning institutions for Managerialism's elite trained in past and present fads and fashions (Abrahamson 1996; HR 2010). What counts is not *philosophia*, the 'love of wisdom', but 'learning outcomes' (178). Having already triggered all the wrong ideas, next we are offered a glimpse of 'Greek society prior to the time of Plato' (179). Well, the time before Plato in 'Greek philosophy' (the chapter's title) is associated with a towering name in philosophy: Socrates. But instead of mentioning the potentially business school-damaging philosophies of Socrates, we are told 'the philosopher is in danger of being marginalised as mad or politically dangerous' (182). In fact, the philosopher is not in danger at all – perhaps business schools are? Instead of asking such questions, the authors offer an ideological reformulation so that the potential danger of philosophy for business schools is eliminated, or so that philosophy is made to appear to be in support of business and business schools. This is the ideological task of Baritz' 'Servants of Power' (1960) of what is euphemistically termed 'business ethics' – a tautology. But this moves even further away from the danger of Greek philosophy (and particularly Socrates).

Moral philosophy is further weakened by one of Managerialism's all-time favourite ideologies, namely corporate social responsibility, which in real corporations is inconveniently – or perhaps tellingly – located in corporate PR departments. Unsurprisingly, the chapter declines to grapple with difficult questions about 'key terms and phrases in recent decades (that) include impact, excellence, and performance' (187). What this means in the light of Greek philosophy is not discussed either. Despite the collection's claim, today's business school isn't 'a community of scholars and teachers or *universitas magistrorum et scholarium* [that] inform the whole person including the spirituality of our students [designed] to unfold...one's spiritual nature' (189, 190, 192).

Unsurprisingly, the rapporteur notes, 'I have been teaching meditation for many years I learned something' (203). Perhaps one can really learn a lot through teaching meditation at business schools. What one might not learn is what role business schools play in sustaining capitalism. Another thing one does not learn is the pathological impact of business schools and business school-trained MBAs on the environment, human wellbeing and society once they emerge from their training. It seems that teaching meditation at a business school does not seem to lead to an understanding of these connections.

Eventually, however, readers also encounter the single most unexpected, and rather exquisite, highlight of the entire collection. It is Rickard Grassman's chapter on 'were business schools complicit in the financial crisis and can classical French literature help?' This chapter is a shining testimony to the old truth that young PhD students produce the best writing, perhaps especially when they are written by a PhD candidate from an engineering faculty – as appears to be the case here – remaining somewhat uninfected by the ideological virus of Managerialism. Grassman does not write ideology (Klikauer 2015b) and he does not camouflage contradictions such as those between business school teachings and the pathologies of corporations and capitalism. He does not sustain domination; he challenges it. He does not work against emancipation; he works for it.

Based on sound, in-depth empirical interviews on the GFC with bankers, Grassman highlights their pathological immoralities and their MADD. Perhaps his chapter can be summed up in the words of Andrew Haldane, Chief Economist at the Bank of England. Grassman's banker, business schools and global financial capitalism have learned their lessons from the GFC (Luyendijk 2015). It is, as Haldane says: 'that in the end there is very little they will not get away with'. In other words, we can carry on with business as usual, making huge profits and

receiving stratospheric payments, and when things go wrong we can offload the consequences – trillions of dollars of damage to society – onto the taxpayer by disguising it in the ideology of ‘too big to jail’, or was it ‘too big to fail’? To make all this possible and support what is still going to come from the world of global financial ‘mis’-management, business school graduates will carry on. However, given Haldane’s ‘we can get away with it’ lesson, the following is a truly amazing statement: ‘business schools are known for their ability to produce impressive research’ (220). This ‘impressive research’ is research for the selected few – not for the benefit of society. Business school’s ‘impressive research’ is also all too often financed in two ways:

1. Corporate financed business research that is generally framed as ‘industry partnerships’, ‘external funding’, etc.
2. Publicly funded research through the state or internal university grants that are commonly framed as ‘merit-based funding’, ‘competitive funding’, etc.

Success in either of these often leads to immediate promotion in cash-starved universities in which a 20-something-year-old Albert Einstein writing on a non-commercialisable theory of relativity today would no longer stand a chance. In the ‘research-outcomes-for-cash’ case, researchers almost secure any position they apply for thanks to the money they command, in a set-up reminiscent of the ‘oldest business in the world’. One is reminded of a fat colonialist tossing a handful of coins from a boat so that Indian boys can scramble for a coin. Scrambling for the academic coin means ‘playing the game’, and more often than not, weeks, if not months, of writing applications and filling in mind-numbing forms while partaking in the denigrating spectacle in which a few win but many lose. For this embarrassing pageant, the managerial university even employs specialist ‘application helpers’ with (I am sure) fanciful titles on their ‘business’ cards (Aspromourgos 2012).

Above all this, however, one might like to suggest the following: a collection on ‘questions business schools don’t ask’ should also consider, for example, Lynd’s ‘Knowledge For What?’ (1939) and Shlensky’s ‘Management Education for What?’ (1945). Perhaps ‘impressive research’ comes about when business school academics publish the same old thing over and over again. This is what our masters call ‘a track record’. Instead of asking the right questions, in this work one is given pure ideology: ‘business schools provide a valuable opportunity to elicit and explore meanings of mutual respect’ (229). Really? Do business school graduates respect others, often called ‘underlings’? Do they respect their customers, trade unions and local communities? More questions that are not even asked. The same is true of the following:

- Is this the respect the managers of the East India Company showed for the people of India?
- Is this the respect the MBA-trained managers at Volkswagen showed for people buying a diesel car?
- Is this the respect business schools and their entourage of ideologically motivated business consultants show for workers when factories are offshored, outsourced, downsized or simply closed down?

These are just some of the very few questions that should be asked. Instead, one is left wondering whether it is at all possible that ‘the management techniques enshrined in functionalist’ (232) models might assist in disrespecting people, especially those derogatively labelled ‘underlings’ and ‘subordinates’ by those managers often trained in business schools. One might even ask whether business school management techniques and functionalism ensure that their own ideological propagators – those who work in business – write collections that make a point of avoiding such questions. And yet a book that claims to write

about 'questions business schools don't ask' should be asking these questions. Is avoiding all those questions the epitome of ideology?

It might just be possible that this book sustains the business school ideology while claiming to 'ask questions business schools don't ask'. Overlooking serious questions while sustaining that ideology is a decision that can be shored up through the cybernetic system of 'career progression, promotion and salary levels, further reinforced by business school rankings' (232). The adage 'do what you can, but watch your back' (235) may be a wise one, as the seminal insight into the inner workings of a corporation in Schrijvers' *The Way of the Rat* (2004) has shown most exquisitely. One might even be tempted to suggest that *The Way of the Rat* is replicated inside business's prime teaching facility: the business school. Against the backdrop of much of what actually happens inside corporations and business schools on a daily basis, sentences like 'marketing the MBA as a unique journey starting with a vision of beauty' (240) appear utterly delirious or – alternatively – downright ideological. Similarly, one wonders about the intellectual and/or ideological value of statements such as 'MBA students with different backgrounds and serving different environments will need to pick up different skill sets' (250).

Who would have thought of that? Living in the thought-asphyxiating bubble of business seems to have very serious consequences when authors state that 'it came as something of a shock to learn that I knew very little about critical thinking in my mid-fifties when I retreated to business schools' (268). The reader should clearly not expect to learn this in business schools, nor by reading collections on 'questions business schools don't ask'. One can hardly learn critical thinking when, for example, the GFC is presented as merely being a 'disaster' (281) that naturally came upon us or, for those with spiritual-religious inclinations, descended from the heavens. Perhaps the GFC has something to do with the unquestioned 'white elephants in the room' – capitalism, the corruption of democracy through corporate mass media and our current master ideologies as propagated by business schools: Managerialism and neo-liberalism's ideologically motivated deregulation. Even the former chairman of the US Federal Reserve and one of the main demagogues of neo-liberalism, Alan Greenspan, admits as much in a private McNamara-like 'end-of-career' moment of truth-telling (Blight & Lang 2005; Feldner & Vighi 2015).

In order to keep the prevailing hegemonic ideology of business schools alive and protected from the truth, however, the author of the final chapter states that 'Grassman's own ideological perspective is provocative' (282). This is ideology at its best. The only chapter in the entire book that removes the fog of ideology is labelled 'ideological' and 'provocative'. Seeking to remove the fog of ideology steaming up from business schools is mirrored back onto Grassman to make it appear as those writing ideology were not the 'servants of power' but Grassman himself, he who has the audacity to call business schools what they are: deeply ideological institutions. The hidden subtext beneath 'Grassman's own ideology' is that he is ideological – and that that is not true of the servants of the business schools. These assertions are a fine example of how ideology works (Therborn 1988; Rehmann 2013).

Sadly, and somewhat surprisingly, the collection ends with no conclusion. As a consequence, readers will not read about 'what can we learn from the collection'. In any case, with the exception of Grassman's chapter, which demystifies business schools and exposes their ideology, providing valuable theoretical insights into business schools, the answer is not much. The collection ends with a short chapter on the 'genesis' of the book, stating the fundamental theoretical insight on 'the questions business schools never ask': 'the proof of the pudding is in the eating' (292). Marvellous! Anyone wishing to understand the 'questions business schools don't ask' would be better advised to read Locke and

Spender's superb work on 'Confronting Managerialism: How the Business Elite and Their Schools Threw Our Lives Out of Balance' (2011).

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