POP-MANAGEMENT:
TALES OF PASSION, POWER AND PROFIT

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ABSTRACT. This paper analyzes the phenomenon of popular management literature, proposing a reflection about its role in the managers' subjectivity. Pop-management literature comprises books and magazines produced by the business media for fast consumption. Adopting the psychoanalytical approach to fairy tales as a perspective, we conducted a content analysis of two success stories published in the business media. We observed that the structure and key elements of fairy tales are present in these stories. We argue that the success stories help to reduce tensions and mitigate frustrations, supposedly offering answers for anxieties and professional problems. We also argue that continued access to these texts might keep individuals linked to their power fantasies and therefore might affect their development and maturing processes.

INTRODUCTION

In a newspaper article, a baffled Jonathan Myerson complained about the invasion of the adult world by "Pottermania":

> Walking on the train yesterday, stumbling my way to the restaurant car and back, I could count five people reading *Harry Potter* books. They were not children, but adults reading children's books. It looked as if the brains of adults had been affected by some strange plague and they had gone back to their childhood, looking for their toys and color books. This

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might have been comprehensible. It would make more sense If people had, of their own will, leaped back into a second childhood. But those were adults with credit cards, laptops and charts, on their way back from business meetings. They chose, nevertheless, a children's book as their reading (Myerson, 2001, p. 10).

Myerson might have been a little less surprised had he paid attention to what executives usually spend their time reading: biographies of celebrity managers and success stories told by business magazines over and over again. Could the similarities between fairy tales and the popular management (pop-management) literature be nothing more than a coincidence? Maybe they are not, as we shall discuss ahead.

In this article, based on the psychoanalytic approach to fairy tales (Bettelheim, 1976; Kohut, 1971, 1977, 1991; Von Franz, 1996) we analyze two success stories published by a leading business magazine. The first one centers on IBM, emphasizing its CEO, Lou Gerstner (Kirkpatrick, 1999; Slater, 2000). The second one tells the story of Nissan, similarly highlighting its CEO, Carlos Ghosn (Dawson & Prasso, 2001; Fulford, 2000; Taylor III, 1999; Thornton, 1999; Vassalo, 2000).

This examination of stories fits in the tradition of narrative analysis, which has been gaining importance in organization studies (see Czarniawska, 2002). For instance, Beech and McCalman (1997) examined the role of narrative in fitting individuals into groups and Jameson (2001) discussed the importance of collective building of stories to attribute meaning to the past, present and future. Other texts examined the narratives as vehicles for the building of organizational culture (e.g., O'Connor, 2002) or discussed the influence of biographies and success stories in organizational life (Alvarez & Merchan, 1992).

This article discusses how the hero stories disseminated by the business media may affect the behavior of individuals in organizations. The popular business press is one of the agents that influence the social construction of reality (Chen & Meindl, 1991). In the case of hero stories, the business media resorts to fairy-tale structures and to images cherished from childhood to build narratives aimed to managers.

To analyze these narratives and their meanings, we draw on the psychoanalysis of fairy tales (Bettelheim, 1976; Von Franz, 1996). We find that these meanings are closely related to the construction of the individuals' psychic world. We use the psychoanalysis of the self (Kohut, 1971, 1977, 1991) to examine how these narratives help shape the behavior of individuals in organizations.

This article is structured in four parts, after this introduction. The first part presents the structure of fairy tales and its components. The second part analyzes the success stories of Lou Gerstner and Carlos Ghosn based on the psychoanalytical approach to fairy tales. The third part discusses the relation between fairy tales for adults and motivational texts. In the same section, we also consider the impact of these texts on self and identity's development. The fourth part offers a synthesis of the paper and gives directions for future research.

FAIRY TALES: A PSYCHOANALYTICAL APPROACH

The Role of Fairy Tales in the Development of Children

Traditionally, organization studies has incorporated sociological notions derived from functionalist lines, which have an instrumental view of the social reality, or from lines based on the classical views of political science, such as Weberian readings and Marxism. Weberian readings analyze organizations according to their bureaucratic model and the way in which this model conditions the behavior of individuals and groups. The Marxist approach, on other hand, tends to associate group and organization behavior with the social and economic conditioners.

Freud's sociological works offer a counterpoint to these notions, by considering the individual and collective psyche (Motta, 2000). Based on these works of Freud, it is possible to develop a psychoanalytical approach to organizations (e.g. Enriquez, 2000a; 2000b; Gabriel & Carr, 2002; Kets de Vries & Miller, 1984; Morgan, 1986; Pagès, 1987; Pauchant, 1996; Schneider & Dunbar, 1992). In this article, we engage the work of Bettelheim (1976) and Von Franz (1996), in addition to the classic work of Propp (1968) on the structure of the children's stories, and the psychoanalysis of the self by Kohut (1971, 1977, 1991).

In early childhood, we receive stimuli that are fundamental to the development of identity and personality. At this stage, we deal with a myriad of feelings, usually related to the process of individuation and sexual definition. To overcome the emotional tension caused by these processes, children need ideas that help them organize their feelings and build adequate behavior patterns. These ideas and patterns get conveyed effectively not through ethical and abstract concepts but through situations that are perceived by the child as being correct and meaningful.

In a study on early childhood, Bettelheim (1976) highlighted the importance of fairy tales in the process of emotional development and maturing. Fairy tales are particularly appropriate in this case, for they deal with universal human problems that worry children and that also refer to the ego in germination, fostering its development. To Bettelheim, fairy tales, since they reproduce essential and universal human dilemmas, offer the child elements that help to understand what is going on in his/her unconscious, and help to build self-control and to face the psychological problems of growth. Among these problems one might mention narcissistic frustration, the Oedipus dilemma, sibling rivalry and dependence.

Apart from that, fairy tales show ways to build a feeling of individuality, of self-esteem and of moral obligation. This is due to the fact that fairy tales mirror with great clarity the basic structures of the human psyche: they are the purest and simplest expression of the psychological processes of the collective unconscious, being associated to the archetypes identified by Carl Gustav Jung (Von Franz, 1996). Moreover, fairy tales are not a creation of modern mass-production society, but are a universal heritage and have been retold through the centuries by members of the most diverse cultures.

Aiming to clarify the role of fairy tales in the emotional development of children, Bettelheim (1976) studied their fundamental components, starting by differentiating them from myths and fables. Bettelheim acknowledged that in most cultures there is no dividing line between fairy tales and myths. Though he admitted that they have much in common, he pointed out some differences that he believes to be fundamental. In a myth, heroes have super-human characteristics and live fantastic events that would not be experienced by the ordinary mortal. In a fairy tale, however, though situations are frequently unusual and unlikely, they are told in a

casual, everyday manner, as if they might befall any ordinary person. Apart from that, the hero may have occasional magic powers, but these cease to be mentioned at the end of the story when he/she takes up his true identity.

Bettelheim also pointed out that a myth usually unveils a symbolic dilemma and presents moral demands to mortals. Also, myths often present a pessimistic perspective and tend to be tragic at the end. They differ, however, from a fable, which is an admonitory tale, and which raises anxiety and prevents us from acting in ways described as immoral or harmful. A fairy tale, unlike a myth or a fable, never directly confronts us, nor does it openly tells us which way to make our choices. Its role is not to demand anything, but to create an optimistic perspective, offering hope for the future with the promise of a happy ending.

Thus, when one wants to show a child the importance of working, the fairy tale "Three Little Pigs" is more effective than La Fontaine's "The Ant and the Cricket." That is because the latter explicitly affirms a moral truth and leaves no room for imagination. A child will develop greater empathy with the pig who saves his brothers from the wolf by building up a solid brick house than with the ant who stored food in its working summer days.

Fairy tales convey a message essential to the formation of the ego: the struggle against the difficulties in life is part of human existence; however, a firm attitude in unexpected – and sometimes unfair – situations will lead to victory. Additionally, the guarantee of a happy ending plays an important role in emotional stabilization once it makes the frustrations experienced in real life easier to suffer.

As they tell these stories to their children, parents encourage them to borrow some fantastic hopes about the future without misleading them with the suggestion that these fantasies are real. Besides, characters in fairy tales are not ambivalent: the polarizations between good and evil, false and true, and fair and unfair, just to name a few, help in the making of decisions for the development of personality.

To Bettelheim, fantasy is intrinsic to childhood and every child ceases believing in magic as he or she grows – with the exception of those who have had too much disappointment in life to trust its rewards. Held (1980) complemented this position by demonstrating

that the nature of the fantastic is different from a child's and an adult's perspective. Adults tend to get enthusiastic over everything that breaks the accepted rules. Children do not have these rules as a perspective, which makes them accept the transformation of a pumpkin into a carriage as something natural.

The Structure of Fairy Tales

According to Bettelheim (1976), fairy tales present a structure that buttresses their psychological role. They are composed of the following elements: (a) the problem, (b) liberation from deep despair or the escape from a great danger, and (c) the happy ending. Von Franz (1996), similarly, outlined the following structure for a fairy tale: (a) the opening (presenting of a problem), (b) the peripatetics (the ups and downs of the story), (c) the climax (the turning point of the narration), and (d) the conclusion (happy ending). Propp (1968) argued that, apart from having a fixed structure, fairy tales also make use of a rather limited repertoire of actions. In a minute analysis of these stories, Propp managed to identify 31 typical actions, which he calls "functions" (see Table 1).

Propp rigorously analyzed a number of fairy tales and concluded that they are all made of a combination of these functions, with just some changes in the names of the characters. In well-defined, although not always rigid, steps, the hero always has to face some sort of challenge, then fights enemies and wins, guaranteeing a happy ending.

Script-writer Christopher Vogler seems to have reached a similar conclusion after reading *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* by the mythologist Joseph Campbell (1972). Vogler used his reading of the book to write a practical guide to script-writing, which later gave origin to his influencing work, *The Writer's Journey* (Vogler, 1998).

Reading Campbell's work, Vogler understood the basis of the popularity of some American movies: people are attracted to stories that talk directly to their unconscious (Oricchio, 2002). Thus, "the heroic quest" would be present in many blockbusters such, as *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*.

TABLE 1
Functions of Fairy Tales

#	Description
I. Introductory Sequence	
1	Family member leaves family; the hero is introduced
2	Interdiction – don't do X
3	Interdiction is violated – hero does X anyway
4	Villain – reconnaissance of hero
5	Villain gets information about hero
6	Villain attempts to deceive hero with trickery
7	Hero submits to trickery – complicity
II. Body of the Story	
8	Villain causes harm or injury through villainy; villain carries off a victim, the hero or the desired magical object, which must be retrieved.
8a	A member of the hero's family lacks something, or wants something
9	Lack is made known to the hero
10	Hero agrees to counteraction
11	Hero leaves home
III. Donor Sequence (Magic Agent Obtained)	
12	Hero is tested/questioned
13	Hero reacts
14	Hero receives a magical agent/object that helps in quest
15	Transfer to place where the lack is to be found
16	Combat with villain
17	Hero is branded
18	Villain is defeated
19	Lack is liquidated – object of the quest is obtained by the hero
IV. Hero's Return	
20	Hero sets off for home
21	Hero is pursued
22	Rescued from pursuit (tale often ends here, but can continue)
23	Hero arrives home and is not recognized
24	False hero presents claims of true hero
25	Difficult task is set
26	Task is resolved
27	True hero is recognized
28	False hero is unmasked
29	Epiphany of true hero – new appearance/transfiguration
30	Villain is punished
31	Marriage and rule of true hero

Source: Adapted from Propp (1968).

One should remark that Propp's formulation is rooted in structuralism. As such, it does not contemplate the complexity of psychodynamics that we intend to deal with further in this paper. On the other hand, we believe that it can be used as a reference to identify the structure of fairy tales embedded in texts published by the business media.

SUCCESS STORIES: FAIRY TALES FOR ADULTS

Power Fantasies

Power fantasies begin in childhood and are ever-present in an individual's story (Held, 1980). Following the psychoanalytical perspective, we can say that we grow and become mature, yet the power fantasies still drive our actions. These dreams are a by-product of specific historical and sociological conditions.

Power fantasies in organizations are related to explicit forms of domination. With the prevalence of the bureaucratic model and a well-defined hierarchy, having power meant reaching a position of command (power equals formal authority). In this context, the fulfillment of power fantasies was out of reach for most members in the organization. Therefore, a usual desire was that of finding a way of overcoming oppression.

Over the last two decades, changes in the corporate world have produced a new social contract. This contract was established between managers and employees and was based on commitment and participation. To guarantee its functioning, a set of rules, patterns, rituals and practices was developed, to allow for the control of behavior and attitudes (Motta, Vasconcelos & Wood, 1993). Thus, managerial positions kept on being out of reach for most but explicit oppression diminished and employees were invited to take part in the power fantasies of managers.

Gradually, managerial rhetoric went from being a monopoly of those at the head of organization to being something everyone could share. In this context, some tendencies emerged: the creation and use of success stories, the celebration of heroes and winners in change processes, and the popularization of the clichés of pop-management literature. All of these tendencies seem to contribute to transform the corporate world into a "magic", symbol intensive universe (Leikola & Wood, 1999).

Thus, the individual's subjectivity and psychological life were "absorbed" by organizations, making "management through affection" as well as the "management of passions" usual managerial practices (Enriquez, 2000a). Replacing the traditional bureaucratic control, there emerged control through the feeling of love, which fosters identification with, and fusion with, a "fascinating being" who announces that all can be gods "in his image" (Motta, 2000). The fascinating beings in this case are, of course, the organizations themselves.

To Freitas (2000) corporations increasingly assimilate human subjectivity. Therefore, individuals are being encouraged to project their power fantasies into the organizations. This kind of projection creates in the individual the psychological expectation that he or she can be as great and as omnipotent as the organizations are, provided he or she becomes a part of them and shares their ideals.

Thus, there is a greater attempt to convey to the individual the idea that he or she can also be a "winner" and a "hero" (Enriquez, 2000b). For Freitas (2000), this satisfies one of the chief unconscious fantasies of individuals: the coming together, once again, of one's desires of plenitude and perfection with one's ideal ego, which starts to be formulated in childhood.

In organizations, hero stories and fantasies are increasingly usual and seem to alleviate employees' psychological tensions. Apart from that, there is a group of fantasies of victories and heroism that become part of the official story of organizations, being part of the nucleus of the "manageable organization" (Gabriel, 1995), in which fantasies can become tools for the management of culture and meanings.

Fairy Tales for Adults

Analyzing success stories present in pop-management literature, we found that some of them seem to be part of such "manageable organizations". These are "fairy tales for adults" insofar as they help promote the sharing of these fantasies and, as a result, reinforce the process of the "management of passions and subjectivity" within organizations.

Fairy tales for adults are narratives similar to fairy tales encountered in early childhood, both in their structure and in their

typical content. This can be seen from the analysis of some articles in popular business media, including magazines such as *Forbes*, *Fortune* and *Business Week*, and *Exame* (Brazil's most influent business magazine). Fairy tales have already been used more directly in the pop-management literature. In the book, *"Goldilocks on Management: 27 Revisionist Fairy Tales for Serious Managers,"* Mayer and Mayer (1999) used classic fairy tales to analyze management principles.

It is worth saying, at this point of the paper, that we won't be dealing with the psychodynamic processes associated with the phenomenon, but instead using the functions identified by Propp to identify the structure of fairy tales, i.e., performing a morphologic analysis of the texts.

In the magazines, many success stories follow the pattern of opening, peripatetics, climax and conclusion identified by Von Franz (1996) as the structure of fairy tales. The object of the story may be a successful corporation. However, even when it is a matter of showing the good performance of a given corporation, the story is usually told from the perspective of the actions of its chief executives.

In 2000, two stories on the success of executives got prominence in *Exame*: the "heroic" performances of Lou Gerstner at IBM (Slater, 2000) and of Carlos Ghosn at Nissan (Vassalo, 2000). It is important to point out that other magazines carry stories quite similar to the ones studied here. To analyze the parallel between these stories and fairy tales we chose to first describe them from their basic structure (see Table 2).

TABLE 2
Fairy Tales at IBM and Nissan

	Lou Gerstner's story (Slater, 2000)	Carlos Ghosn's story (Vassalo, 2000)
OPENING	"...in April, 1993, the company looked doomed, losing billions of dollars a year, with no hope of recovery [...] That was when Gerstner became president of the board of directors and CEO [...] Few believed that he would	"Nissan sank under the weight of seven years of losses in a row, a debt of 13 billion dollars, an insipid line of cars, a decreasing share of the market and lethargic management. [...] It is now months since Ghosn started

TABLE 2 (Continued)

	Lou Gerstner's story (Slater, 2000)	Carlos Ghosn's story (Vassalo, 2000)
OPENING	have the chance of putting IBM on its feet again. His task was formidable: the most challenging position in corporate America [...] To bring profound changes to IBM it would not be enough for Gerstner to fight against the existing corporate culture. He would have to create a new culture in the organization. A frightening task – not only because IBM culture was so deeply-seated [...] But also because he was a newcomer and would, therefore, be met with distrust and suspicion. Change was an anathema. Change was counterculture. Change was the enemy."	facing what may be called the riskiest and most difficult mission in the auto industry all over the world: recovering Nissan, the second largest auto-industry in Japan, with revenues worth 54.4 billion dollars [sic] in 1998. For the first time, a Westerner is at the head of the company [...] Goshn arrived at the Nissan offices in Guinza well aware that without the elimination of a number of dogma and habits his chances of success would be minimal. The largest and most complex change to be performed is that of culture."
PERIPATETICS	"Gerstner recovered the sense of urgency in the company – the same company that had once taken aggressiveness as a synonym for shame [...] First, he abandoned the lay off policy which had existed for decades [...] the dress code was one of the most deeply-rooted and most troublesome in the company. Changing this habit, thought Gerstner, would help break other aspects of the old corporate culture [...] Gerstner concluded that it was vital for IBM to be transformed into the best company in the offering of solutions to clients."	"The Revival Plan pointed to the lack of long-term commitment on the part of employees and to a chronic isolation of departments. Goshn talked about the urgency of a clear drive towards profit and of the sense of urgency to solve problems. And, finally, he announced a 30% cut in the production capacity, the shutting down of plants, the laying off of thousands of employees and the end of the keiretsu, the traditional network of stock participation which the big corporations have with their suppliers and which has kept Japan's economy going over the last decades [...] Some months ago, Goshn started receiving anonymous letters with death threats."

TABLE 2 (Continued)

	Lou Gerstner's story (Slater, 2000)	Carlos Ghosn's story (Vassalo, 2000)
CLIMAX	"If the image of the old IBM was that of Uncle Thomas Watson, wearing a white shirt beside a mainframe of many millions of dollars, the image of the new IBM is that of Uncle Lou, with his sleeves rolled up, making things work. [...] Its working with the customers rose by more than 50% in 1994 to generate revenues of approximately 1 billion dollars."	"Over-exposition made Goshn – a shy, usually impassible, not physically imposing man – a celebrity, a kind of Zico to Japan's corporate world [...] During his term, the company shut down its plant in Belgium and laid off 3,100 employees. All contracts with suppliers were revised. The auto-company managed to save 3 billion dollars over the past 3 years earning Gosh the nickname – which he hates – of Cost Killer."
CONCLUSION	"After six years in command – a relatively brief period to put such a big company back on its feet, Gerstner has performed a number of miracles [...] Six years ago, skeptical analysts used to ask: how long will it take for IBM to be inevitably ruined? In 1999, the question asked was of a rather different order: when will Gerstner manage to make IBM have a respectable, continuous and consistent growth?"	"It is impossible to know today whether Carlos Goshn will manage to save Nissan or not, whether he will enter business history as a brilliant executive, as a visionary or as a loser [...] I ask him how much longer he will stay in Japan. 'Oh...Four years, at least. Not before I carry out every step in the Revival Plan'. 'If everything goes wrong, we will be moving again in one year' says Rita, his wife. 'But the truth is that he never even considers this possibility'."

Gerstner's story can also be analyzed through Propp's functions (Table 1), as shown in Table 3.

In the conclusion, Gerstner is glorified and shows that, even when one is faced with a formidable task, a happy ending is possible. Questions regarding the future may be interpreted as Gerstner's return to the condition of an ordinary mortal, which occurs in fairy tales. It is also a kind of departure rite: many storytellers end their narratives with some observation that brings us back to reality.

TABLE 3
Gerstner's Story and Propp's Functions

	Propp's functions	Gerstner's Story
16	The hero and its opponent get face-to-face in direct combat	Gerstner faces his enemy, the deep-rooted corporate culture
17	The hero is marked for his bravery	Gerstner takes Watson's place in the organization's folklore
18	The opponent is defeated	Gerstner manages, through a series of tricks, to change IBM's culture
25	The hero is faced with a challenge	Gerstner has to save IBM
26	The task is accomplished	Gerstner saves IBM from ruin
27	The hero is glorified	Everybody recognizes Gerstner as the miracle-maker who saved IBM

In Ghosn's story, one can also identify Propp's functions as shown in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Ghosn's Story and Propp's Functions

	Propp's functions	Ghosn's Story
16	The hero and its opponent get face-to-face in direct combat	Ghosn faces his enemy, the deep-rooted Japanese corporate culture and practices
17	The hero is marked: for his bravery	Ghosn becomes a celebrity in the corporate world
21	The hero is persecuted	Ghosn start receiving death threats
25	The hero is faced with a challenge	Ghosn has to take measures to save Nissan
26	The task is accomplished	Ghosn is successful in the implementation of corrective measures

The structure of the story is quite similar to that of Gerstner and it also makes use of a rite of departure. Both stories deal indirectly with a recurrent theme in the corporate world of the 1990s: the difficulties and losses in the processes of organizational change and corporate restructuring.

In a similar fashion, news of hostile takeovers in the American media is also told through the language of fairy tales. Analyzing some

pieces, Schneider and Dunbar (1992) observed that such a strategy would be a kind of counterpoint to the anxiety generated by these events. According to these authors, this kind of language would allay fears and desires related to power fantasies, such as those of dominance and dependence.

Magazines and books presenting this kind of structure, full of heroic events and fantastic tales of corporate success, are usually avidly read and discussed by executives. In fact it is meaningful that fairy tales for adults are so popular. Because they promote a symbolic sharing of power fantasies, such fairy tales provide psychological comfort by showing that changes have a positive side and that, after everything is said and done, all ends well.

DISCUSSION: FANTASY AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF

Postponing Maturity

The analysis of the two articles appearing in *Exame* (Slater, 2000; Vassalo, 2000) suggests that elements of the childhood universe are present in pop-management literature. We could also hypothesize, in light of the psychoanalysis of fairy tales, that the success stories disseminated by the business media promote the sharing of power fantasies and help in the mitigating of the tensions caused by environmental instability.

We must now address, in more detail, another important question. As we saw earlier, fairy tales play an important part in the process of emotional development of children. But how should we interpret the permanence of the same structure in adult literature? As a postponing of maturity?

Of course we do not believe that there is a direct connection between the reading of fairy tales for adults and a regression to childhood or permanence in a lower stage of emotional development, not in the least because reading processes are very subjective and the psychological impact varies according to the values and experiences of each individual. However, the success of these stories in pop-management literature brings evidence that the process of identity building goes on during adult life and signals that fantasies still play an important role in this process. To analyze this phenomenon we will focus in this section on two themes: motivational texts and the concept of self and identity development.

Make-Believe, Self and Identity

As seen earlier, fairy tales have a role in the formation of a child's ego: they play a relevant part both in the regulation of infantile emotions and in the search for the meaning of life and of ego by each individual (Bettelheim, 1976). Therefore, making-believe has a bearing not only on the process of ego formation but also on the process of formation of the self.

The ego, the id and the superego are elemental parts of the psychological apparatus. The ego is a structural part of the psychological apparatus and has the function of mediating the demands, being thus a regulator of emotions. The self, on the other hand, is an internal structure of the mind that has continuity in time. That is, it is a register of an individual's experience and contains representations of itself, having a dynamic influence on behavior. According to Kohut (1991, p. 6):

> The self contains: (1) the basic levels of personality from which spring the effort towards power and success; moreover, (2) its central idealized objectives; and also (3) the basic talents and skills which act as mediators between ambitions and ideals. They all link to constitute a unity in time and space, a recipient for impressions and an initiator of actions.

In addition to establishing the differences between the ego and the self, Kohut also defines identity. In his point of view, this is the point of convergence between the self developed at the end of the teen years and early adult life and the individual's social and cultural position. In this article we are working with these definitions and that the self and identity are temporal psychic structures, in permanent development.

To Winnicott (1971), among the active processes of the formation of self and identity there appear children's games and all forms of activities through which creativity seeks expression, for these are the forms of communication in which the external and internal worlds interact. In childhood, fantastic tales shore up the child's making believe by providing elements to games and stories that exercise the search for identity.

Being exposed to fairy tales, children tend to use them in their symbolic games. In this process, they may choose either the personal game or the projected game (Slade, 1978). The personal game

involves activities in which the child experiences social roles and tries to act the part of a certain character. The projected game, on the other hand, has the child using toys to act in roles and characters and to represent places and things in a dramatic plot unfolding in his or her mind, as if he or she were a stage director.

The route of a child's playful acting with making believe and personification progresses to include the projected making believe to reach reverie, a stage in which the child arrives at the full development of playful imagination once he or she does not make use of any kind of prop or material support: he or she daydreams.

It is worth saying that introjection, as well as projection, is present in these symbolic games. This is a fundamental psychic mechanism for the development of the individual's identity.

Motivational Texts and the Engineering of the Soul

The array of games just mentioned is also available to adults: they can either play roles or daydream. However, the relation they have with making believe is rather different from that of a child (Held, 1980). Once their imagination is surrounded by patterns for perspective, they tend not to create new things, but to reproduce what already exists.

Thus, instead of symbolic games, adult tends to choose games with rules in which rational spirit and logical skills prevail. Within this context, motivational texts becomes prominent for they offer "games" with well-defined rules, which simulate the search for the self and allow for an experiencing of the fantasies suggested by the fairy tales for adults. One must notice that children can also play games with rules, but their capacity to elect make-believe games is bigger than that from the adults.

Motivational texts, adapted to the corporate context, account for a large part of pop-management literature. Many pop-management articles and books make use of the prescriptive discourse typical of motivational texts. They commonly suggest behavior rules and give precise advice. Motivational texts and self-help texts complement the part played by fairy tales for adults by offering strategies to put into practice the power fantasies stimulated by success stories.

According to Rüdiger (1996), the search for answers to existential questions through self-help takes place by a process of self-

rationalization, in which desires and attitudes are regulated so as to make it possible to reach certain goals. This process differs from reflexivity, which is the ability the individual has of looking at himself or herself and of considering his or her way of being.

Rüdiger argues that the success of self-help literature may be explained by its (purported) capacity to offer answers to the problem of the fragmenting of the self, a "by-product" of the modern individualistic civilization. Its techniques and sets of rules would then constitute a prosaic form of the individual rescuing himself or herself. Rüdiger relates self-help with problems in the process of self and identity development. Through self-help, people "play" with representations of themselves, shifting their principles and goals according to the images and perspectives that are trendy at a certain moment. Due to their connection to the status quo and their unconditional acceptance of values, self-help texts could therefore be classified as "engineering of the soul," which transforms personality development and the pursuit of self-fulfillment in goals that are often dependent on the "market."

The Threatened Self

The risk implicit in this "game" is the difficulty in establishing an authentic self. This occurs through the serial adoption of multiple variations of self and identity by the use of models broadcasted by the media. There emerges the "Zelig manager" or the "chameleon-man," capable of taking up several different personalities but incapable of sticking to any of them. To Enriquez (2000a), these multiple identities end up by complementing each other to constitute a false self and an *as if* personality. Similarly, Tonelli and Alcadipani (2000) argued that the stereotype behavior models that have been praised in organizations would be something like "make up" for the self.

It is a fact that individuals cannot be considered mere reflections of the "available personalities" in the environment of which they are part. Following the Foucauldian tradition, they also manipulate the narratives associated with these personalities according to their wishes (see Ezzy, 1997). Yet this exercise in free agency does not exempt them from the risk of exacerbating individualism and, ironically, end up drifting away from their own identity. As pointed out by Kolhut (1977), a strong, integrated self emerges when the desire

for grandiosity and exhibitionism of the narcissistic stage are replaced by the capacity of being socially useful and by realistic self-esteem. In a similar fashion, Marcuse (1974) pointed out that when an individual remains isolated and does not overcome the difficulties of fitting in and of social integration, he or she tends to compensate for his or her frustration of unfulfilled pleasure through narcissistic fantasies of power.

Based on these concepts and observations, we can suggest that the success of fairy tales for adults and of self-help in pop-management literature points to difficulties in the self and identity's development, apart from the perpetuation of delusions of grandeur and exhibitionism.

First, resorting too often to fantasy constitutes an "escape valve" rather than an incentive to creativity. Moreover, the availability of "set formulae" in an increasingly demanding, fast-changing environment leads to the distancing of the creative process of interaction with reality.

Second, the construction of self and identity does not occur through the use of *prêt-à-porter* identities. Such process occurs though experiences meaningful to the psychological development of the individual, and these are often difficult and painful.

Third, the lure of power fantasies generated by these stories may bring forth narcissistic attitudes that isolate the individual in his or her own world of desires and interests, reinforcing the competitive, individualistic atmosphere that has been affecting the quality of life in organizations.

Finally, it is worth noticing that, by dealing in over-simplifying, schematic fashion with themes dear to the emotional and professional development of individuals, pop-management literature may be playing a dangerous game with its readers once it triggers psychological processes that require, for the most part, individual attention and psychological care.

CONCLUSION

In an issue of the *Harvard Business Review*, arguably one of the best examples of pop-management magazines (see Wood & Paes de Paula, 2008), one advertisement showed the new Audi A4. A child's

slide led to the driver's seat through an open door. The clear, minimalist landscape showed just two elements: the child's toy and the adult's toy. Like the success of *Harry Potter* mentioned at the beginning of this text, the auto industry seems to count on the permanence of infantile traits in adult life.

These traits would define characteristic behavior and consumption patterns, guiding the production of both symbolic and consumer goods and, cyclically, acting for the preservation of the same childish traits. As one can see, the phenomenon analyzed here may go well beyond organizational boundaries.

In this paper, we have explored this phenomenon by using psychoanalysis and the study of the structure of the fairy tales as a perspective to analyze two success stories published by a business magazine. We observed that elements of fairy tales, such as heroic feats and happy endings, are recurrent in pop-management literature, inducing sharing of power fantasies and mitigating psychological tensions in the workplace. Possible consequences of this phenomenon to the development of self and identity have also been examined.

FUTURE RESEARCH

We see this paper as an introductory piece and envision several possibilities for its development. In fact, interest in the problem of "subjectivity management" has been growing, with new analytical approaches emerging in the field of organizational studies, such as, for instance, discourse analysis, and fantasy theme analysis (Boorman, 1972; Jackson, 2001; Wood & Paes de Paula, 2008).

Applied to this case, discourse analysis and fantasy theme analysis could contribute to the understanding of the process of the creation of fairy tales for adults by examining how parallel stories struggle for primacy and how a certain version emerges as "the true one." It would also make possible a study of the diffusion and transformation of the story, from its origins to its broadcasting by the business media and to the diffusion in the corporate world.

Another possibility would be that of analyzing the various readings and uses of the story by actors who are distant from the context in which the story came up. In this sense, a possible approach would be to examine the ways in which the cases of IBM and Nissan are used

by teachers and students in undergraduate management courses and in MBAs or, alternatively, to see how executives and consultants interpret the stories and bring them to their own context.

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